

The Truth about Abraham Lincoln

From, *A History of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church – One hundred fifty-seven years 1803 to 1961*

“President Lincoln not only attended the regular Sunday services at *The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church*, but it was discovered quite by accident that he was a frequent attendant at the mid-week prayer meeting. He had made an agreement with Dr. Gurley that he would slip into the pastor’s study by the side door and that the glass paneled door leading to the lecture room was to be left ajar so that he might inconspicuously share the inspiration of the meeting and pray with the church for the things nearest its heart.

Two lads of the congregation, Dr. Gurley’s son, Will, and John D. McChesney, had noticed the shadow of Lincoln’s well known profile silhouetted against the glass door by the lamp burning on the pastor’s desk. A light snow had fallen and the two young men followed the footprints leading from the side door toward the White House. When the President reached the door he turned to the two followers and called, “Thanks for the escort, boys.”

In a letter to a friend, Dr. William Henry Roberts, Moderator of the General Assembly in 1907, said, ‘entering the service of the United State Government in the fall of 1863, the first Sabbath of my sojourn in Washington City, I went to *The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church*. When the time for the long prayer came, a number of men stood up for the prayer, and among those upright figures I noticed in particular that of the President of the United States. As a member of the *New York Avenue Church*, I was seated not far from Mr. Lincoln at Sunday services for a year and a half, and his attitude was always that of an earnest and devout worshiper. He was also an attendant at the weekly prayer meeting, though for a considerable period taking part in the service privately. It had become known that he was an attendant at the prayer meeting. Many persons would gather in or near the church at the close of the service in order to have access to him for various purposes. Desiring to put an end to these unwelcome interruptions, the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley, Mr. Lincoln’s pastor, arranged to have the President sit in his study, the door of which opened upon the lecture room, where Mr. Lincoln could take part in the service. He informed his pastor on several occasions that he had received great comfort from the meetings, and for the reason that they had been characterized more by prayer than by making of addresses.’

Lincoln's pastor, Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, said, 'I have had frequent and intimate conversations with him on the subject of the Bible and the Christian religion, when he could have no motive for deceiving me, and I consider him sound, not only on the truth of the Christian religion, but on also its fundamental doctrines and teachings...'

Mrs. Lauck's Affidavit A member of the church, Mrs. Lauk (Miss Sidney I. McCleary, later married to Henry Lauck) made affidavit as follows:

STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
COUNTY OF ESSEX.

Mrs. Sidney I. Lauck, of full age, being duly sworn upon her oath, according to law, deposes and says that:

I am a resident of East Orange, New Jersey, living at 56 South Walnut Street, in the said city, I was born in Washington, D.C., on the 29th day of March, 1834, and resided in that city all my life, until a few years ago I moved to the city of East Orange, and have lived in East Orange up until this time.

During the period when Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States of America, I was a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. Abraham Lincoln was a regular attendant at the said church, not only at Sunday services, but also at the Mid-week Prayer Meetings, for he was most unostentatious. He would take his place in a room, adjoining the main room where the people were assembled and would leave the door ajar, so he might hear the services. His reasons for wishing to remain in this adjoining room were that his modesty constrained him to avoid publicity, which would have come from his mingling with the small group at these Mid-week Prayer Meetings. It was at his request that he sat in the adjoining room and with the door open about six inches. He wanted to attend the Mid-week Prayer meetings, but he felt that he only wanted to attend them in the manner aforesaid. It was common knowledge among the people of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church that Mr. Lincoln attended regularly these Mid-week Prayer Meetings.

I can see him still, as he would come swinging up the aisle on Sunday morning, with his boys following him and then would stand at his pew until they filed in; he would then take his seat at the end next to the aisle.

The pastor of the *New York Avenue Presbyterian Church* aforesaid, at the time Mr. Lincoln attended the said Church, was the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley. I was a friend of Frances Gurley, the daughter of the aforesaid pastor, Phineas D. Gurley. I attended the home of the said Phineas D. Gurley so often, that I was considered almost one of the family.

I knew Mr. Lincoln; I was introduced by Phineas D. Gurley aforesaid, whom we knew as Dr. Gurley. On numerous occasions Dr. Gurley and I talked particularly about Mr. Lincoln.

After Mr. Lincoln's death, Dr. Gurley told me that Mr. Lincoln had made all the necessary arrangements with him and the SESSION of the *New York Avenue Presbyterian Church* to be

received into the membership of the said church, by confession of his faith in Christ, on the Easter Sunday following the Friday night when Mr. Lincoln was assassinated.

At the time of the experience herein stated, I was about 30 years of age and remember clearly and distinctly the facts herein stated.

Sworn and Subscribed to,
Before me this 15th day of
February, 1928.

(Signed)

GEORGE W. PERRY,
Atty. at law of New Jersey.

(Signed)

SIDNEY I. LAUCK

**Assassination
and Funeral
Services**

Alas! Easter Day dawned on a nation bowed in grief at the untimely death of its beloved President. On Good Friday night the fatal shot was fired that ended the life which might have reconciled the warring states and changed the course of history. As his life was ebbing out in the Peterson House on Tenth Street across from the Ford Theatre, his friend and pastor was with him. Dr. Gurley prayed with him, and by his presence helped Mrs. Lincoln and her son through the hours of that interminable night. It was to him that the family turned in their extremity and he was their choice to conduct the funeral services which were held in the East Room of the White House.

His sermon on that occasion directs our thoughts to Lincoln's deep-seated faith and is of national significance. It was as follows:

'HAVE FAITH IN GOD' - Mark 11:22

A Sermon

Delivered in the East Room of the Executive Mansion

Wednesday, April 19th, 1865

At

The Funeral of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States

By

Rev. P.D. Gurley, D.D.

Pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

Washington, D.C.

AS WE STAND HERE TODAY, MOURNERS AROUND THIS COFFIN AND AROUND THE LIFELESS REMAINS OF OUR BELOVED CHIEF MAGISTRATE, WE RECOGNIZE AND WE ADORE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. His throne is in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all. He hath done, and He hath permitted to be done, whatsoever He pleased. 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.' His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If He cut off and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder Him? For He knoweth vain man; He

seeth wickedness also; Will He not then consider it?' We bow before His infinite majesty. We bow, we weep, we worship.

*'Where reason fails, with all her power,
There faith prevails, and love adores.'*

It was a cruel, cruel hand, that dark hand of the assassin, which smote our honored, wise, and noble President, and filled the land with sorrow. But above and beyond that hand there is another which we must see and acknowledge. It is the chastening hand of a wise and a faithful Father. He gives us this bitter cup. And the cup that our Father hath given us, shall we not drink it?

*'God of the just, Thou givest us the cup:
We yield to thy behest, and drink it up.'*

'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' O how these blessed words have cheered and strengthened and sustained us through all these long and weary years of civil strife, while our friends and brothers on so many ensanguined field were falling and dying for the cause of Liberty and Union! Let them cheer, and strengthen, and sustain us today. True, this new sorrow and chastening has come in such an hour and in such a way as we thought not, and it bears the impress of a rod that is very heavy, and of a mystery that is very deep. That such a life should be sacrificed, at such a time, by such a foul and diabolical agency; that the man at the head of the nation, whom the people had learned to trust with a confiding and loving confidence, and upon whom more than upon any other were centered, under God, our best hopes for the true and speedy pacification of the country, the restoration of the Union, and the return of harmony and love; that he should be taken from us, and taken just as the prospect of peace was brightly opening upon our torn and bleeding country, and just as he was beginning to be animated and gladdened with the hope of ere long enjoying with the people the blessed fruit and reward of his and their toil, and care, and patience, and self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of Liberty and the Union – O it is a mysterious and a most afflicting visitation! But it is our Father in heaven, the God of our fathers, and our God, who permits us to be so suddenly and sorely smitten; and we know that His judgments are right, and that in faithfulness He has afflicted us. In the midst of our rejoicings we needed this stroke, this dealing, this discipline; and therefore He sent it. Let us remember, our affliction has not come forth out of the dust, and our trouble has not sprung out of the ground. Through and beyond all second causes let us look; and see the sovereign permissive agency of the great First Cause. It is His prerogative to bring light out of darkness and good out of evil. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain. In the light of a clearer day we may yet see that the wrath which planned and perpetrated the death of the President, was overruled by Him whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out, for the highest welfare of all those interests which are so dear to the Christian patriot and philanthropist, and for which a loyal people have made such an unexampled sacrifice of treasure and of blood. Let us not be faithless but believing.

*'Blind unbelief is prone to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.'*

We will wait for His interpretation, and we will wait in faith, nothing doubting. He who has led us so well, and defended and prospered us so wonderfully, during the last four years of toil, and struggle, and sorrow, will not forsake us now. He may chasten, but He will not destroy. He may purify us more and more in the furnace of trial, but He will not consume us. No, no! He has chosen us as He did his people of old in the furnace of affliction, and He has said of us as He said of them, 'This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth My praise.' Let our principal anxiety now be that this new sorrow may be sanctified sorrow; that it may lead us to a deeper repentance, to a more humbling sense of our dependence upon God, and to the more unreserved consecration of ourselves and all that we have to the cause of truth and justice, of law and order, of Liberty and good government, of pure and undefiled religion. Then, though weeping may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning. Blessed be God! Despite of this great and sudden and temporary darkness, the morning has begun to dawn – the morning of a bright and glorious day, such as our country has never seen. That day will come and not tarry, and the death of an hundred Presidents and their Cabinets can never, never prevent it. While we are thus hopeful, however, let us also be humble. The occasion calls us to prayerful and tearful humiliation. It demands of us that we lie low, very low, before Him who has smitten us for our sins. O that all our rulers, and all our people may bow in the dust today beneath the chastening hand of God! And may their voices go up to Him as one voice, and their hearts go up to Him as one heart, pleading with Him for mercy, for grace to sanctify our great and sore bereavement, and for wisdom to guide us in this our time of need. Such a united cry and pleading will not be in vain. It will enter into the ear and heart of Him who sits upon the throne, and He will say to us, as to His ancient Israel, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.'

I have said that the people confided in the late lamented President with a full and loving confidence. Probably no man since the days of Washington was ever so deeply and firmly embedded and enshrined in the very hearts of the people as Abraham Lincoln. Nor was it a mistaken confidence and love. He deserved it – deserved it well – deserved it all. He merited it by his character, by his acts, and by the whole tenor, and tone, and spirit of his life. He was simple and sincere, plain and honest, truthful and just, benevolent and kind. His perceptions were quick and clear, his judgments were calm and accurate, and his purposes were good and pure beyond question. Always, and everywhere he aimed and endeavored to be right and to do right. His integrity was thorough, all-pervading, all-controlling, and incorruptible. It was the same in every place and relation, in the consideration and the control of matters great and small, the same firm and steady principle of power and beauty that shed a clear and crowning lustre upon all his other excellencies of mind and heart, and recommended him to his fellow citizens as *the* man who, in a time of unexampled peril, when the very life of the nation was at stake, should be chosen to occupy, in the country and for the country, its highest post of power and responsibility. How wisely and well, how purely and faithfully, how firmly and steadily, how justly and successfully he did occupy that post and meet its grave demands in circumstances of surpassing trial and difficulty, is known to you all, known to the country and the world. He comprehended from the first the perils to which treason had exposed the freest and best Government on earth, the vast interests of Liberty and humanity that were to be saved or lost forever in the urgent impending conflict; he rose to the dignity and momentousness of the occasion, saw his duty as the Chief Magistrate of a great and imperiled people, and he determined to do his duty, and his whole duty, seeking the guidance and leaning upon the arm of

Him of whom it is written, 'He giveth power to the faint, and to whom that have no might He increaseth strength.' Yes, he leaned upon His arm. He recognized and received the truth that that 'kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations.' He remembered that 'God is in history,' and he felt that nowhere had His hand and His mercy been so marvelously conspicuous as in the history of this nation. He hoped and prayed that that same hand would continue to guide us, and that same mercy continue to abound to us in the time of our greatest need. I speak what I know, and testify what I have often heard him say, when I affirm that that guidance and mercy were the props on which he humbly and habitually leaned; they were the best hope he had for himself and for his country. Hence, when he was leaving his home in Illinois, and coming to this city to take his seat in the executive chair of a disturbed and troubled nation, he said to the old and tried friends who gathered tearfully around him and bade him farewell, 'I leave you with this request: *pray for me.*'

They did pray for him; and millions of other people prayed for him; nor did they pray in vain. Their prayer was heard, and the answer appears in all his subsequent history; it shines forth with a heavenly radiance in the whole course and tenor of his administration, from its commencement to its close. God raised him up for a great and glorious mission, furnished him for his work, and aided him in its accomplishment. Nor was it merely by strength of mind, and honesty of heart, and purity and pertinacity of purpose, that He furnished him; in addition to these things, He gave him a calm and abiding confidence in the overruling providence of God and in the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness through the power and the blessing of God. This confidence strengthened him in all his hours of anxiety and toil, and inspired him with calm and cheering hope when others were inclining to despondency and gloom.

Never shall I forget the emphasis and the deep emotion with which he said in this very room, to a company of clergymen and others, who called to pay him their respects in the darkest days of our civil conflict: "Gentlemen, my hope of success in this great and terrible struggle rests on that immutable founding, the justice and goodness of God. And when events are threatening, and prospects very dark, I still hope that in some way which man cannot see all will be well in the end, because our cause is just, and God is on our side." Such was his sublime and holy faith, and it was an anchor to his soul, both sure and steadfast. It made him firm and strong. It emboldened him in the pathway of duty, however rugged and perilous it might be. It made him valiant for the right; for the cause of God and humanity, and it held him in a steady, patient, and unswerving adherence to a policy of administration which he thought, and which we all now think, both God and humanity required him to adopt. We admired and loved him on many accounts – for strong and various reasons; we admired his childlike simplicity, his freedom from guile and deceit, his staunch and sterling integrity, his kind and forgiving temper, his industry and patience, his persistent, self-sacrificing devotion to all the duties of his eminent position, from the least to the greatest; his readiness to hear and consider the cause of the poor and humble, the suffering and the oppressed; his charity toward those who questioned the correctness of his opinions and the wisdom of his policy; his wonderful skill in reconciling differences among the friends of the Union, leading them away from abstractions, and inducing them to work together and harmoniously for the common weal; his true and enlarged philanthropy, that knew no distinction of color or race, but regarded all men as brethren, and endowed alike by their Creator 'with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness;' his inflexible purpose that what freedom had gained in our terrible civil strife should never be lost,

and that the end of the war should be the end of slavery, and as a consequence, of rebellion; his readiness to spend the be spent for the attainment of such a triumph – a triumph, the blessed fruits of which shall be as wide spreading as the earth and as enduring as the sun: - all these things commanded and fixed our admiration, and the admiration of the world, and stamped upon his character and life the unmistakable impress of *greatness*. But more sublime than any or all of these, more holy and influential, more beautiful and strong, and sustaining, *was his abiding confidence in God and in the final triumph of truth and righteousness through Him and for His sake*. This was his noblest virtue, his grandest principle, the secret alike of his strength, his patience, and his success. And this, it seems to me, after being near him steadily, and with him often, for more than four years, is the principle by which, more than any other, ‘he, being dead, yet speaketh.’ Yes; by his steady enduring confidence in God, and in the complete ultimate success of the cause of God, which is the cause of humanity, more than by any other way, does he now speak to us and the nation he loved and served so well. By this he speaks to his successor in office, and charges him to ‘have faith in God.’ By this he speaks to the members of his cabinet, the men with whom he counseled so often and was associated so long, and he charges them to ‘have faith in God.’ By this he speaks to the officers and men of our noble army and navy, and, as they stand at their posts of duty and peril, he charges them to ‘have faith in God.’ By this he speaks to all who occupy positions of influence and authority in these sad and troublous times, and he charges as they sit in sackcloth today, and weep for him with a bitter wailing, and refuse to be comforted, and he charges them to ‘have faith in God.’ And by this he *will* speak through the ages and to all rulers and peoples in every land, and his message to them will be ‘Cling to Liberty and right; battle for them; bleed for them; die for them, if need be; and have confidence in God.’ O that the voice of this testimony may sink down into our hearts today and every day, and into the heart of the nation, and exert its appropriate influence upon our feelings, our faith, our patience, and our devotion to the cause of freedom and humanity – a cause dearer to us now than ever before, because consecrated by the blood of its most conspicuous defender, its wisest and most fondly-trusted friend.

He is dead; but the God in whom he trusted lives, and He can guide and strengthen his successor, as He guided and strengthened him. He is dead; but the memory of his virtues, and of his wise and patriotic counsels and labors, of his calm and steady faith in God lives, is precious, and will be a power for good in the country quite down to the end of time. He is dead; but the cause he so ardently loved, so ably, patiently, faithfully represented and defended – not for himself only, not for us only, but for all people in all their coming generations, till time shall be no more – that cause survives his fall, and will survive it. The light of its brightening prospects flashes cheerfully today athwart the gloom occasioned by his death, and the language of God’s united providences is telling us that, though the friends of Liberty die, Liberty itself is immortal. There is no assassin strong enough and no weapon deadly enough to quench its inextinguishable life, or arrest its onward march to the consolation, as we weep and mourn today. Though our beloved President is slain, our beloved country is saved. And so we sing of mercy as well as of judgment. Tears of gratitude mingle with those of sorrow. While there is darkness, there is also the dawning of a brighter, happier day upon our stricken and weary land. God be praised that our fallen Chief lived long enough to see the day dawn and the daystar of joy and peace arise upon the nation. He saw it, and he was glad. Alas! Alas! He only saw the *dawn*. When the *sun* has risen, full-orbed and glorious, and a happy reunited people are rejoicing in its light, alas! It will shine upon his grave. But that grave will be a precious and a consecrated spot. The friends

of Liberty and of the Union will repair to it in years and ages to come, to pronounce the memory of its occupant blessed, and, gathering from his very ashes, and from the rehearsal of his deeds and virtues, fresh incentives to patriotism, they will there renew their vows of fidelity to their country and their God.

And now I know not that I can more appropriately conclude this discourse, which is but a sincere and simple utterance of the heart, than by addressing to our departed President, with some slight modification, the language which Tacitus, in his life of Agricola, addresses to his venerable and departed father-in-law: ‘With you we may now congratulate, you are blessed, not only because your life was a career of glory, but because you were released, when, your country safe, it was happiness to die. We have lost a parent, and, in our distress, it is now an addition to our heartfelt sorrow that we had it not in our power to commune with you on the bed of languishing, and receive your last embrace. Your dying words would have been ever dear to us; your command we should have treasured up, and graven on our hearts. This sad comfort we have lost, and the wound, for that reason, pierces deeper. From the world of spirits behold your disconsolate family and people; exalt our minds from fond regret and unavailing grief to contemplation of your virtues. These we must not lament; it were impiety to sully them with a tear. To cherish their memory, to embalm them with our praises, and, so far as we can, to emulate your bright example, will be the truest mark of our respect, the best tribute we can offer. Your wife will thus preserve the memory of the best of husbands, and thus your children will prove their filial piety. By dwelling constantly on your words and actions, they will have an illustrious character before their eyes, and, not content with the bare image of your mortal frame, they will have what is more valuable – the form and features of your mind. Busts and statues, like their original, are frail and perishable. The soul is formed of finer elements, and its inward form is not to be expressed by the hand of an artist with unconscious matter – our manners and our morals may in some degree trace the resemblance. All of you that gained our love and raised our admiration still subsists, and will ever subsist, preserved in the minds of men, the register of ages, and the records of fame. Others, who had figured on the state of life and were the worthies of a former day, will sink, for want of a faithful historian, into the common lot of oblivion, inglorious and unremembered; but you, our lamented friend and head, delineated with truth, and fairly consigned to posterity, will survive yourself, and triumph over the injuries of time.’

On the funeral train which bore Lincoln’s body home to Springfield, along with the casket of Willie Lincoln which was to rest finally beside that of his father, Dr. Gurley composed the following hymn to be sung at the service at the grave in Springfield:

Rest, noble Martyr! Rest in peace;
Rest with the true and brave,
Who, like thee, fell in Freedom’s cause,
The nation’s life to save.

Thy name shall live while time endures,
And men shall say of thee,
‘He saved his country from its foes,
And bade the slave be free.’

These deeds shall be thy monument,
Better than brass or stone;
They leave thy fame in glory's light,
Unrival'd and alone.

This consecrated spot shall be
To Freedom ever dear;
And Freedom's son of every race
Shall weep and worship here.

O God! Before whom we, in tears,
Our fallen Chief deplore;
Grant that the cause for which he died,
May live forever more

Doxology.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God whom we adore,
Be glory as it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

**Mrs. Lincoln's
Gratitude**

Mrs. Lincoln in her deep gratitude for the friendship and sympathy of her pastor wanted him to have some personal belonging of her husband's as a keepsake. She sent the following letter with her gift:

Executive Mansion
May 22nd, 1865

Rev. Dr. Gurley
My Dear Sir:

Please accept as a memento, of the very kind regard entertained for you by my Beloved Husband, the hat worn by him, for the first and only time, at his Second Inauguration. While its intrinsic value is trifling, you will prize it, for the associations that cluster around it. If anything can cast a ray of light across my dreary and blighted pathway, the recollection of your Christian kindness, extended to myself and family in our heavy bereavements will ever be most gratefully cherished. With love to Mrs. Gurley, I remain,

Your heart broken friend,
Mary Lincoln.

The Lincoln Pew

Discarded and Salvaged When our church was undergoing a large repair and renovation job in 1886 the Lincoln pew was discarded with the others. The mistake was speedily discovered. John D. McChesney, one of the two boys who had tracked President Lincoln in the snow from his private worship in Dr. Gurley's study to the White House, was responsible for salvaging it. As the discarded pew stood on the sidewalk at the side of the church he discovered it. He, with the sexton, seated themselves on it to prevent it being carried away to the dump. There they continued to sit until they were assured that it would be preserved.

Position This is the same pew which Mrs. Lincoln had selected when they first arrived in Washington for the inauguration. Number fourteen happened to be vacant and she chose it from the church seating plan which she had borrowed. It now occupies the same relative position in this church. The authority for its place is stated in the Minutes of the Session of March 8, 1893, 'Decided to submit to the Congregational meeting tomorrow evening the propriety of restoring to its former place the pew occupied by President Lincoln, which was removed when new pews were put into the church.'

Hallowed Attraction It has been and continues to be a hallowed attraction to our members as well as to all patriotic pilgrims to our church. During the two World Wars numbers of our soldiers, passing through the Capital to ports of embarkation; walked down the aisle to the dark colored pew. Sometimes they paused there to hear the story of the man who prayed in that pew during the dark sixties, who came there regularly because, as he said, he got not partisan politics but something to feed his soul. When hearing that President Lincoln always carried a Testament and that he called his Bible 'The Rock', they eagerly slipped offered Testaments into their uniform pockets. They were told how Dr. Gurley, our pastor, spent the night with the President while they followed the movements of troops on the map, and how he implored him to pray for them and kneeling beside him joined his voice in prayer for the Army.

President Roosevelt's Speech In 1903 when *The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church* celebrated their one hundredth anniversary, President Theodore Roosevelt occupied the Lincoln Pew with his Secretary of State, Honorable John Hay. President Roosevelt remarked that 'A man would be a poor citizen of this country if he would sit in Abraham Lincoln's pew and not feel the solemn sense of the association borne in upon him. I hope it will remain unchanged in this church as long as our country endures. Let us keep every little bit of association with that which is the highest and best, as a reminder to us equally of what we owe to those who have gone before, and of how we should show our appreciation.'

This evening I sit in the pew of Abraham Lincoln's, together with Abraham Lincoln's private Secretary, who for my good fortune, now serves as Secretary of State in my Cabinet. If ever there lived a president who during his term of service needed all of the consolation and the strength that he could draw from the Unseen Power above him, it was Abraham Lincoln – sad, patient, mighty Lincoln, who worked and suffered for the people and when he had lived for them to good end, gave up his life. If ever there was a man who practically applied what was taught in our churches, it was Abraham Lincoln.'

Secretary Hay Pays Tribute Secretary Hay spoke briefly, ‘Some of you share with me the memories to which this occasion and place give rise, of the days when I have sat in this church with that illustrious patriot, whose fame even now has turned to something remote and legendary. But whatever is remembered or whatever lost, we ought never to forget that Abraham Lincoln, one of the mightiest masters of statecraft that history has ever known, was also one of the most devoted and faithful servants of Almighty God who has ever sat in the high place of the world. From that dim and chilly dawn, when standing on a railway platform in Springfield, half-veiled by falling snow flakes, from the crowd of friends and neighbors gathered to wish him Godspeed, he acknowledged his dependence on God and asked for their prayers, to that sorrowful yet triumphant hour when he went to his account, he repeated over and over in every form of speech, his faith and trust in that Almighty Power who rules the fates of men and nations.’

Other Worshippers What a strengthening thought it is to recall that other heads of our Government have worshiped in this same pew. President James Buchanan had immediately preceded Lincoln; Presidents McKinley, Taft and Eisenhower also, though their own church homes were elsewhere. The British Ambassador, The Honorable Mr. Brice frequently came here. Not only was he a great admirer of Lincoln but he was always eager to gather new information about him. Lord Charnwood who wrote the classic ‘Lincoln’ also attended Sunday morning service here. Many nations and many creeds have been represented by the many men and many women who have shared this hallowed seat. It is certain that many have felt the touch of the great heart and have bowed in reverence before the God of Abraham Lincoln. On one Sunday an Ambassador from Japan, a maid from a European Embassy and a missionary from China listened to the Word of God while sitting here. On another Sunday a Lee of Virginia and the granddaughter of an Abolitionist shared it. There is room here for all even as there was in Abraham Lincoln’s heart, room for all.

Poem ‘Lincoln’s Pew’ When Dr. Radcliffe once spoke on Lincoln, Lyman Whitney Allen sat in the pew. Evidently he was inspired to write the poem, ‘Lincoln’s Pew.’ Later Dr. and Mrs. Radcliffe were touring Europe and discovered his poem in a French newspaper. It is as follows:

Lincoln’s Pew

Within the historic church both eye and soul
Perceived it. ’Twas the pew where Lincoln sat –
The only Lincoln God hath given to men –
Olden among the modern seats of prayer,
Dark like the ‘sixties’, place and past akin.
All else has changed, but this remains the same,
A sanctuary in a sanctuary.

Where Lincoln prayed! - What passion had his soul –
Mixt faith and anguish melting into prayer
Upon the burning altar of God’s fame,
A nation’s altar even as his own!

Where Lincoln prayed! – Such worshipers as he
Make thin ranks down the ages. Would'st thou know
His spirit suppliant? Then must thou feel
War's fiery baptism, taste hate's bitter cup,
Spend similar sweat of blood vicarious,
And sound like cry, 'If it be possible!'
From stricken heart in new Gethsemane.

Who saw him there are gone, as he is gone;
The pew remains, with what God gave him there,
And all the world through him. So let it be –
One of the people's shrines.”
