

There have been cases when the unholy deed of the assassin seemed less heinous. When the blood-thirsty tyrant, or the relentless persecutor, who has trampled on all law, human and divine, is struck down by violence, we condemn the act, while we recognize its substantial justice. But here, it is the good, the generous, and the just that is the victim.—“As a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou.”

This event is fitted to impress upon us important lessons. It reminds us that an evangelistic work remains to be done in Christian lands of which we little dreamed. We are well aware that, heretofore, only a small portion of any community have felt the saving power of divine truth, but we had hoped that its indirect influence in civilizing the nations, and in imparting light and vitality to conscience, would have rendered such deeds, as that which we deplore, impossible in Christian America. What makes our rude awakening more startling, is the fact that many were evidently concerned in the unhallowed plot, and still more sympathize with the assassin. It cannot be believed that, without the impulse of private revenge, he would have ventured on so terrible a crime, unless assured of the applause of a large circle, whose consciences were as perverted as his own. That any number of persons imbued with such a spirit could be found in a Christian land, is a startling fact, which should arouse the Church to more earnest activity to reach all classes of the community, and especially those unchristianized savages who walk our streets in the garb of gentlemen.

It calls to the exercise of faith. It teaches us to look away from earth to heaven, to Him who can make “the wrath of man to praise him, and restrain the remainder thereof.” It seems to say, “Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils.”—“The Lord reigneth, let the earth be glad.” When our Father sits on the throne of the universe, we know that however dark the sky, there is light in the cloud. It is his prerogative to bring good out of evil. He made the death of Abner advance, rather than retard the work of reconciliation in Israel, and he can make even this appalling crime subserve the cause of peace and order.