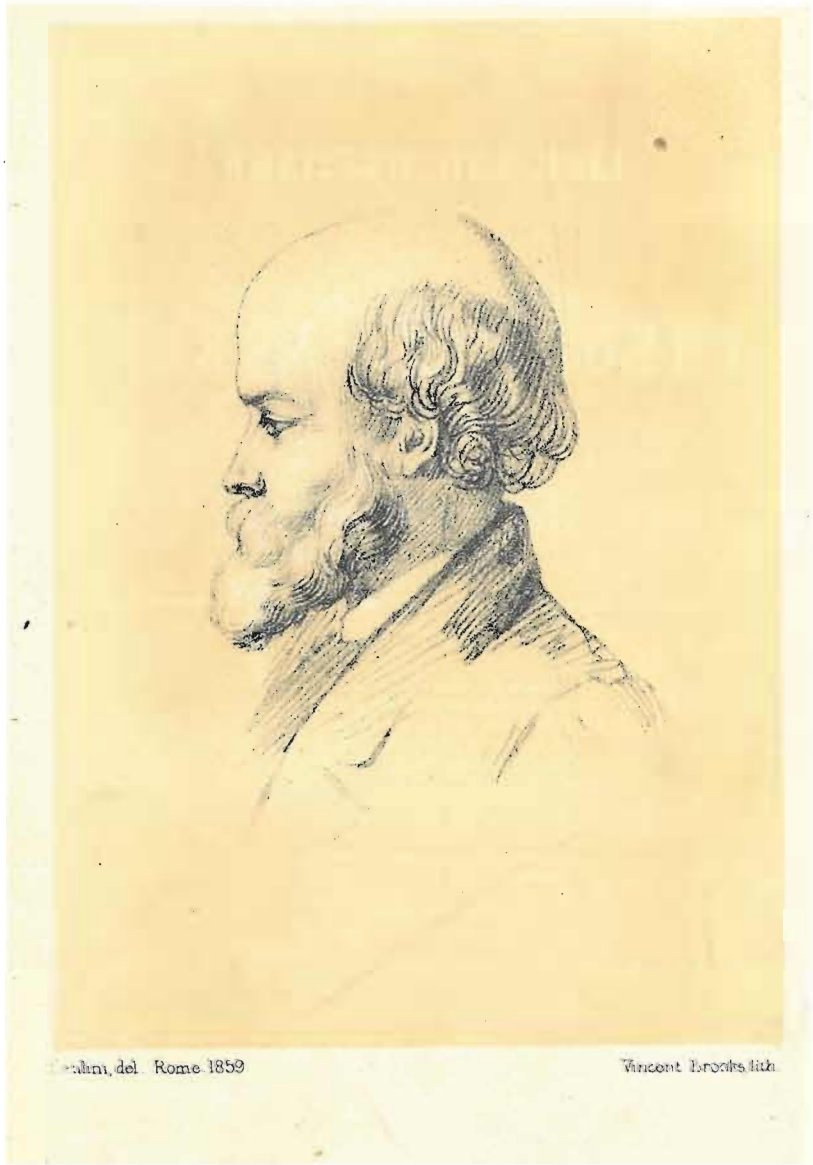
The Life and Writings of Theodore Parker

by

Albert Réville D.D.



[illegible], del. Rome 1859 Vincent Brooks lith.

THEODORE PARKER.

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BY

ALBERT RÉVILLE, D.D.

(AUTHORISED TRANSLATION, REVISED BY THE AUTHOR SECOND EDITION.)

A theologian, from the schoo.
Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there;
Skilful alike with tongue and pen,
He preach'd to all men everywhere
The gospel of the golden rule,
The new commandment given to men,
Thinking the deed, and not the creed,
Would help us in our utmost need.
With reverent feet the earth he trod,
Nor banish'd nature from his plan,
But studied still with deep research
To build the universal church,
Lofty as is the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man.

LONGFELLOW.

LONDON:
BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
37, NORFOLK STREET, STRAND.
1877.

"Nobody is surprised to find the books of Parker in every thoughtful man's library, or to hear multitudes of strong men impute their conversion to him; for he believed in God and man so completely that his fragmentary denials were but the floating drift upon the deep, swift current of his mighty faith."

REV. A. D. MAYO.

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*** *The British and Foreign Unitarian Association in accordance with its First Rule, gives publicity to works calculated "to promote Unitarian Christianity by the diffusion of Biblical, theological, and literary knowledge, or topics connected with it," but does not hold itself responsible for every statement, opinion, or expression of the writers.*

THEODORE PARKER,

HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

I HAVE always considered it one of the happy circumstances of my life as an author that, thanks to the incomparable organ of public opinion, *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (Number of the 1st Oct., 1861), I was able to draw the attention of the general public to the eminent preacher of Boston, in the United States, namely, Theodore Parker. Doubtless his name was already known in several religious circles; but beyond the limits of America the knowledge of him was far from being proportionate to his merits. Since the publication of that article numerous indications, rising in some sort at the four corners of the horizon, bear witness to the growing interest which connects itself with the ideas and the character of that truly admirable man; one of the superior souls of the 19th century, which the sun of the future has lighted up with its early rays. It is, then, with all the earnestness which multiplied occupations permitted me to apply to the task, that I yielded to the desire expressed by some of his old friends, to the effect that I would produce a Memoir of him with more details and explanations than the limits of a review-article authorized in my former labour. Moreover, in composing that Essay I had at my disposal only certain newspaper-

articles, funereal notices, and communications from friends; and since then the sources to be consulted in order to trace the attractive history of his life, have greatly increased. Among others we owe to one of his friends, Mr J. Weiss, the inappreciable advantage of acquaintance with his voluminous correspondence, at least in all of it that is likely to interest the public.* Some inconveniences proceeding from an ill arrangement of the numerous letters printed by the author, cannot lessen our gratitude for the great service he has rendered. We are also obliged to him for having scattered over his narrative notes taken from the private journal that Parker was accustomed to keep, extracts from which, more than narrated facts and even than friendly letters, enable us to penetrate to the core of his noble heart.

This study, resumed with new sources of information, has led me to rectify my first production on more points than one, at least for what concerns the external framework of the biography. For, as to the picture itself, I have only had to persist in the judgment which I at the first pronounced touching the American reformer. The gigantic events of which his country has been the theatre, that colossal crisis which, at the moment when these lines are written, is proceeding toward an issue corresponding to his hopes after having realized all the fears of his enlightened patriotism, this is the most eloquent commentary on that life of his suddenly put to an end. I hope then that this book will in some measure contribute to a movement replete with promises, which carries the human race onwards in the way of religious, moral, and social progress. I do not believe that our age is, as some declare, more irreligious, more immoral, and, in general, worse, than others. I even think that without much

* Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker, by J. Weiss. London, 1863.

trouble one may prove the contrary. What is true is that, consequent on the spread of general instruction, all possible tendencies have now their organs, and accordingly make their influence visible, small as it may be. We must then not be astonished to see at the two poles of the domain of thought, materialism and superstition presenting their forces with an arrogance scarcely equalled in the past, and profiting by all the sources of support, which may be offered to them by our generation, in the exhaustion and misery which are proper to it. We ought not to close our eyes before their enfeebling action, nor be alarmed thereat beyond measure. But we ought to set in opposition to them the great manifestation of life and power of which the apostle speaks, and in particular to save the age from forgetting those of its children who have lived on these three sacred and mutual loves, viz., God, man, liberty.

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER.

Did agreement or opinion stand supreme in my estimate, I should not have translated this interesting and instructive volume, but placing, as I do, the essence of religion in the love of God and man as embodied in Christ, I have performed the task with great pleasure, and hand over the result to the public, assured that it will minister to many light in darkness, relief in doubt, and encouragement in the pressures and strain of ordinary duty. My confidence rests on the fact that the character here portrayed, though not faultless, is so pure, lofty, and self-denying, as to bear, if a faint, yet a real resemblance to that of the Lord Jesus, and consequently presents, in one of ourselves, features in which men of all forms of religion may find something to love, admire, and imitate.

The author, speaking in his few preparatory words, from the point of time when he wrote, implies that the struggle between the Federals and the Confederates was then still proceeding. As what he says serves for a date to the composition, I have left the passage as I found it. One or two other passages in the body of the volume, containing a similar implication, I have modified so as to bring them into agreement with the fact that the conflict had come to a close when the translation was issued.

[Note.—In a letter to the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, written within a few days of his lamented decease, Dr. Beard expressed his intention to add a few lines in this place, on the issue of the present edition, feeling that from his more intimate acquaintance with Unitarian teaching and literature, he could with propriety point out that what was obviously, as Theodore Parker used it, in speaking of the Athanasian Creed and the Unitarian exegesis (in his well-known "Discourse of Religion," b. 5, c. 5), the exaggerated language of controversy, could hardly bear translation into the positive statement of page 19 of this biography, without injustice to his opponents, and indirectly to himself. This note is here inserted with the author's sanction, who, besides authorizing several minor corrections in the present edition of his work, desires it to be stated, with regard to an alteration of more importance at pp. 26 and 27, that he has modified his views presented in the first edition concerning the older and the modern Unitarians, recognizing the justice of certain observations which had been made to him upon the actual facts of the case.]

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

Birth of Theodore Parker—His family—His domestic education—The little tortoise—The little fairy—Readings—The Whortleberry Bible—Entrance at Harvard College—Hard times at Boston—Better weather at Watertown—Fine days begin to dawn—Miss Lydia Cabot.

Theodore Parker was born the 24th of August, 1810, at Lexington, in Massachusetts, where his family, of the old Puritan stock, which originally belonging to Yorkshire in England, had emigrated to America in 1635, was settled at the beginning of the 18th century. His grandfather distinguished himself as a soldier in the Canadian war, at the capture of Quebec, and more especially in the war of American independence. He displayed even a true heroism in the battle of Bunker's Hill, which commenced the sanguinary struggle wherein the American Union was to come forth so gloriously triumphant. His father, who was 50 years old in 1810, united, as did so many cultivators of New England, solid information to great manual dexterity. More of a mechanic than a farmer, and possessing remarkable skill in mathematics, he constructed for his neighbours "wheels, pumps, and farming gear." He was also a great reader, very fond of the Bible, although somewhat sceptical as to miracles, and a warm friend of popular education, which he endeavoured to extend as much as possible in the rustic circle of which he was one of the most valued oracles. He was one of those cold and strong men, thoroughly honest, who never

hesitate between duty and interest, and whose memory is a source of ceaseless benediction to their children when they too are engaged in the battle of life. His wife, not less zealous in the performance of duty, was nevertheless very different in character. Graceful, delicate, adroit as a fairy, and charitable as a saint—such is the portrait of her left us by her son, who lost her when quite young, and who fondly cherished her memory. Very often in his dreams he thought of her fine blue Puritan eyes, dark, pure, austere, but all bright with love for her Benjamin; for Theodore was the youngest of eleven children.

The Parkers were Unitarians, as so many other descendants of the *Pilgrim Fathers* at Boston and in the whole of New England. It is known that Unitarianism is that branch of Protestantism which has for its fundamental principle the doctrine of the absolute unity of God. Resting on this basis Unitarians reject the doctrine of the Trinity, which teaches that God is one, and nevertheless exists in three distinct persons, equal and coeternal. They accordingly acknowledge only the Father as God, consider the Holy Spirit to be his power, his action in man's soul, not a person, and assign to the Son a subordinate rank. In general, their theology has a less tragical and more optimist character than the other Protestant systems. This dogmatic system however had occasioned no marked change in the way in which the Parker family lived. They continued faithful to the simple and laborious existence of their ancestors. Theirs was a busy household. Children had come in great number. The good old grandmother was still alive—more than 80 years of age. She was seen to come down-stairs every day at dinner hour, and solemnly take at table the place of honour which was reserved for her. After the meal, she took to her knitting, except on Sundays. On that day she read her old Quarto Bible, the Oxford Edition, which she had received from her husband, who himself had bought it for the price of more than one load of hay, delivered at Boston. The original edition of the Puritan Hymn-book was also much in her hands. "It was," says Theodore, "a part of my childish business to carry the drink to my venerable grandmother twice a day, at 11 A. M. and 4 P. M.; this was flip in cool weather, and in spring and summer was toddy or punch—the latter, however, was more commonly reserved for festive occasions."

Notwithstanding these burdens, comparative ease reigned in the house, owing to the sober manner of its life, the persevering industry of the father, who was assisted by his older sons, and the ingenious economy of the mother. The last was the angel of the household. If the father represented its regular and correct prose, she was its poetry. She loved the silent prayer of the heart; the English poets were her favourite authors; she sang popular songs to her children, and took the greatest care of their moral education. During the long evenings of winter, Mr Parker read to his wife and children instructive extracts, on which he commented with perspicuity and good sense. A fact to be noted is, that all the family, the females no less than the males, read the local newspapers. All this breathed a spirit of propriety and self-respect. It was a Protestant family of the olden time, a little self-absorbed, but eager for knowledge and open to light, in which the father is the priest and the mother the confessor, while all are united, contented, peaceful. Those who hold that moral dispositions are hereditary, may find a confirmation of their views in this sketch of the Parker family. In reality they will find in Theodore, by the side of scholarship which he only had opportunity to acquire, the practical sense of the father, the poetical and mystical inclinations of the mother, and even the

warlike propensities of the grandfather. Moreover, it is easy to see that if the surroundings of the young Theodore did not offer to his earliest years great resources for the development of his intelligence, it was impossible to live in a circle more favourable to the formation of character. His parents endeavoured systematically to unfold in him the faculties whose use most contributes to ripen the judgment, namely, comparison, observation, and habits of decision, arising from acquaintance with our determining motives. He was early taught to consult his own moral and religious sense. "The spirit of free inquiry," he says, "was encouraged in me in all ways and in every sense." He was free to read all the books in the house, but he was not permitted to take a new one until he showed that he understood what he had read in the former. One trait more will complete the picture of this simple and manly training. It comes from his own hand: "During all my childhood I never heard my parents utter one single word which was irreligious or superstitious."

We will also allow him to recount in his own terms an incident of his early life, in which you already discern what he will afterwards be—a man of an imperious and indomitable conscience. "When a little boy in petticoats, in my fourth year, one fine day in spring, my father led me by the hand to a distant part of the farm, but soon sent me home alone. On the way I had to pass a little 'pond-hole,' then spreading its waters wide; a *rhodora** in full bloom, a rare flower in my neighbourhood, and which grew only in that locality, attracted my attention, and drew me to the place. I saw a little spotted tortoise sunning himself in the shallow water at the root of the

* The Canadian Rhodora (Greek *rhodon*, a rose) of the Ericaceæ family, containing, besides the genus Erica, the Azalea, the Rhododendron, the Kalmia, Arbutus, Andromedas, Gualtherias, and many other beautiful genera.

flaming shrub. I lifted the stick I had in my hand to strike the harmless reptile; for though I had never killed any creature, yet I had seen other boys out of sport destroy birds, squirrels, and the like, and I felt a disposition to follow their wicked example. But all at once something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, 'It is wrong!' I held back my uplifted stick in wonder at the new emotion, the consciousness of an involuntary, but inward check upon my actions, till the tortoise and the *rhodora* both vanished from my sight. I hastened home and told the tale to my mother, and asked what it was that told me it was wrong. She wiped a tear from her eye with her apron, and taking me in her arms, said, 'Some men call it conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out little by little, and leave you all in the dark, and without a guide. Your life depends on heeding this little voice.' She went her way, careful and troubled about many things, but doubtless pondered them in her motherly heart; while I went off to wonder and think it over in my poor childish way. But I am sure no event in my life has made so deep and lasting impression on me."

This is a vigorous awaking of conscience in a child, but that child is a little *Yankee*, who, while admiring the inner voice which speaks to him, is quite ready to consider any intervention of a third party in his affairs very impertinent.

At six years he went to school, where, it seems, a certain tendency to practical jokes made him somewhat feared by his companions. With rare perfection he imitated the manners, the language, the gait of others; something of that dangerous talent, often found in per-

sons richly endowed in intelligence, imagination, and sympathy, remained with him at the University and in his public life. Moreover, he became strong and skilful, while he excelled as a patron of small boys that were tyrannized over. At seven he had toward a little girl of the neighbourhood one of those, so to say unconscious, infantine inclinations, more frequent than is thought, the recollection of which remains sweet and fragrant to the end of life.

"I was about seven years old," he once wrote to a friend, Mr George Ripley, "when a very pretty little girl made her appearance at our humble village school. She was from seven to eight years of age. She fascinated me to such a degree that I could no longer look at my books, and I was scolded for not having got my lessons; a thing that had never happened to me before, and that never happened to me again after the departure of the little fairy. She remained only a week with us, and I wept bitterly when she went away. She was so pretty! I dared not speak to her, but I liked to walk round her, like a butterfly round a flower in the fields. She was called Narcissa. She fell into the ocean of time, and disappeared before I had attained my eighth year."

These truly are indications of great precocity, attested moreover by the astonishing rapidity of his physical and intellectual development. At an early age he had to divide his time between school and the labours of the farm. Mr Parker had solid reasons for putting his children to work as soon as might be. This however did not prevent Theodore from being an insatiable reader when only eight years old. He had few volumes at his disposal, but the small number was better than many libraries. He had the Bible, the English poets, his mother's favourites; some Latin and Greek classics, Homer, Plutarch, Virgil, which he read first in translations, but soon in the original, for a Unitarian minister of the neighbourhood,

Mr W. White, noticing his happy dispositions, gave him lessons in Latin and Greek.*

Besides, his father possessed works on mathematics, travels, and Natural History, which he devoured so as to know them by heart. At 10 years of age he had, after his manner, catalogued the Flora of the neighbourhood. At 12 he, one fine night, discovered with his naked eye the crescent appearance peculiar to the planet Venus. Forthwith he everywhere searches for a book on astronomy, and reads it eagerly. Already he surpassed the majority of children brought up in cities, and, like a veritable American, he always invented some ingenious means of supplementing the disadvantage of his position. For instance, he greatly desired to have a Bible for his own use. That of the family was cumbersome and too valuable to be given up to the boy, and he had not a penny of his own toward purchasing one. He was not, however, to be defeated. He went and gathered whortleberries in a neighbouring wood, took them to Boston for sale, and in this way obtained money sufficient to procure for himself a copy of the divine volume. He also found

* The name Jesus, which he remarked in a Catholic cradle hymn, filled him with an intense desire to know the meaning. Almost 40 years after he fell in with it again and translated it thus:

"Dormi, Jesu—mater ridet;
Quæ tam dulcem somnum videt;
Dormi, Jesu, blandule!
Si non dormis, mater plorat;
Inter fila cantans orat,
Blande, veni, somnule!"

"Slumber, Jesus,—mother smileth,
As sweet sleep her babe beguileth;
Darling Jesus, go to sleep!
If art waking, mother mourneth,
Singing as her spindle turneth,
Gently, little slumber, creep."

time to learn French and Spanish. Thus did his youth pass away.

However, in proportion as the young Parkers grew up, the needs of the household went on decreasing, and on the sole condition of not being a burden to his parents, Theodore was enabled to think of the means of entering into some liberal course of life. One evening in the autumn of 1830 he had been absent all the day, and did not return home till midnight. Proceeding at once to the chamber of his aged father, "Father," he said, "I entered Harvard College to-day." This college is a university founded at Cambridge, not far from Boston, where young New Englanders go in great numbers to take their degrees in learning. He had spent the whole day in undergoing the examinations required as preliminaries to admission. The old man was not less disquieted at hearing the announcement than he had been at the prolonged absence of his son. "Why, Theodore," he said, "you know I cannot support you there." "I know that, father, and my intention is to provide the necessary means by giving lessons or opening a school." Indeed his plan was to get out of the difficulty by combining the duties of an educator with the studies in the Academy. This plan was easier to conceive than to execute. It required all his determined energy, all his steadiness of purpose and character, all his ardour in study, to overcome the numberless obstacles which lay on his path. At first he lived at Boston, an under-master in a private school, gaining three or four pounds a month; consecrating the greater part of his nights to study; visiting no friendly domestic circle, no place of recreation; sometimes dejected, melancholy, desirous of death; but still rising from his momentary depressions, recovering courage in his honourable and haughty poverty, and perhaps recalling to mind the old motto of his family: *Semper aude*, Be daring ever. His

health suffered greatly from this excess of effort, and his physical disorder visibly aggravated that of his mind. At last, seeing that he should never realize his purposes at Boston, he removed to Watertown, where, without a penny, without a pupil, he opened a school on his own account. Beginning with two scholars, he soon had more than 50; for pupils under his direction made marvellous progress, an advantage which they owed to the extraordinary affection with which he inspired them toward himself. The only shade in the picture was the pressure exercised by the parents of his young people, to induce him to dismiss a little coloured girl who had been intrusted to his care. The prejudice which still prevails in the States on this point is very strong. Parker blamed himself throughout his life for having yielded to this compulsion. But the question touched the very existence of his school, as yet scarcely founded, and thereby concerned all his hopes; and his ideas as to the duties of the whites toward the blacks had not then the definiteness nor the energy which they afterwards acquired. However, the dawn of a brighter day began to rise for him. Always economical and rigid toward himself even in extreme, he amassed penny by penny the money which would enable him to study at the university as a regular student. The Unitarian minister of the neighbourhood, Mr Francis, an intelligent and well-read man, who afterwards occupied a professional chair at Cambridge, had, at the same time, opened to him his house and his library. Parker, who had learnt German during his stay at Boston, initiated himself in the German literature, especially the theological; studies, so to say, unknown at that time in America, not less than in many another country nearer the Rhine. It was only a few choice spirits that began to suspect that in the German universities an incomparable religious science was being wrought out, which was destined to

* In 1832,

transform all the official theologies. Numerous as were the hours which his school duties demanded, and large as was the tax on his time and energy exacted by his private studies, he yet found leisure to go twice a week to Cambridge to take lessons in Hebrew. What was more pleasant, if not more profitable, he found, or made, a way to fall in love, and to tell his tale to the lady, Miss Lydia Cabot,* a charming young person, of remarkable beauty, who also gave instructions in the little town, and was his co-worker in the Sunday School.

A pleasing incident in the life of this young man was the interview which he had with his aged father in order to impart to him his matrimonial intentions. Parker has himself reported it in a letter to his betrothed:

"Watertown, Tuesday eve, Oct. 30, 1833.

"I walked to father's; he soon returned from church, and I caught him in the garden, and informed him of the 'fatal' affair, if you will call it so. The tear actually started to his aged eye. 'Indeed?' said he. Indeed, I replied, and attempted to describe some of your good qualities. 'It is a good while to wait,' he observed. Yes, but we are young, and I hope I have your approval. 'Yes, yes! I should be pleased with any one you would select;—but, Theodore,' said he, and the words sank deep into my heart, 'you must be a good man and a good husband; which is a great undertaking.' I promised all good fidelity, and may Heaven see it kept!"

There were now a few moments of relaxation every day. He discovered that the banks of the Beaver Creek, the aged oaks which overshadow it, and the surrounding hills, formed the finest landscape in the world. The flowers gathered in rural excursions were brought home not merely from the love of botany. But the small lamp of the indefatigable student only burnt on the farther into the night. At last Parker saw himself in possession of a small capital just sufficient to pass the required time at the University.

* The Cabot family is old and honoured in Massachusetts. Its members trace back their genealogy to the famous navigator, Sebastian Cabot.

† He entered the Cambridge Divinity School in April, 1834.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

Religion of the Parker family—Unitarianism—Its advantages—Parker's final rupture with Calvinism—Timidities and darings—What he did at the University—*Old Paul*—Condition of religious progress—What tradition and criticism said of the Bible—History of Dogmas—Religions compared—Miracles—Essential Christianity—Parish of West Roxbury.

We must turn back in order to give some account of the principles and religious development of Theodore Parker.

His parents, we have said, were pious Unitarians. Their Unitarianism was not narrow or dogmatic. From all that is known of Parker's childhood it appears that dogma, properly so called, held very little place in the reading and the conversations of the family. The cold and practical character of the father, the thoughtful and sentimental disposition of the mother, equally contributed to keep at a distance from the domestic horizon what is either purely theoretical or stereotyped. The Bible was read; public worship was frequented; but alike in that sacred book and in the weekly services, what was sought for was what went to the heart, what enlightened the conscience, what spake to the soul of God. The rest was of small consequence. Admirably counselled and directed in regard to morals, the young Theodore was pretty much left to himself in the matter of religious doctrine; but his youthful reflection soon turned to that domain which

called forth a desire for knowledge surpassing every other. It followed that his religious beliefs were formed step by step with his general culture, and not without receiving an unavoidable influence from surrounding traditions, although he never saw in them a yoke to which he must of necessity bend his neck. "My head," he has somewhere said, "is not more natural to my body than my religion is to my soul." As soon as he began to think he felt an unutterable horror at the idea of everlasting punishment, which he had seen set forth in an old catechism, and it was a delightful relief to him when he learnt that there were excellent Christians who did not believe in the doctrine. He listened with rapture to what his mother said to him of the beauteous character of Jesus. His loved companions, the flowers and the stars, soon told him the impressive tale of the glory of God. He was specially struck with a feeling of God's infinitude, and he ever experienced an intense joy in the thought of that omnipresence and that boundless activity, which pervade all things, and reveal themselves to the religious mind in every part of the universe. As he approached manhood, his ideas touching the Bible, its inspiration, its miracles, had as yet nothing very definite, and did not rise above the ordinary level of the Unitarian beliefs, in the bosom of which he had been brought up.

This Unitarian education was an immense privilege for the young man. From how many prejudices and narrownesses was he thereby preserved! Unitarianism aspires to give man a religion at once enlightened and favourable to morality, in agreement with the institutions, the liberties, and the new wants of modern society. By its worship, its ethics, its general tone, it is connected with the great church of the Reformation; but while, like it, founding its doctrines on the Bible, it interprets the sacred writings so as to eliminate from the body of its religious instruction the old irrational and contradictory dogmas. Nothing in Unitarianism opposed, on the contrary everything favoured, social and political progress. It spread around its steps a beneficent atmosphere of progressive liberalism and religious toleration. It had no favour for that austere and monkish devotion, endurable perhaps in the bosom of populations which do not hold productive labour in honour; but it firmly maintained the grand principles of Christian morality, which are meant to guide and ennoble a life of labour, and to call forth and cherish the domestic and social virtues. Accordingly in its ranks were recruited the most courageous and influential patrons of great public ameliorations and philanthropic institutions. Whilst, for instance, on the question of slavery, the orthodoxy of the South of the Union, and, in great part, that of the North, became more and more the humble servants of the selfish interests pledged to the maintenance of that horrible institution; whilst, in a superstitious adoration of the letter of the Bible, forgetting that if the letter of the Gospel utters no formal word against slavery, its spirit condemns the vile practice peremptorily, they did not blush to put the barbarous system under the protection of the sacred books;—it was specially in the bosom of Unitarianism that the abolitionist ferment arose, which, though long despised, is now the first power in the Union. This Unitarian Church, large and progressive, liberal and earnest, saw its adherents every day increase in number in New England, and there, when it did not supplant other Churches, it kept alive a permanent centre of liberalism and reform, which radiated over the religious world. Thus indirectly Unitarianism has exercised very great influence on religion in America, and it would be a great error to take the official number of its adherents for the full measure of its actual progress. By little and

little a large number of Universalist churches, also Baptist and Presbyterian, received the leaven of Unitarian liberalism, and were gradually transformed. Preachers of high merit, such as Henry Ware and the illustrious Channing, accelerated the pacific movement, and, especially the second, compensated the defects of Unitarianism by the diffusive warmth of their heart and character. We have used the word defects: and, in truth, by the side of the excellent philanthropic spirit which distinguished the American Unitarians, there were serious shortcomings, which could not fail to become more manifest as its influence grew. Theologically their Unitarianism was richer in good intentions than in results. Many enlightened men who felt the want of a simple practical religion, and could no longer tolerate the yoke of the old orthodoxy, breathed at their ease in that softer and freer atmosphere. It may be a question whether religion, in becoming more gentle, did not part with some of its robustness. A certain dryness, an illogical and utilitarian rationalism, occasioned regret for the irrational, but nevertheless imposing and impressive, dogmas of traditional orthodoxy. Deism, with its blights and frosts, showed its head in many quarters. Mysticism, that element inseparable from all living religion, and perfectly legitimate so long as, confining itself to the sphere of sentiment, it does not pretend to tyrannize over reason and conscience—found itself reduced in Unitarianism to the condition of an angel whose wings had been clipt. Philosophy and Biblical criticism it wholly lacked, as did the whole of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism of that period. The sensualism of Locke reigned in the theological school of both "Old England" and New. As this system reduced the human soul to a state of complete passiveness, as logically it issues in either materialism or scepticism, and yet does not disown the interior voices of the soul, which loudly call for beliefs,

duties, and hopes, its partisans commonly took refuge in the idea of an external and miraculous revelation, which imposed itself on man with the arbitrariness of absolute authority. Thus Unitarianism, so liberal in matters of dogma, remained riveted to the supernatural point of view and to the ancient ideas concerning the miraculous origin and authority of the Bible. It was as skilful as orthodoxy in bending, at its pleasure, the texts of Scripture which ill accorded with its particular doctrines, and if some evil genius had resolved that the Athanasian creed should be in the Bible, its theologians would certainly have undertaken to prove that the document did not teach the Trinity. Such, with its advantages and disadvantages, was the theological position whose most eminent representatives Parker was to find at Cambridge. In addition, he obtained an opportunity of closely studying the old Calvinistic orthodoxy, which was still the faith of the majority, and which, owing to immigration from Europe, especially of English blood, every day received considerable reinforcements, which amply compensated its losses. In his childhood and around his father's house, he had become acquainted with honourable supporters of the ancient faith of the Pilgrim Fathers. During his sojourn in the capacity of tutor at Boston, he had assiduously attended the orthodox preachings of Lyman Beecher, then in all the brilliancy of his talent. "One year of that preaching," he said, "was enough to put an end in me to all the influence which the Calvinistic theology might exercise over my mind." The dark sides of that doctrine, which sets forth God as arbitrarily predestinating some individuals to salvation and the immense majority of the human race to eternal damnation, were always deeply offensive to him. Nevertheless, he did not himself yet suspect the consequences of the resolution he had formed to seek religious truth in complete independ-

ence. In becoming, under Dr Francis, acquainted with German literature and theology, he had been surprised, and even shocked, at the liberty of thought and speech which in Biblical matters prevailed in those unknown regions, and which contrasted so forcibly with the profound, scrupulous, and easily superstitious respect which, like all the Protestant American Churches, the Unitarian Church professed for the Bible and the whole of its contents. When he began to read Eichhorn's "Introduction to the Old Testament," he fell on his knees and besought God to keep him from being misled in his search after truth, by the reasonings of unbelievers. We possess a summary of the religious opinions he then entertained, addressed by himself to one of his nephews, Columbus Greene.

"Cambridge, April 2, 1834.

"You inquire about my belief. I believe in the Bible. Does that satisfy you? No, you will say; all Christians profess to do the same, and how different they are.

"To commence, then: I believe there is *one* God, who has existed from all eternity, with whom the past, present, and future are alike present; that He is almighty, good, and merciful, will reward the good and punish the wicked, both in this life and the next. This punishment *may be* eternal;* of course, I believe that neither the rewards nor punishments of a future state are corporal. Bodily pleasures soon satiate, and may God preserve us from a worse punishment than one's own conscience!

"I believe the books of the Old and New Testament to have been written by men inspired of God for certain purposes, but I do not think them inspired *at all times*. I believe that Christ was the Son of God, conceived and born in a miraculous manner, that he came to preach a better religion by which men may be saved.

"This religion, as I think, allows men the very highest happiness in this life and promises eternal felicity in another world. I do not think our sins will be forgiven because Christ died. I cannot conceive why they should be, although many good and great men have thought so. I believe God knows all that we shall do, but does not *cause* us to do anything."

* In this confession of faith, evidently inspired by a fear of wounding, Parker by the *possibility* of eternal punishment means such as would ensue from a voluntary and eternal continuance in sin.

In this exposition of his beliefs, the doctrines of orthodoxy are softened down, or reduced to their *minimum*, if they are not completely eliminated. The Trinity is represented only by the miraculous birth of Jesus. The inspiration of the Bible is not uninterrupted, consequently it is not absolute; whence it follows that conscience must decide what portions of it cannot pretend to that prerogative. The dictatorial authority of the Bible is then virtually set aside. The reader will also have noticed the utilitarian and optimist tone of this creed. This is a feature that Parker owed to the whole of his education, to his own frank and robust nature; he will preserve the quality, but he will also ennoble it by a most elevated spiritualism. We must now follow the transformations that his faith underwent in proportion as the field of his studies enlarged.

At the university, as at Boston and Watertown, he was the most indefatigable of workers. His industry went to such an extent that at the end of some months he had got in advance of the greater number even of his teachers. He excelled in the exercises of discussion, but did not yet promise to be the brilliant orator he afterwards became:—a fact not at all surprising. Preaching as an academical exercise, before an imaginary auditory, is, for the Protestant student in theology, what the *Messe blanche*,* with the host unconsecrated, is for the young Catholic Levite. Parker was a great orator the moment when preaching became with him a conflict, a battle without quarter. The sarcastic side of his character freely showed itself in his youthful exercises. One day, when

* Messe blanche (literally *White Mass*) is an exercise in saying or performing Mass by which the candidate for the Catholic priesthood is taught the due and formal discharge of his duty, when in orders. The essential difference is that in the *White Mass* the wafer is taken without receiving the divinizing and transmuting power of consecration. T.

the not very reverent appellation *Old Paul* escaped from his lips, as he spoke of the Apostle to the Gentiles, he replied to the professor, who rebuked the offender; "Yes, sir, you are right, I should have said 'the gentleman of Tarsus.'"

But we must not judge of his real dispositions by this momentary outburst, which was connected with a growing dislike he had for mere conventionalisms. There is a manner of citing *Paul the aged* (Phil. 9) which denotes a profound and therefore respectful study of the writings of the first of Church Reformers, more than complimentary invocations in honour of the canonized *Saint*. We readily grow familiar with grandeurs which we examine minutely and much; and Parker examined everything much, and ever more minutely. He read the Fathers, enjoyed the best literature of the Mystics, made himself acquainted with the history of dogmas and the ancient religions, gathered around him the best German expositors, and eager always to widen the circle of his studies, and seeing the universe enlarge as he knew it more and more, he succeeded in carrying on, side by side with the study of theology, the study of half a score of languages dead and living. His health again suffered from the excess of labour he imposed on himself. Sometimes a cherished hand (the reader will guess to whom it belonged) sent to him from Watertown entreaties (which in such a case are sweet commands) that he would not compromise his future by undue efforts. For a few days obedience was the result, but his passion for knowledge and for clear insight, what may be termed *Yankee go-aheadness*, resumed the mastery. However, while thus exploring history and the universe, he acquired a vast amount of knowledge.

Your horizon cannot widen without elevating your ideal. It would be easy to show that all the principal religious ascents of the human race have coincided with a

notable enlargement of the intellectual horizon. The most elevated Greek philosophy came into existence after events had brought the Greeks into contact with the East. The Judaism of the times which preceded Christ was formed, not under the dictation but in the midst, and at the impulse more or less direct, of Persian and Greek influences. Christianity comes forth at the moment when the ancient world, till then split up into nationalities indifferent if not hostile to each other, acquires a knowledge of itself, and when national partialities began to disappear in a community of subjection and endurance under the yoke of Rome. The Reformation had for its mother the new spirit, full of independence and hardihood, which antiquity had laid open, great discoveries, acquaintance with the world increased more than threefold, breathed into modern Europe. And in our own days, when geographical, scientific, and industrial discoveries are changing the face of society, we witness a fresh evolution of the imperishable Christian idea. The reason of these coincidences is simple. Religious progress is accomplished only by means of a certain enfeeblement of the forces of tradition. As long as it speaks alone, tradition stamps on all its lessons the seal of the eternal and the universal, the appearance of the absolute; hence its religious potency, for the seal of the absolute is an attestation of divinity. Nothing then more surely damages its authority than to discover that what was thought a reality is but an appearance. I am very far from thinking that the study of languages and religions, the fine investigations of astronomy and geology, the modern researches of historical and Biblical history, must detach us from the Gospel, and make us desire a religion absolutely new. On the contrary, I hold that if anything pleads in favour of the religion of Jesus, it is that it remains intact and uninjured, at least as to its essential principles, while facts,

ideas, minds, and institutions change all around it. But in view of all that is now known of the world and its history, I say that all the old theology is destined to be reformed, all the old methods of presenting and defending the divinity of the Gospel are convicted of impotence, all the old dogmas are threatened with death, and that those only are the intelligent friends of Christianity who, discerning the signs of the times, labour, according to their strength, to bring it into harmony with the spirit of its Founder and with the imperative needs of modern culture.

Such nearly was the course which the thoughts of Parker followed in the degree in which human and divine things unfolded themselves to his mind enamoured of truth. We have stated that American Unitarianism, far in advance of other Churches in relation to dogmas properly so called, yet moved on the same level as they in regard to an external and miraculous revelation, imposing its authority on reason and conscience, and contained exclusively in the Bible. It was by interpretations now very legitimate, now very arbitrary, that it flattered itself to put to silence the protests of the moral sense and of enlightened intelligence. Indeed, Biblical criticism, already completely emancipated in Germany, was still in its infancy among the Unitarians of America. Parker, who read the Germans, soon felt himself restrained by the theories of his professors, who still dealt with the Bible as a uniform and invariable whole, without giving due heed to the circumstances which had presided over the drawing-up, the revisal, and the putting together, of the books of which it at present consists.

Tradition said, "The Bible is one, it is God's revelation to humankind, it is a supernatural book which, from its first to its last line, is God's word." Criticism had a reply to make. Firstly, even were it so, in order that the

Bible which people now read may be an infallible book, the translations of it must be infallible, and the scholars who read it in the original tongues must be of one mind, instead of being divided and undecided, as to the meaning of many an important passage. Then we must possess this miraculous text in its primitive integrity, without the shadow of a variation, whereas the variations known to exist in the manuscripts are counted by myriads. But —and this deserves special attention—tradition seems to have forgotten that, in the Christian economy, the Bible is neither a primitive fact nor a simple fact, defying analysis. The Bible as now in our hands is composed of two distinct parts, the Old Testament (or Covenant) and the New; the former, the regulative source of the Jewish religion; the latter, the primeval record of Christianity in its earliest years. But the first is made up of 39 books, which came into existence at different dates extending over many centuries; the second consists of 27 books, which, agreeing in their principal aim, differ as to their age and authorship. Who put together the elements which form this collection or that? The question remains unanswerable in regard to the Old Testament, which was not rigorously closed when Jesus came into the world. Our ignorance is not much less in regard to the New, the canon of which was not precisely determined until the fifth century, and then only after many variations, after certain writings which it now contains had been long rejected or unknown, and certain others, now excluded from the canon, had long been in possession of an authority equal to that of the canonical books. On what miraculous inspiration did the formers of the canon rely in making their selection? They were liable to error no less than we. How then can you maintain the infallibility of a volume compiled by fallible men?

Something might be said if an attentive examination

of the canonical books justified what they did. By no means is it so. The traditional canon ascribes to Moses five books evidently composed of documents diverse alike in date and spirit, the last of which tells of his death. To the prophet Isaiah prophecies are ascribed which must be divided into two distinct groups, separated the one from the other by an interval of at least 150 years. To King David are ascribed a number of psalms, a majority, if not a great majority, of which are long posterior to their alleged author. To Daniel, who is thought to have lived at the time of the Babylonish Captivity, is ascribed a series of oracles manifestly drawn up under Antiochus Epiphanes. In a similar way, our actual New Testament attributes to the Apostle Paul what is called the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he cannot have written; and to the Apostle Peter, a second epistle, which supposes that, when it was written, the whole of the first Christian generation was dead, 2 Pet. iii. 3—9. These are the most salient facts which criticism has brought to light, and demonstrated so positively that the most fastidious of those who have seriously occupied themselves with the subject, have been compelled to yield to the evidence. If now we pass on to the contents of the books, we find ourselves unable to regard as a continual divine revelation those narratives or those instructions in which it is easy to point out so many astronomical, physical, and historical errors; accounts which contradict each other; miracles decidedly impossible even in the judgment of those who are inclined to believe in miracles; and whose legendary and mythical character forces itself on the assent of every unprejudiced mind; besides those gross ideas of God represented as an imperfect, wrathful, vindictive, and arbitrary being. Moreover, is it fancied that the Bible, or, to put the question more simply, that the New Testament, from one end to another, contains one and the same doctrine? This is what the old Socinians thought, and thence

sprang their way of wresting the Scripture. On this point neither they nor those who followed their system had anything to impute to other Christian sects, all of which exercise their ingenuity in forcing the Bible to speak in the language of their own peculiar dogmas. But with the attentive observer this unity of Biblical doctrine is an illusion. To confine ourselves to the New Testament, the doctrine of the three first Gospels is one, that of the fourth is another; Paul's teachings differ from those of James and those of the Apocalypse. No longer then think of imposing on Christians the doctrine of the Bible, for it has several forms.

The sacred enclosure being thus pierced at more points than one, the advancing waves of criticism soon flooded the whole. The history of Church dogmas will not less powerfully contribute to detach the young theologian from the dogmatic tradition of the past. It has done so in Germany, and with the hand of a master. If the Unitarian finds in the results ampler confirmations of the impeachments made by his denomination against the Trinity, original sin, vicarious redemption; if he sees that he has been completely in the right in declaring that Christianity in itself is altogether independent of these dogmas; that it lived before them, and, in consequence, will live after them; he ought also to acknowledge that the Church of his choice has, not more than others, escaped from the illusion that Christian antiquity was exactly what he is, and he ought to admit that it is vain to desire, at any cost, to take for his model a primitive Church which had its share of grave errors and defects. True Christianity, that which really corresponds to the intentions and the spirit of the master, is a-head, and not in the rear of men of our days. Finally, the comparative study of forms of religion, mythologies, nations, languages, has aroused in the mind of the thinker a question which must altogether renew theology. Christianity, however

superior to all other historical religions, is not by its miraculous origin so separated from them that they are to be contrasted with it purely as falsity with truth. The history of religions presents phenomena which may be called not equal but similar to the phenomena observable in the study of Christianity. Zoroaster, Mahomet, Buddha, are not judged when they are hastily put into the category of dupes or impostors. And when you are led to see that you may classify religions as you classify plants or rocks or animals; when you discover the immanent law of that religious development of our race, which, on this domain as on others, has little by little risen from matter to mind, from the most puerile feticism to the sublimest conception of God, do you not find it surpassingly more reasonable to admit that not only Christianity and Judaism, but also the entire ascensional movement of man in search after God, is the imposing movement of the same inmost force, the ever-living and ever-acting impulse of religious growth? In this point of view, Jesus, the Son of the human race drawn upwards of God, has clearly and emphatically pronounced the word which conscience had before him whispered faintly and inarticulately, and by uttering it aloud he has made a similar utterance easy for all. Such were the doubts, the discoveries, the ideas which grew up in the soul of Theodore Parker during his sojourn in the university. Already, in concert with some friends, he prepared for *The Scriptural Interpreter* articles on the Old Testament in which you could discern the influence which German critics began to exercise over serious and independent minds. Thus, for example, these new lights demonstrated that the passage in Isaiah, lii. 13—liii., was not a prediction of the person and death of Jesus, but an ideal description of the just man, the servant of Jehovah, such as he was during the captivity in Babylonia. In general

they made it clear that the prophecies in the Old Testament referred to Jesus, lacked all validity, considered as miraculous predictions. In the ranks of the old Unitarians this called forth a cry of surprise, which soon deepened into terror. They asked not, "Are these young men right or wrong?" but, "What will become of us?" "What will be left if they go on in this way?"

Such appeals could not daunt those hardy investigators. However, Parker had not yet systematized his theological ideas. Many things remained with him in a chaotic state. For instance, as to the supernatural, he had not yet, as he tells us, the idea of God which he entertained later on, and which, once acquired, made a real miracle as impossible in his judgment as a triangular circle. Nevertheless from this time his belief in the Biblical miracles went on decreasing. Indeed the more he held the pages of the Bible over the torch of a free criticism, the more he became convinced that not a single miracle was so attested as to demand that men should subordinate their daily experience to its authority—an authority only such as could belong to a writer perhaps inexact, perhaps ill-informed, perhaps deluded by his own enthusiasm. Full of admiration for the heroic virtues and the incomparable moral beauty of the Christ, he declared that to assign them to an extra-human birth and nature as their cause, was to take from them all their value. The miraculous birth of Jesus is doubtless contained in two of the Gospels. But the other two, as well as the rest of the New Testament, know nothing of it, and the Gospels themselves which report it contain other particulars by which it is contradicted. Then a grand idea took possession of Parker's mind ever more and more, namely, that of the absolute perfection of God, and this idea became with him a touchstone by which to try religious doctrines. Finally, plunging to the bottom of that

tumultuous sea of opinions of all kinds which dash against and destroy each other, his judicious and practical spirit sought for the solid and permanent ground on which to cast anchor, and found it in this, that there is nothing better for any one, that there cannot be a more imperative obligation, than to obey the law of one's nature, that is, in the case of man, the law of our spiritual nature. To be good and to do good from faith in the Heavenly Father is the Christian sentiment properly so called; there is nothing superior to that either on earth or in heaven, and this is the ultimate foundation on which to build. Accordingly this was the basis which Parker deliberately chose.*

Meanwhile the years of his theological noviciate drew near their termination. He shortly preached as a candidate for the ministry, and became known in several places, waiting until a vacant pulpit placed him in a

* We must not think that the religious sentiment with Parker was enfeebled by his free and persevering investigations. We shall have more occasions than one to observe that his originality and power were characterized by a union of mysticism and rationalism, both apprehended on their legitimate side. It is in 1836 that he composed these fine lines:

"Jesus! there is no dearer name than thine,
Which time has blazon'd on his mighty scroll;
No wreaths nor garlands ever did entwine
So fair a temple of so vast a soul.
There every virtue set his triumph-seal;
Wisdom conjoin'd with strength and radiant grace,
In a sweet copy heaven to reveal,
And stamp perfection on a mortal face.
Once on the earth wert thou, before men's eyes,
That did not half thy beauteous brightness see;
E'en as the emmet does not read the skies,
Nor our weak orbs look through immensity,—
Once on the earth wert thou, a living shrine,
Wherein conjoining dwelt the good, the lovely, the divine."

settled position. This occurred in 1836. He divided his time between itinerant preachings, which procured him repute, and theological labours carried on with ardour. Then it is that he formed the design of putting out a translation of De Wette's *Introduction to the Old Testament;* at that time the best work of the kind. With the candour of a young man who believes that every one is, as much as himself, disposed to turn toward the light, he anticipated much good from the progress of really sound theology. He specially desired by that means to destroy in well-informed minds that bibliolatry which held so many under its sway. He was afterwards compelled to admit that he had been much misled in his calculations. In that hope however he gave himself, with characteristic eagerness, to the labour of translation, enriching the work with a mass of notes collected by himself, and sometimes correcting the original. About the same time he had the pain of losing his aged father. The gentle and pious companion of the venerable man had gone to the tomb a few years before. The memory of the two remained embalmed in the noble heart of their son. Traces of the reverent affection often appear in his religious discourses. In 1837, the small Unitarian Church of West Roxbury, lying a small distance from Boston, chose Parker for their minister. The community consisted of some 60 families, for the most part living in moderate ease; some were rich and well educated. The pastoral duties were not absorbing. The country was fine. The cure, of a charming simplicity, was buried in verdure, and according to a custom not unknown in Protestant districts, the minister had free access into the gardens of the neighbourhood. His taste for meditation in the open fields or in the midst of flowers, which he loved passionately, found there full satisfaction. He could easily go thence to Boston, and

profit there by the last words of Dr Channing, whose house he frequented. His people listened with pleasure to his sermons, full of originality, poetry, and applications to their simple and decent mode of life. In this fragrant retreat he established himself with his dear Lydia, now become his life-companion.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS CRISIS.

Parker's religious teachings—A storm arises—Heresies of the Unitarian minister — An incendiary Sermon — Parker black-balled — A model deacon—The Boston Resolution—Conferences—Of religion in general —God—Immortality—Jesus Christ—The Bible—Churches—Necessary truth.

We here transcribe a portion of a letter addressed by Theodore Parker, on the 10th of August, 1838, to one of his friends, Mr W. Silsbee. The reader will find in it a statement, traced by Parker himself, of his method as a preacher, and of the religious views at which he had arrived.

"You ask me what effect my speculations have on my practice. You will acquit me of boasting when I say, the most delightful—better than I could hope. My preaching is weak enough, you know, but it is made ten times the more spiritual and strong by my views of nature, God, Christ, man, and the Sacred Scriptures. In my religious conversation I tell men religion is as necessary as bread to the body, light to the eye, thought to the mind. I ask them to look into their hearts, and see if it is not so. They say I tell them the doctrine of common sense, and it is true. Questions are often asked on the heretical points. I tell men that Moses and the writers of the Old Testament had *low* views of God, but the best that men could have in those times. They understand it, and believe the New Testament account of God. In regard to Christ, they see a beauty in his character when they look upon him as a man who had wants like theirs, trial, temptation, joys and sorrows like their own, yet stood higher than the tempter, and overcame in every trial. They see the same elements in themselves. I dwell mainly on a few great points, viz., the nobleness of man's nature, the lofty ideal he should set before him, the degradation of men at this time, their low aims

and worthless pleasures; on the necessity of being true to their convictions, whatever they may be, with the certainty that if they do this, they have the whole omnipotence of God working for them, as the artist brings the whole power of the river to turn his wheel. Also I dwell on the character and providence of God, and the exactness and beauty of his laws, natural, moral, and religious. My confidence in the Bible is increased. It is not a sealed book, but an open one. I consider there are three witnesses of God in creation. 1. Works of nature; these do not perfectly reveal him, for we cannot now understand all its contradictions. 2. The words of our fellow-men; this confirms all the wisdom of all the past; it includes the Sacred Scriptures. Parts of it differ vastly in degree from other writings but not in kind. 3. The infinite sentiments of each individual soul. Now, I lay stress on the first, but more on the second, and still more on the third; for a man may have just as bright revelations in his own heart as Moses, or David, or Paul; I might say as Jesus, but I do not think any man ever has had such a perfect God-consciousness as he. Men no more understand his words than they can do his miracles. "Be perfect as God," do they know what this means? No, no. My confidence in the gospel is immeasurably increased. I see it has meaning in its plainest figures. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant,"—what meaning! It will be understood 1000 years hence, not before. But I see the gospel is human, but almost infinitely above present humanity. I feel bound to communicate my views just so fast and so far as men can understand them,—no farther. If they do not understand them when I propound them, the fault, I think, is mine and not theirs. I often find it difficult to make myself understood." *

Parker's early days at West Roxbury were perfectly calm. His ideas, though new and bold, were gladly received; his charming character and his serious disposition gained him all hearts. Gradually however this idyl gave place to a drama. It may indeed be doubted whether Parker could have been long satisfied with so peaceful a manner of life. His need of activity, the consciousness he had of his abilities and of the good he was able to achieve for his country, the feeling that to produce a religious reformation you must labour in the centre of men enlightened and prepared by their moral wants for such a work, —all conspired to raise in him a desire to exercise his

* Parker's Life and Correspondence, by Weiss, vol. i. pp. 110, 111.

powers on a theatre more spacious than that of West Roxbury. You may even trace in his Journal some signs of dejection, of melancholy evidently engendered by the monotony and relative inconsiderableness of the life which passed under his eyes. But soon a storm arose in that calm atmosphere.

For two years he had had in the drawer of his study table two sermons touching contradictions which exist in the Bible. Only after having consulted friends and persons of experience, who for the most part, it must be said, would rather he left them where they were, did he resolve to preach those compositions. To his great surprise and to his great joy he found that his hearers were no way shocked, even those who did not completely sympathize with him. It sometimes happens to preachers, led by faith in timid conservatives whom they consult, to represent to themselves the mass of people as more distant than they really are from liberal principles. Great however was the noise occasioned among the Biblical Unitarians. Besides, Parker frequently spoke of his hope that the future would see other Christs arise, superior to him whom we owe to the past. I suspect that in this matter his utterance was more paradoxical than his thought. What he meant to express was his faith in the future progress of the human race, and he spoke as if he had been jealous of the perfection which the past might bequeath to the future. Perhaps with more reflection he would have avoided the infelicitous manner of formulating a truth which certainly would not be denied by him who said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father," John xiv. 12. There are in the field of genius, and specially of religious inspiration, grandeurs which cannot be measured, and which consequently defy com-

petition. Let us also ask if man has not a determined career to run in his history here below, and if in virtue of laws presiding in his inmost nature, certain individual grandeurs must remain without rival, whatever progress may be accomplished by the mass. But this manner of viewing a question, in itself purely speculative and without actual consequences, made a great number of Parker's co-religionists start back in alarm, and it began to be the fashion in the aristocratic circles of Boston to pronounce judgments perfidiously pitying "the poor infidel" of West Roxbury.

There were other complaints. Parker sent forth the doctrine that the divinity of Christianity reposes entirely on its moral and religious value, and that the proof drawn from miracles is radically powerless. On every side the advocates of miracle manifested hostility to those two positions with a kind of concentrated anger, aware that miracles, which prove nothing, are useless, and that useless miracles are speedily eliminated from consciousness and history. Parker published an excellent critique on the famous book of Strauss, The Life of Christ, pointing out with equal impartiality and penetration its good qualities and its defects, but hardly any one around him understood what the German critic had undertaken or accomplished, so that Parker obtained no credit for the superiority of his point of view, or the moderation with which he set it forth. In other articles he had sown German ideas on philosophy, the immanence of God in the world and in history, the mythical elements of the Bible. These ideas caused him to be ranked with Pantheists and Spinosaists, by persons who had not even a tinge of the special studies necessary for an enlightened appreciation of such questions. A number of his brother ministers declared that they would not admit him into their pulpits. American Unitarianism, like so many other

religious and political parties reduced to impotence, dared not follow out to the end the principle of free faith which constitutes its vitality. After having suffered so much from the disdain, the ignorance, and the narrowness of the less enlightened Churches of tradition, now that it had acquired for itself a large and open field, and had to some extent extorted respect and consideration from the other sects, instead of working for the development of its liberal principles, the Unitarian Church of the United States condescended to borrow from its rivals the rusty arms of their intolerance, and aimed not so much at refuting Parker as gagging him; fancying that thus it would maintain peace, while it saw not that it was only silence it gained, and that questions once mooted must and will be debated until they are resolved. Moreover, in the Protestant Church, especially in America, to desire silence is not necessarily to secure it. The mere fact of the exclusive proceedings taken against Parker drew on him, and the doctrinal points he had raised, the attention of many who, but for that, would have thought neither of the man nor his theology. The spark was put to the powder by a sermon preached at Boston on the 13th of May, 1841. It took place at the ordination of a young minister. To Parker was assigned the office of addressing the neophyte. He availed himself of the occasion to unfold his views on Christianity, especially distinguishing its transient elements from its permanent ones.* Under the former head he arranged many things which traditional theology considered as the very columns of the temple, and notwithstanding the care he took not so much to attack directly the beliefs which he no longer held, as to show that they were unimportant in regard to a real and positive piety, he yet called forth alarm and hostility, and

* See the extract at the end of the volume, under the title "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity."

soon came to be looked on as one of the most dangerous revolutionists. A violent controversy ensued, in which Parker, almost left alone, had to bear up against a crowd of attacks and imputations, which came from all parts of the horizon. Yet in all the vigour of his youth, with a clear sense that what he had done was morally right, revolted at the refusal of what he thought justice, and at calumnies and disregard of truth from old associates; moreover naturally inclined to take revenge by irony and sarcasm, Parker did not preserve in the conflict the calm and the moderation always to be desired. It must also be said that moderation, everywhere too rare, is not exactly an American virtue, when political or religious questions are under discussion. After all, let us own that religious reforms are not to be achieved by compliments. There are moments when you are obliged to tell Pharisees that they are Pharisees, and to cast into the flames the bulls which send you to burn everlastingly in hell.

We shall not enter into the details, now devoid of interest, of a controversy which for months occupied the daily and periodical press of Massachusetts, to say nothing of numberless minor publications in which heated partisans rushed forwards as if to expose their ignorance of the questions at issue. A sort of moral terrorism was organized against Parker, to which the timidity of some contributed quite as much as the passions of others. Ere long all the Unitarian pulpits, except some half-score, were closed against Parker, throughout the whole of New England. His hearers at West Roxbury, who had attended on his public services for four years, and had readily grown habituated to heresies (as they were called) in which they found moral and religious aid and profit, remained quite faithful, in spite of all the attempts made to alienate them from their pastor. Specially were they pleased with his frankness. We cite by way of proof, the

reflections of one of his deacons, named Farrington, an excellent man, the like of whom we would gladly see increase.

"Mr Parker makes a distinction between religion and theology; it is a sound distinction. We like his religion; it is exactly what we want; we understand it; and this religion is the principal thing. About the theology we are not quite so clear; much of it is different from what we used to learn. But we were taught many foolish things. Some of his theology we are sure is right; all of it seems like good common sense; and if some of it does seem a little strange, we are contented to have him preach just what he thinks; for, if he began by not preaching what he believed, I am afraid he would end by preaching at last what he did not believe."* This "wise old deacon," as he was called by his minister, from whom that minister confessed to have "learned a great many things," may be considered as the organ of the middle direction of opinion in the little community. The proportions which the struggle had taken naturally augmented Parker's desire to labour in the reformatory work he had undertaken, in a more ample field. The friends of progress in Boston who were not affrighted by the crusade preached against a theologian more laborious than others, whose sole crime was that he had frankly put his religious teaching into harmony with his knowledge and his conscience, were not disposed to allow that courageous voice to be extinguished. They held a meeting for deliberation, and unanimously adopted this motion:

"Resolved: *that the Rev. Theodore Parker be heard at Boston.*" †

Parker gave a favourable answer to this call, which opened to him the intellectual and commercial capital of

* Weiss, vol. ii. 305.

† Jan. 1845. This was after his visit to Europe related in the next chapter. The lectures presently referred to were delivered in Boston while he was still the minister at Roxbury.

New England. He went, and was received with sympathy such as surpassed his expectation. Never with impunity does the obscurantist spirit succeed in getting the upper hand in a Protestant community. The Churches, which may be traced back to the Reformation, have doubtless their narrownesses, their times of exhaustion or stagnation, but their origin cannot be forgotten by all their members, and the feeling that the ground and justification of their existence is freedom of religious life and teaching, always succeeds in the end in asserting its legitimate rights. The lectures delivered in Boston in the winter of 1841-1842 were published by their author in a volume entitled a "Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion." There you may find a complete exposition of his theological ideas. We shall endeavour to give a brief summary of them in analyzing that remarkable work.*

Book I. ON RELIGION IN GENERAL. All human institutions have sprung from a principle inherent in human nature. There is nothing in society but what exists in man. Religion is no exception. It is as unreasonable to ascribe it to the artifices of priests and princes, though beyond a doubt they have made ill use of it, as to take the tricks and artifices of tradesmen for the source of commerce. There is then a religious principle in man's nature. To this natural religious principle, which, closely considered, has for its essence the recognition of a perfect infinite Being on whom we depend, an adequate object

* The first edition has for its date 1842. Except that Parker afterwards declared positively against the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, his ideas remained essentially the same to the last. You may judge how truly his was an *advanced* theology by the fact that nearly a quarter of a century since the young theologian of New England professed opinions the recent appearance of which in France was regarded as an unheard-of novelty, and which to-day are only beginning to make for themselves an opening into the most intelligent circles of the Old World.

must correspond. Here is the reason why man believes in God by a spontaneous intuition of his reasonable nature. The arguments ordinarily alleged to prove the existence of God may confirm, but cannot beget this intuition of faith. As to the determinate conception which we form of God, it is necessarily inferior to the reality, the finite not being able to comprehend the infinite. Hence at once the permanence and the universality of the intuitive idea of God throughout history, as well as the innumerable variations in the conception which men have had of God. The frightful abuses which man has so often committed in the name of religion, prove the depth and power of that instinctive tendency of human nature, much more than they make against it. We must not confound religion, which is a fact, with theology, which is the science or explanation of that fact, any more than we must confound the stars with astronomy. Religion has three great historical forms: feticism, polytheism, monotheism. The first is the worship of visible objects. It is the immediate worship of nature, or rather of certain natural phenomena which awaken in the human mind the sense of mystery, or of fear, or of gratitude, &c. It tends to generalize the objects of adoration, until it has made a divinity out of each of the great divisions of visible nature, the heaven, the earth, the sea. This form of religion possesses little moral value, if indeed it has any. Polytheism consists in the adoration of many divinities, produced by the personification of the material and moral forces of the world —the former always yielding more territory to the latter. Notice the opulence of its forms and symbols, its powerful charm, especially in Greece, and its tendency, more or less unconscious, toward either pantheism or monotheism. Under its shadow arises a priesthood with its relative advantages and abuses. War is the normal state of nature and of the human race, as of the divinities one among the

other. Slavery in its origin is a step in advance of war without quarter, and with slavery begins labour, production, involving superfluity, and then commerce. Religion and the state are one, whether the unity is founded on a theocracy or not. Polytheism now arrests, now advances, moral development. It is defective principally in respect of interior and domestic morality, as well as in universal or humanitarian. It inspires very little higher than civic virtues.

With monotheism appear the grand ideas of humankind, equal rights for all, liberty, and an absolute moral ideal. For God only is perfect in wisdom, in love, in will. But here also, indeed here above all, we must revert to the distinction already drawn between the identity of the monotheistic idea through the ages, and the numerous conceptions, so often inferior and even gross, that man forms of the Deity. The primitive monotheism of the Hebrews is still very incomplete, and no way excludes the existence of other gods besides Jehovah. When Jehovah came to be regarded as the only true God, the character ascribed to him was at first very far from perfection. The Old Testament sets him forth in features often little spiritual and venerable. But from Moses to Christ the line of monotheism, always more and more elevated, is prolonged until it reaches the grand and touching conception of "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Certain questions closely connected with religion ask for study. Among others we mention the primeval condition of the human race, and immortality. As to the former, everything concurs to prove that men, whether descended from a single pair or not (the solution of this obscure question in no way changes the moral unity of mankind), began their earthly career in a condition little above animalism. The stories of Eden, of the golden age, and others of a similar kind, are explained by man's tend-

ency to idealize the past, and correspond to nothing real. The kingdom of God is not behind this age or that, but always before.

The doctrine of immortality is nearly as general as faith in God, and, like it, arises from man's tendency toward the infinite. Here too, as in speaking of faith in God, we must distinguish clearly between the idea and the conception of the life to come. The latter, no less than the arguments adduced to prove it, may be very defective. Faith in immortality, at first very vague and sometimes even indirectly denied in several places of the Old Testament, continually gains strength, and becomes more precise from age to age, especially after the era of the captivity in Babylon. Marks of a similar evolution may be traced among other nations. Were the doctrine of the Church true, which devotes to damnation the great mass of mankind, the gift of immortality conferred on our race by its Creator would be a curse much more than a blessing.

Religion, according as it turns into superstition, into fanaticism, or into real piety and the love of God, is either the most formidable of the powers which direct the course of human things, or the grandest, the most salutary, and the most delightful of the Divine benefactions.*

Book II. Relation of the religious sentiment with God. An infinitely perfect God is what the religious sentiment requires. If in declaring that God is personal, you mean that he is superior to the limitations of unconscious beings; if in declaring that he is impersonal you mean that he is superior to the limitations of our personality, you are right. But if in using these two terms you intend to refer to him the limitations of personality, or those of unconsciousness, you are wrong. As God is in-

* See the piece translated at the end of the volume under the title of "Religious Joy."

finite perfection, he must possess omnipotence, omnipresence (immanence), justice, love, holiness. All nature then is a revelation of THE BEING who pervades and governs all things. The forces of nature are his laws or modes of action. Hence the uniformity and stability of the laws of nature.

But God is in man not less than in nature, and just as to every want of each living being God provides in nature an object by which it is satisfied, so he furnishes a natural satisfaction to our religious want. This satisfaction lies in the soul's communion with God by means of the religious sentiment, and in that communion arise the phenomena of inspiration. This point of view puts away not only that naturalistic deism which, separating God from the world, does not admit of any actual relation between God and man, and reduces religion to a form, useful it may be, but empty and cold; but also supernaturalism, which allows no revelation from God to man except by means of miracle. The true conception, that of spiritualism, recognizes the permanent action of God on and in the human soul—an action in virtue of which the soul directly and intuitively perceives rational and moral verities. But inspiration, supposing the co-action of the inspired soul, differs according to races and individuals, both of which may be more or less richly endowed, and employ with greater or less energy the faculties they have severally received. The essential condition of inspiration is that man purely observes the law of his spiritual being. The best man, the wisest, the most religious, is also the most inspired. It is a fault of his religion, or from lack of reflection, that a person thinks himself so remote from God as to need for the resting-place of his faith and hope the authority of either a book or a Church.

Book III. RELATION OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT WITH CHRISTIANITY. Is Christianity the absolute religion, that is, the perfect love of God and man, manifested in a life, in which all the human faculties are harmoniously developed? To answer this question we must recur to the teachings of Jesus himself. So doing, we find ourselves consulting the Gospels. Now the Gospels in no way pretend to that miraculous inspiration which tradition claims in their behalf. Moreover, did they make any such pretension they would be in the wrong, for, in fact, they frequently contradict themselves. Nevertheless, and in spite of what is legendary and mythical in their narratives, it must be admitted that a sublime fact, that is, A DIVINE LIFE, a circle of instruction the most elevated, is the fountain-head of the traditional current which they have collected and still present to the world. Let us leave on one side the fourth Gospel, which is historical neither in itself nor in the intention of its author. Thanks to the synoptical Gospels, that is, the three first, which are so called because they all contain many passages in common, and which may be placed side by side with each other, so as in the main to present one and the same view of the Lord's history; owing to this remarkable fact, and notwithstanding certain variations and divergences as between the accounts when compared together, we are able to reproduce the doctrine taught by Jesus, a doctrine which he confirmed, illustrated, and enhanced by his sublime life, a life the essence of which was a faithful and perfect obedience, in the love of God and the love of man, considered as our highest law and our supreme Good. Nevertheless, alongside of an incomparable sentiment of divine perfection, we meet with words which imply an eternal hell, the personal existence of the devil, the approaching end of the world to take place at the return of the Messiah, borne in triumph on the clouds of heaven. Perhaps we may also be justified in imputing to Jesus certain faults, very excusable indeed, but still certain

faults. Not the less is it true that the principle of the everlasting religion was proclaimed by him, and received in his life magnificent realization. The religion of the spirit, superior to rites, to priests, to dogmas, made its appearance on earth with him, by him, in him. We must not rest the authority of Christ's doctrine on miracles, which are either impossible or attested very insufficiently. The miracles of Saint Bernard would be more admissible than those of Christ were we to decide solely by weighing testimonies. Moreover, if you say that the doctrine proves the miracles, you thereby proclaim their inutility. The authority of that doctrine reposes altogether on its truth.

The excellence of the doctrine taught by Jesus is specially apparent in that it fully authorizes man to advance indefinitely beyond the point where he himself stopped. All that agrees with reason, with conscience, with our religious sentiment, is essentially Christian. The religion of Christ is then a religion of liberty, of continual development, of the ceaseless pursuit after what is better and what is perfect. Another of his superiorities is, that he sets before us not a system but a method of life, that is, obedience to the law written of God on the tablets of our hearts. Still further, his religion is eminently practical, and sets no value on dogmatical confessions or ritual observances, but makes all depend on a loving and holy life. It is a religion of man's every-day existence, of the domestic hearth, of the exchange, of rural solitude, of civic stir, of public enterprise and movement. It knows nothing of vicarious righteousness, and if it shows us a brother praying by our side, it ignores that *attorney* or substitute, pleading with God on our behalf, as well as that guiltless victim which expiates sins he has not committed; both of which are characters invented by the traditional theology.

As far as we are able to restore the portrait of Jesus, after all allowance for inevitable limitations and imperfections, we are compelled to bow before him as before the grandest soul that ever appeared on earth. The evangelical doctrine ascending from the borders of the lake of Galilee to Jerusalem, to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Athens, to Corinth, to Rome, triumphed over all its enemies. But, alas! it was not without loss to its divine purity, that it came into contact with Judaism, paganism, and statescraft. But being everlasting in its principle, it will, in its continual applications, throw off errors found even in Jesus himself, by whom it was proclaimed, and from whom it received life and power.

Book IV. Relation of the religious sentiment with the Bible. The immense and beneficent results of the diffusion of the Bible in the world must have had a proportionate cause. But we must not look for it anywhere else than in the sublimity of the teachings which the Bible contains, and this does not take from us the right to acknowledge and repel the contradictory, absurd, or immoral elements which it also contains. As that of Christianity in general, the authority of the Bible is no other than that of the truth it presents, and which justifies itself before the tribunal of the human conscience. If the Bible does disappear before the breath of criticism, the reason is that it ought to disappear. But disappear it will not, and that on account and in the degree of the truth that is in it.*

Book V. Relation of the religious sentiment with the Church. Jesus did not found a Church. But his religion, like every religion, brought together those who possessed it, and common sympathy toward his person singularly tightened the bonds of that religious associa-

* In order to complete the analysis of this part of the work, refer to what is said, p. 24, *et seq.*

tion. In the beginning liberty sat as a queen in the Christian assemblies. By little and little, the episcopal hierarchy engrafted itself on the republican and democratic organization of the primitive days. With Paul, who endeavours to emancipate Christianity from Jewish forms, a definite form of necessary dogmas is introduced. By degrees servitude, whether in regard to the priest, or in regard to the doctrine formulated by the priest, becomes the rule of the Church. Thence the spiritual and temporal horrors of the Church of the Middle Ages, as well as the legitimacy of the Reformation. The Reformation broke in pieces irreparably the external unity of the Church. Catholicism owes the truth and the force it has to its recognizing the continuity of the revealing and redeeming action of God among men; but its error and its feebleness proceed from its pretending to include that divine action within the circle of its clergy and its creeds and ritual; hence its intolerance, its tyranny, its dread of free inquiry, nor less the backward condition of the populations that are under its rule. The merit of Protestantism lies in having broken that intolerable yoke, and replaced the individual in the position in which Jesus would have him be: that is, in the immediate presence of God. Its demerit consists in desiring to enclose all truth, all inspiration, within the Bible, and as the Bible lies open to several interpretations, in drawing up and imposing forms of religious opinion. Thence the divisions in Protestantism. Its diverse branches, from Calvinism the most sombre to Unitarianism the most large, have all their good qualities and their bad. All are too narrow, too much slaves of the letter of the Bible. Criticism will deliver us from this servitude. The future belongs to spiritualism, which proposes for its supreme object the identity of the will of man with the will of God, and which subordinates all,—Churches, forms of worship,

varieties of religion,—to the great thing, the only necessary one, the sole religion which can be considered everlasting—the love of God and the love of man.

We owed to our readers this condensed analysis of the exposition, so full of movement, which Parker gave of his doctrines to his Boston auditory. How often have we been tempted to substitute for our dry summary a continuous translation. It was impossible to indicate as we went along, the authors referred to in the notes, the incredible number of which shows how much in earnest with his subject Parker was, though branded as a heretic, and how much he was bent on learning the truth before he attempted to teach it to others. I do not propose at this moment to pass his religious views in formal review. If I may express an opinion, I should say that on certain points, *e. g.* the genesis of mythologies, the personal character of Christ, what may be strictly called his doctrine (that is, his doctrine in its original purity), in general the somewhat too hostile way in which the Church of the past is regarded, I am unable entirely to agree with the eminent orator. With these reservations, I do not conceal my ardent sympathy for that assemblage of fine and generous doctrines. Theodore Parker is one of the noble army of God which, each in his age, has fought the good fight of piety united with freedom. The errors that are mingled with his grand and noble views will pass away. But the truth, the eternal splendour of which he has endeavoured to show to all, that truth which the ardent and pure love of the perfection which is in God, and is destined to be in man, is that which is most beauteous and most needful in heaven and on earth, and that truth will not perish, and no one can deny to Parker the glory of having been one of its most powerful preachers.

CHAPTER IV.

VISIT TO EUROPE.

Death of Channing—Association of Unitarian ministers—Religious exclusiveness in America—The health of Parker suffers—Departure for Europe — France — Florence — Rome — Venice — Prague — Berlin — Heidelberg—Wittenberg—Tübingen—A vocation.

It will easily be conceived that, if the complete exposition of his religious views gained Parker adherents in the bosom of the society of Boston, it only vexed his adversaries and added to their number. The venerable Channing, a little surprised by the irruption of new views which surpassed his own, but too thoroughly liberal to enrol himself in the party of compression, died shortly after Parker published his Boston lectures (in the autumn of 1842). Parker felt the loss severely. Perhaps Channing only could have uttered a conciliatory voice which would have been heeded in the midst of the theological excitement. It was proposed to expel the West Roxbury pastor from the association of Unitarian ministers of Boston, and in a sitting at which he was present, he had during several hours to repel accusations, evidently put forward to compel his retirement. Nevertheless, some members manifested sympathy toward his position and character. This brotherly act melted him, and he burst into tears. The following he wrote some days after to one of his friends (Rev. C. Robbins) who was present at the meeting:

"You mistake a little the cause of my tears the other night. It was not a hard thing said by yourself or others. All might have said such as long as they liked; I would not have winked at that. It was the kind things said by Bartol and Gannett, and what I knew by your face you were about to say; it was this that made me weep. I could meet argument with argument (in a place where it is in order to discuss 'the subjects' of a theological book which is talked of), blow with blow, ill-nature with good-nature, all night long; but the moment a man takes my part, and says a word of sympathy, that moment I should become a woman and no man. If Pierpont had been present, I should have asked him, at the beginning, to say no word in defence of me, but as many of offence as he liked. I felt afraid, at first, that a kind thing might be said earlier in the evening, and am grateful to the 'brethren' that they said none such till late.

"But to leave this painful theme. I knew always the risks that I ran in saying what was hostile to the popular theology. I have not forgotten George Fox, nor Priestley; no, nor yet Abelard nor St Paul. Don't think I compare myself with these noble men, except in this, that each of them was called on to stand alone, and so am I. I know what Paul meant when he said, 'At my first answer no man stood with me;' but I know also what is meant when a greater than Paul said, 'Yet I am not alone; for the Father is with me.'

"If my life ends to-morrow, I can say,—

'I have the richest, best of consolations,
The thought that I have given,
To serve the cause of Heaven,
The freshness of my early inspirations.'

I care not what the result is to me personally. I am equal to either fate, and ask only a chance to do my duty. No doubt my life is to be outwardly a life of gloom and separation from old associates (I will not say friends). I know men will view me with suspicion, and ministers with hatred; that is not my concern. Inwardly, my life is, and must be, one of profound peace—of satisfaction and comfort that all words of mine are powerless to represent. There is no mortal trouble that disturbs me more than a moment—no disappointment that makes me gloomy, or sad, or distrustful. All outward evil falls off me as snow from my cloak. I never thought of being so happy in this life as I have been these two years. The destructive part of the work I feel called on to do is painful, but is slight compared with the main work of building up. Don't think I am flattered, as some say, by seeing many come to listen. Nothing makes a real man so humble as to stand and speak to many men. The thought that I am doing what I know to be my duty is a rich reward to me; I know of none so great. Besides that, however, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have awakened the spirit of religion, of faith in God,

in some 20 or 25 men, who before that had no faith, no hope, no religion. This alone, and the expression of their gratitude (made by word of mouth, or made by letters, or by a friend), would compensate me for all that all the ministers in all the world could say against me or do against me. But why do I speak of this? Only to show you that I am not likely to be cast down. Some of my relations, 200 or 300 years ago, lost their heads for their religion. I am called to no such trial, and can well bear my lighter cross."

All who, experiencing the need of sympathy in their daily life, have felt themselves placed in the alternative of losing that deep joy or of failing in duty, will understand what resignation there is in this determined language. Such firmness was necessary to him. From that hour, and during the years which followed his installation at Boston, he was exposed to an opposition which would have discouraged any but him. Charges, insults, threats, hatred from the majority excited by his denunciators, fell on him like an avalanche. Opprobrious words were addressed to him in public by men who had vaunted themselves on his friendship. Prayers were put up in public in many a pious gathering, asking that he might either be converted or punished from on high. People refused, in a way characteristic of American manners, to sit on the same sofa, at the same table, in the same omnibus as he. He was treated as a leper in the Church and in society. For some time there was a veritable coalition against him on the part of the press, patronized by rich and influential coteries. Everywhere his writings were shunned. During several months no bookseller could be found in all the Union to print and publish his works. At last a Swedenborgian printer of New York undertook the venture. Not only the University of Boston dared not open its ranks to him, in which doubtless he would have occupied one of the foremost places, but when he wished to take part in enterprises of Christian philanthropy, he was

obliged to do so by stealth, concealing himself as if for some bad action.

Nothing extinguished his courage, and truly there is encouragement in beholding this man, who has only his conviction and his character wherewith to withstand all the forces of society leagued against him, and who at last succeeded in overcoming their hostility. Bound only by his conscience, above all suspicion of personal interest, pledged to no political nor religious party, he was strong, it may be said, in that he was weak. He continued to carry on at the same time his pastoral duties and the most absorbing studies. He laboured on an average 15 hours a day, keeping himself abreast of all the advances of Europe, on science. Criticism, exegesis, philology, philosophy, archæology, comparative ethnology, statistics —everything knowable he resolved, as far as possible, to know and to communicate; and much of the fruit of his laborious hours he did communicate to his fellow-citizens in language clear and impressive. Not long after his Boston Lectures he put out his translation of De Wette's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, enriched, as we know, with considerable notes and illustrations. From many quarters he began to receive invitations to deliver his thoughts in public. Once heard, he was generally entreated to return that he might be heard again, and as he would not permit his people to suffer in consequence, he stole from the night the time necessary for discharging his undertakings by day. At last his health, which had already suffered from excess of labour in the University, proved to be seriously damaged, and his friends were unanimous in urging him to take a year's rest and to visit Europe. This would be a means for the restoration of his health and for augmenting the circle of his knowledge. The year which he devoted to the visit was, as

he himself said, the most profitable of his life.* Europe interested him in the highest degree. In London he became acquainted with several persons distinguished in the sciences and in theology, among others, Professor Newman. Paris and France had their turn. The French character, manners, monuments, everything, even to the singular names of some streets, is noted down with surprising precision in his journal. The following is a summary of the judgment he expressed on the subject, in a humorous letter written to a friend (Dr Francis).

"After all, there is a certain unity of character in the French which has its merit. They are always gay—gay in their business, gay in their religion; their churches even have a style that is peculiarly French, at least since the time of Delorme all their architecture has been gay. The Frenchman would gladly dance before the Lord, like King David."

At Paris he heard professors Damiron, Lenormant, and Jules Simon lecture. The last, still young, seemed to him, to use his own words, "the *beau ideal* of lecturing. I never heard or read a neater exposition of doctrines than his of Plato's notions of God, though I think them a little erroneous." His love of perspicuity made our best authors particularly dear to him. He profited greatly, he said, from "the brilliant Mosaic of Cousin."

Passing into Italy he visited Genoa, Pisa, Florence. Who would then have said that, 16 years after, he would breathe his last sigh in the city of the Medici?

Extracts from his journal:

"FLORENCE.—Santa Croce is the great burial-place of the illustrious departed of Florence; here sleep in peace the men that were persecuted when living, and driven from their native land.

"The first time I visited this beautiful church it was a very sad day, and not knowing what to do, I turned into the home of the departed. While I copied the inscriptions the priests chanted their service, and ever and anon the organ poured out such music as might

* Sailed Sep. 1843.

have fallen from the sky; it was sad, sweet, and soothing to the soul.

"It is a little curious that Galileo should be buried in *this* church and have such a monument *here*, for the tribunal that persecuted him had its residence in this very cloister. So the world goes. The conventuals of St Francis, to whom Urban IV. entrusted the inquisitorial power in Tuscany, met in the cloister of Santa Croce. Now the Grand Duke of Tuscany is curious to preserve every relic of Galileo, even his finger, kept in the Laurentian Library.

"I have now visited most of the wonders of this charming place. Let me say that the great paintings of Raphael—the Madonna Della Seggiola, the Julius II., the Leo X., the Fornarina, affect me more than I had ever dreamed of. The first time I went to the Pitti Palace, I did not know what I was to see: all at once my eye fell on the Madonna. What a painting! God in heaven, what a painting! What a genius! I must say the same of the great work of Titian—the Magdalen, and both the Venuses; but the Laocoon, the Venus de Medici, and the Apollo did not fill my mind as I had expected. The statues in general have fallen a little below my imagination, the paintings (I mean the great ones, which I knew well by engravings before) have risen above it far; so have the public buildings."

In this last remark we may recognize the friend of life and movement. Statuary is always more abstract, more impersonal than painting. This it is which forms its superiority in the eyes of its admirers.

"PUTEOLI AND BAIÆ. Mem. The girl near the Cento Camarelle who spun in the ancient manner, the pretty girl whose teeth Mr Freeman looked at, and the beauty to whom I gave half a carline, and who knelt down that we might look at her necklace."

Then he reached Rome: "the widow of two antiquities."

"ROME.—There is no city, except Athens and Jerusalem, so full of recollections to me as Rome. Twice it has been the capital of the world—once, of the Pagan, by physical violence; once, of the Christian, by spiritual violence. She has made a desert about her twice. The memorials of the arts, however, came from the times of the Emperors, scarce any from that of the republic.

"I love to walk about the streets, or sit in the Forum, and think of the armies that marched out of this little city—the influences that went forth to conquer the world. What traces of these stern giants

are written all over the earth. One might, in travelling in the land of giants, come all at once on the footprints of one in the sand 10 feet long—and from that judge of the race. So it is with the Romans, but you meet their footsteps everywhere. Yet they *invented* nothing, not even the arch. They borrowed their literature, their art, their religion, but their *arms* they made. But, alas, what a contrast, as one sits in the Forum, and looks on the crowd of beggars and of blackguards. Oh, city of crime from the days of Romulus till these days! Thou that stonest the prophets! The blood of martyrs is upon thee from thy earliest to thy latest days.

"We went to Sta Maria Maggiore, which is exceedingly rich, but not imposing. It is not a religious architecture. It seems to me the modern Unitarians would like this style; it is clear, actual, and the work of logical and demonstrative heads, wholly free from mysticism.

"We went to the prison—the Mamertine Prison, where Jugurtha died, and the conspirators that were with Catiline. Yes, here was Paul a prisoner! The custode shows a spring that spouted up for St Peter (who was here nine months with Paul), in which he baptized 49 soldiers, all of whom became martyrs. There is a stone which records the same event. I drank some of the water. But all nonsense apart, it is something to sit down in the dungeon where Paul was a prisoner!

"Sunday, March 3.—We were presented to the Pope, with some other Americans. He stood, in the simple dress of a monk, with his back against a sort of table, and talked with Mr Greene, who had introduced us. He blessed some rosaries which the Americans had brought. We stayed about 20 minutes. He has a benevolent face, and looked kindly upon us. Talked about the state of Rome—about the English language in America—about the famous polyglott Cardinal at the Propaganda—made a sign, and we withdrew."

A fact occurs here which deserves notice. By no means does it stand alone. For a moment Parker was captivated by the studied manners and the refined politeness of the high dignitaries of the Church of Rome. He found them charming, almost seductive. Not that his religious ideas and tendencies received the slightest shock, but you nevertheless see in his notes and in his earliest letters from Rome that he was inclined to indulgence, rare for him, toward the supporters of a system which in his eyes was very baneful. He was first disenchanted when a Roman whom he questioned touching the morality

of the native clergy, said: "One tenth of the priests consists of pure and conscientious men; as to the rest—" Instead of finishing, his informant shrugged his shoulders, adding, "Walls have ears." Even if the proportion indicated had taken a tinge from old grudges cherished by the Roman people against their clerical rulers, such a statement must have amazed Parker, to whom a young American neophyte had just declared that the moral condition of the Roman clergy was that of immaculate purity.

"VENICE.—I see the secret of the Venetian colouring here in the actual sky, ocean, houses, and men and women. I rose each morning an hour or more before the sun, and watched that beautiful purple spread itself out in all directions from the point where the sun would rise, and then disappear in the dimmer light of day. The solemn stillness of the horseless city was broken only by the fishermen going out to sea, their white sails against the purple. The numerous bells only announce the general silence.

"Venice is a dream of the sea. Occidental science and Oriental fantasy seem to have united to produce it. A Pagan Greek might say that Neptune, drunk with nectar and Amphitrite, slept in the caves of the sea, and dreamed as he slept. Venice is the petrification of his dream. The sun colours curiously the walls of the palaces and churches. It seems as if their wealth had run over and stained the walls."

"PRAGUE.—A lad of 19 conducted me to the old Jewish Cemetery, a small enclosure of half or three-quarters of an acre, surrounded with old houses and old walls, full of dead men's graves. Stone touched stone. There were long inscriptions in Hebrew: the earth was full of Israelitish bones. Old trees, *elders*, grew there to an enormous size. They were the patriarchs of the place. Some of them were a foot thick. The guide said they were more than 600 years old, and I can believe it. Here are the graves of famous Rabbis, of good Levites; of nobles, also, for in this land the Jews sit down with princes. I never saw a Jewish grave-yard before, and this spot made me feel as never before. I have an inborn affection for this mysterious people, for ages oppressed, yet green and living still. I thought of the service they had done mankind—and the reward they got! Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and the Prophets, came up to my mind, and He who was the culmination of Hebrewdom, the blossom of the nation. I shall never forget my feelings as I also laid a stone piously on the tomb of a Patriarch who died 1000 years ago, and plucked an elder leaf from the tree that rooted among his mouldered ashes."

"BERLIN.—Heard Werder on Logic. He made a great fuss about *Bestimmtheit*, and was, as I thought, in a remarkable fix himself. When he wanted to touch upon anything very deep, he laid his forefinger with its tip between his eyes on the organ of individuality, and then gradually drew it down the length of his nose. He goes down so deep, far below the nature of things, that one must take off not only his clothes, but his *Sinnlichkeit*—his memory, his common-sense, imagination, affections, and then he becomes a *blosser Geist*, and is prepared to go down to the deep, deep sea of Philosophy.

"Mem. The pudding-faced youth who tried to comprehend the distinction between *Daseyn* and *Realité*, and could not.

"Heard Schelling on Offenbarungs-Philosophie. He found a good deal of fault with Kant, but praised Fichte, and said he had done great service to philosophy; thought his 'Naturrecht' his best thing; praised the 'Way towards a Blessed Life' for its *dialectic* skill, compared it with Hegel's works, which he said were merely mechanical, though he only alluded to Hegel and did not name him; some hissed at the allusion. Then he added that in his (Hegel's) case the work was mere mechanism, the grinding in a mill, and men paid much more attention to the noise of the *clapper* than to the meal which was alleged to be ground. Upon this all laughed.

"Schelling is about 70, short, five ft. six in. or less, looks mild, his nose is short and slightly turned up, hair white as snow, an ample forehead, large mouth and pale face, his eyes blue, and have once been very bright, his voice is feeble—he has lost some teeth, so the articulation is not very distinct. Audience 150 to 200—the largest by far that I have seen; when one came in after the lecture began, the rest hissed at him. It seems to me a pity he should lecture; the greater part, I am told, come to hear him from curiosity—to see a famous man, and smile at his doctrines. Others come solely to mock at the senilities of a man who is going to 'squash the head of the great serpent of scepticism as if it were a Göttingen sausage.' He has few that follow his notions here at present, though of course all respect a man who has done so much for philosophy. The Hegelians regard him as the foe of freedom, brought here to keep up the existing order of things."

At Berlin he also heard Vatke, Michelet, Twesten, Steffens, and others, lecture. At Halle he made the acquaintance of Tholuck, and at Heidelberg he formed a friendship with Schlosser and Gervinus. The last-named professor, not yet 25 years old, had just taken his chair in the University. We find in Parker's journal a statement the depth and truth of which are attested by the

state of theology to-day. It is in 1844 he wrote what follows:

"Gervinus thinks that the influence of Strauss has passed away; so says Ullmann. I think them mistaken. The *first* influence, that of making a noise, is over, no doubt; but the truth which he has brought to light will sink into the German theology, and mould it anew. Just as the doubts so haughtily expressed in the Wolfenbüttel fragments have done. *Men mistake a cessation of the means for a cessation of the end.* Strauss organizes no party, so there is no obvious action; but his thoughts are not dead—not even inactive, I fancy. They will yet do some work. By-and-by his falsehood will get separated from his truth, and be forgot. The truth of his book will appear.

Some days after he was at Wittenberg.

"We entered the church by the door where Luther put up the 95 theses. I bought a copy of them in the church; here they are (a pamphlet of 16 pages); what a change from then till now! When shall the work end? At night I walked in front of the door to meditate. The evening star looked down. A few persons went and came. The soft air fell upon my head. I felt the spirit of the great Reformer. Three centuries and a quarter, and what a change! Three centuries and a quarter more, and it will be said, the Protestant religion did little in comparison with what has since been done; well, if *this* work be of God!"*

In going to Tübingen he travelled with a very talkative young man, who booked himself as *Bekleidungs-Kunst-Assessor*, assessor in the art of clothing, a euphuism for journeyman tailor, who was, as he said, travelling for the *æsthetischen Angelegenheiten seines Herzens*, that is, for the æsthetic interests of his heart. Doubtless he saw his tender prospect realized.

At Tübingen he saw professors Ewald and Baur. He was delighted at the reception he received from the for-

* On the market-place at Wittenberg is a bronze statue of Luther bearing this inscription:

"Ist's Gotteswerk, so wird's bestehen;
Ist's Menschenwerk, wird's untergehen."

"*Is it God's work, it is sure to stand;*
Is it man's work, it is sure to fall."

mer, whose manners must not be inferred from the injurious style of his controversial works. At Bâle he was cordially welcomed by professor De Wette. He also visited the university of Bonn, and returning to England he had the good fortune to be in the company of Carlyle, Sterling, and Martineau, the eminent Unitarian minister, for whom he preached.

The time for his going back home had come. In the midst of the surprises and gratifications of his journey in Europe, the feeling of his mission as a reformatory theologian had never left him, as the reader may have observed. His liberal ideas, whether in politics or in religion, had been strengthened by everything he saw. He had read in our old world the not doubtful signs of a religious transformation. But he had also seen the enormous resisting force opposed to the labours of the men of the future and of religious progress by the simple inertness of traditions and secular institutions, founded, so to say, in the very blood of European nations. In consequence he returned more than ever convinced of the need of that spiritual renovation, and at the same time full of hope that in America, on that virgin soil, and in the bosom of that Union scarcely more than half a century old, the advent of the new era would be less difficult and more speedy than it could be with us. Without pretending to be the appointed reformer, he felt himself called to hasten on the period by his voice and his pen. This vocation it was impossible for him to withstand.

CHAPTER V.

THE MINISTER OF THE 28TH BOSTON CONGREGATION.

Renewal of the struggle—The Melodeon—Definitive call to Boston—A good lady—Lectures—A pastor's day—Joys and sorrows—Children—Converts.

In the autumn of 1844, to the great joy of his people, Parker returned to his humble ministry at West Roxbury. It was easy to see that he was not to remain long there. Scarcely had he returned when the war against his ideas and his person recommenced. Discourses on *The Signs of the Times;* a sermon on the following text, the application of which it is not difficult to divine, *Have any of the Pharisees believed in him?* energetic assaults on ecclesiastical pharisaism, did not contribute to put an end to it. More than ever he was excommunicated by the Unitarians, and even still more by the orthodox. His Boston friends thought consequently that the moment was come to offer him the means of preaching in that city every Sunday,* and from the 16th of February, 1845, he conducted public services every week in a large hall called the Melodeon, which, in the intervals, was put to uses, namely, concerts and theatrical representations, not particularly edifying. Sometimes the preacher, as he took his seat on the Sunday morning, beheld the frivolous instruments of the previous evenings' entertainment. But necessity is its own law, no other place could be had; besides, the Americans on such a matter are not so susceptible as some

* See *ante*, p. 39.

others. The preacher and his hearers soon lost from view everything in concentrating their attention on high and solemn thoughts. If the hood does not make the monk, no more does the temple make the preacher. Ere long, in spite of anathemas, the hall became too small to contain an audience which ever went on increasing. With the eminent preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, brother of the authoress of *Uncle Tom*, Theodore Parker was until his decease the most popular orator in the United States.

Extracts from his Journal:

"16th February, 1845.—To-day I have preached at the Melodeon, for the first time. The weather was highly unfavourable—rainy, and the snow deep—the streets passable only with difficulty. Still, there was a large audience, mostly of men, unlike most of my audiences. I felt the greatness of the occasion, but I felt it too much to do justice, perhaps, to myself. I felt not at ease in my service. I felt as one that is with some friends, with some foes, with many strangers. It has been a day of struggles. A long, long warfare opens before me! Shall I prove worthy? How much can I do? How much can I bear? I know not. I look only to the soul of my soul, not with over-confidence in myself, but with an adamantine faith in God.

"The greeting of some friends did me much good. I love to take a *friend* by the hand. Mrs —— came into the little room, and took me by the hand. I am a child in some things, I hope I shall always be.

"March 3.—I have but one resource, and that is to overcome evil with good—much evil with more good; old evil with new good. Sometimes when I receive a fresh insult it makes my blood rise for a moment; then it is over, and I seek, if possible, to do some good, secretly, to the person. *It takes away the grief of a wound amazingly.* To be true to God, and 'that one talent which 'tis death to hide'—this depends on me. To know that I am thus true depends on others, and if they know it not, why that is not my affair, but theirs! Sometimes I wish that death would come and fan me to sleep with his wings: but faith soon stops that murmur, and a 'Thy will be done!' is prayer enough for me."

The growing success of his preachings at Boston determined his friends to take another step, and, profiting by the entire religious liberty that reigns in America, they formed themselves into an independent society, and

invited Parker to become their minister. To do so, he was obliged to break the official bonds which still linked him with the constituted Unitarianism of New England. As to those official bonds, they were never totally destroyed, and to whatever outbursts his genius drove him, he was at the bottom never anything else than a Unitarian minister more advanced than the rest. However, it cost him much to separate from his dear little society of West Roxbury. He expressed his regret to his people in touching language, thanking them for their confidence and their sympathies, which had never failed for an instant. "My desire would have been," he said to them, "to remain with you always, but duty calls me to another field." To justify his departure he alleged the tacit excommunication of which he was the object on the part of nearly all his colleagues, and which amounted to his total exclusion from all the important pulpits; as well as the necessity under which he lay to spread the truth as much as possible in the great centres whence it might radiate far and wide.

The religious society formed under Parker refused to take any sectarian name. In reality, it was not a separate Church that Parker and his friends intended to found. By no means did they desire to supplant the old societies by means of proselytism. Their ambition was to undertake the useful, if secondary part, which Unitarianism, for the moment, had not the courage to play, that is, to foment a reformatory leaven, the regenerating action of which should sooner or later make itself felt within the circles of other communities. The better to mark that part, which will surprise no one acquainted with the ideas prevalent among Protestants in regard to the subject of the Church, Parker entitled his society simply "The twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston."

His inaugural sermon turned on "The true idea of a

Christian Church;" * that is, on the object which ought to be proposed to itself by a Church faithful to the Christian character, and to the essential principle of Christianity, in order to fulfil its mission in the bosom of a society which has its grandeurs, its wants, its miseries, and which for the most part finds in the traditional Churches only institutions and maxims fitted for the middle ages, at the furthest for the two last generations, and little or nothing which really and powerfully corresponds to the aspirations of our own age. A compact crowd welcomed this frank and manly discourse. Thenceforwards the hall of the Melodeon was too small to contain those who desired to drink of the living waters which the Holy Spirit caused to spring forth from the too frequently arid soil of American Unitarianism. Thenceforwards, too, the desire to hear Parker became greater in the neighbouring towns. He preached in several fresh pulpits where ministers had a general sympathy with his views. Sometimes he preached a Christianity at once positive and advanced, even under the veil of an incognito. On one of these occasions a good lady, transported at hearing one of his sermons, exclaimed, "Oh, I wish that infidel Theodore Parker could have heard that!" † Meanwhile it might have been expected that the distrust of which he was the object in ecclesiastical circles and bodies would give way to sentiments and conduct of a more brotherly description. Not so; the ministers and associations by whom he was repelled did nothing but conform to the opinion of the multitude. In this state of things, and notwithstanding the popularity won for his ideas by his Boston discourses taken down in short-hand while being delivered, and propagated by the press to the remotest limits of the country, even as far as the pioneers

* See some portions of this discourse at the end of the volume.

† See Weiss, vol. i. 261.

of the Western solitudes.* Parker did not yet feel himself possessed of a lever powerful enough to remove the heavy load of ignorance and narrowness which pressed on the religious life of America. Then did he carry into effect a plan which he had long cherished, and which had already been in part executed. The plan was to turn to account the excellent means of communication which the north of the United States had already multiplied over its surface, in order to deliver lectures in various cities of the Union. The first winter he gave forty in as many different places. This figure rose to eighty and even a hundred lectures a year. It is reckoned that in this way he made himself heard by more than a hundred thousand persons yearly. It was seldom that the subjects of his lectures turned directly on religious questions. Nowhere would he have found a place or an audience had he announced such subjects. But who can but admire the simplicity of those who thought they would with impunity listen to the Boston orator on the fine arts, on politics, on literature, on social economy, without being infected with the heresies necessarily running through the whole of what he said. However, it required all Parker's energy, knowledge, and imagination to execute such an amount of labour, especially since his journeys, often extending to more than a hundred miles from Boston, were not allowed to interfere with his pastoral obligations. He paid special attention to his weekly discourses. At appointed times he opened his house to receive besides his friends those who desired to form his acquaintance, who often were proscribed ones of different lands, whom he assisted with his purse as well as his counsels, perhaps slaves who had escaped from the South. His conversation appears to have been lively and attractive, full of humour and origin-

* It is calculated that some of his sermons reached a circulation of many hundreds of thousands of copies.

ality, though always turning on topics the most serious. Then families in mourning, the poor, the sick, prisoners too, sought benefit from his ministry. He was aided by some devoted ladies who, under his direction, radiated beneficence in quarters the most wretched.* His sole considerable outlay consisted in purchases of books, for he was always a great reader, and he collected a superb library; one is literally amazed in seeing in his journal the number of books, &c., he annually perused. He also found means to establish, with some friends, The *Massachusett's Quarterly Review*, and for three years to perform the duties of editor almost alone. He was obliged to give it up for want of a sufficient number of fellow-labourers, and because increasing occupations, of a special kind, more and more absorbed his thoughts. "Time," he sometimes remarked, "stretches out like India rubber." We here transcribe from his journal the doings of one of his days:

"I had been to the Post-Office, had sewed the sheets of my Easter sermon together, and sat down to make a brief of the matter, when—1. in comes Mrs K——, to talk over her *connubial* affairs. She stayed till about 11, when—2. in comes Mr McKay, and as we talked of various things it was announced that—3. Dr Papin was down-stairs. I went to see him, and—4. R. W. Emerson was coming up the stairs. I left him in the study, and saw the Doctor, who came seeking relief for a poor woman; then returned, and we talked of the *new journal*: saw Carlyle's letter about Margaret. Nos. 3, 4, and 2 successively went away. I was descending the stairs, when, lo!—5 appears, George Ripley, and we talked of the condition of civilization, the prospects of humanity. Dinner came, one hour. Went to see Mr ——: not at home: visited other people in the afternoon: tea. At half-past seven sat down to the sermon: in a minute came—6. Mr F. C., wanting to borrow 12 dollars, which I lent him gladly. Then sat down to write: at a quarter past eight came—7. Mr M——. All chance of work was now at an end, so I gave up,

* One of these, Miss Stevenson, became the Florence Nightingale of the Unionist army. The Federal Government confided to her the direction of an immense military hospital.

and went down to the parlour. A little before nine came a ring, and then—8 appeared, Mr ——, who was interested to kill a man that had done a wrong to one of his friends, and brought a letter of defiance. I burned the letter after a long talk, but could not wholly overcome the man's feelings of revenge. At 10 he retired, and at a quarter before 11, I also, to rest—not to sleep for a long time."

He was indeed often troubled by insomnolence. In the midst of a life so occupied, embellished by the affection of a devoted wife and chosen friends, among whom were R. W. Emerson, the noble writer; Sumner, the distinguished legist, and, at the time, the first orator of the American Congress; Desor, the learned professor of Neuchâtel, then for some time settled in America; and many other notabilities of the press, the bar, the pulpit, and the commercial world; Theodore Parker, nevertheless, had his vexations. He suffered more than he would admit from his unpopularity as a theologian, from the venom, the wrath, the malevolence, tokens of which he met with every step he took. He now and then was tempted to doubt, not the truth which he announced, but his ability to secure its triumph, and such fear in men at once humble and bold is very painful. Often, also, he had the grief to perceive that several of those who attended his ministry connected themselves with him only in the notion of joining the advantages of affiliation with an established religious community to those of a reduction of the duties of a religious life to the lowest level. This is a sad experience often endured by men of religious progress; to which, nevertheless, they are compelled to resign themselves. We subjoin some extracts from his journal:

"Christmas, 1847.—To-day I received from Archdeacon Wolff, at Kiel, the translation of my Discourses, &c. The work awakened such heart-beatings as I have not often had for a cause seemingly so slight. I read the lines of his preface, in which he speaks so tenderly of me, not without many tears. Is it possible that I am to be henceforth a power in the world to move men, a name which shall kindle

men to goodness and piety, a name of power? I think little enough of fame. But to be a man who can lead mankind a little onward, that thought would charm me.

"Well, at reading that, remembering, too, how I have been treated here, I must confess I wept; and since have felt the better for my tears. God grant I may be more and better as the years go by!

"February, 1848.—On Tuesday I attended a funeral of a child, five or six years old; but the parents do not believe in the continuous and conscious life of the soul. It was terribly sad. The friends that I talked with were superficial and conceited. I have seldom attended a sadder funeral. They wanted no form of prayer, but for decency's sake, wanted a minister and an address. I suppose they sent for me as the *minimum* of a minister. I tried to give them the *maximum of humanity* while their hearts were pliant, and they excited by grief. The man seemed a worthy man, humane, but with an unlucky method of philosophy. I see not how any one can live without a continual sense of immortality. I am sure I should be wretched without a *certainty* of that."

Another and a deeper regret was his having no children. Books, flowers, children were his three chief passions. We know what he did with books. As to flowers, they inspired him. This went so far that he preached more eloquently when he had flowers on his desk, and when cherished hands took pains so to decorate it each Sunday. Children he all but worshipped. He was often surprised in his study, having interrupted his grave occupations to lend himself to the caprices of the little pets of the neighbourhood who had always free ingress into his house. "A man who has not children," he in 1846 wrote to a lady among his friends, "is deprived not only of a great comfort and a great joy, but also of a very important educational element. I have always noted this fact in others, I feel it in my own destiny."

Here follows two letters written in reply to communications made to him by his hearers of the recent birth of children:

"I thank you for so kindly remembering me in such an access of new gladness to your hearth and hearts—nay, heart, for there is but *one*, especially at such a time, in man and wife. I have sons and daughters, sympathetically, in the good fortune of my friends. I was expecting to hear of this advent in your family. God bless the little immortal, who comes a new Messiah to cheer and bless the world of home."

"It is my lot to have no little darlings to call my own. Yet all the more I rejoice in the heavenly blessings of my friends. The thing that I miss most deeply in coming from Roxbury to Boston is the society of my neighbours' little children, whom I saw several times a day, and fondled, and carried, and trotted, and dandled, in all sorts of ways, as if they had been mine own.

"Well: God bless the life that is given, and the life that is spared, and the life which rejoices in them both! I thank the new mother for remembering an old friend in *such* an hour. So give her my most affectionate greetings."

On the other hand, one of his best joys, of his highest comforts, was to learn that souls corroded with doubt, tormented with irreligion, had found peace and hope by hearing his sermons or reading his books. This joy was often granted him. As a specimen of his correspondence with his converts, we transcribe the two following letters; the first addressed in 1848 to a physician in Utica (New York), the second to a lady of high distinction as a thinker and writer, and who had sent him from England, where she had read several of his works, the first expressions of a grateful affection which death is far from having extinguished.

"I thank you for the kind things which you say of my writings. I sincerely hope they may do a little to direct the attention of men to the great realities of religion, and help make the earth the paradise which God designed. I see most hopeful signs. Here in Boston and its vicinity there has been a great change for the better in half-a-dozen years. Men do not insist so much as formerly on what is reckoned miraculous in Christianity. The more I study the nature of man and the history of his progress, the more I am filled with admiration at the genius of Jesus of Nazareth, and with love for his beautiful character and life. He is the greatest achievement of the human races, and Christianity the greatest idea which mankind has thought out as yet; for, take the results of Christianity into account, it is the greatest fact in human history.

"But I look on all that has gone before as only the spring-time

of religion, the few warm days in March which melt the snow off the most southern slopes of the hills, and only promise violets and roses. The real summer and autumn of Christianity, I think, are a good way off. But they are certain, and every good man, every good deed, every good thought or feeling, helps forward the time."

We will also quote this letter which he received from a young man who wrote to him from the *Far West.*

"I wish I could express to you on paper my feelings, the joy, the peace, the satisfaction I feel in contemplating the thoughts of the good God in His works. It is not a great while since the thought of God was the most terrible that ever crossed my mind. What hopeless agony I have suffered, as in the dead of night I have thought of the endless hell to which in all probability I was hastening! and yet the grim and ghastly hell of the Christian theology was preferable to its idea of God. But, thank God, it is past, though it is hard to have 'Infidel!' hissed in my ears, to have those whom I once considered my bosom friends turn away. Yet I gladly bear it; yes, ten times more, than turn back to my former belief.

"I have new thoughts, new objects, new aspirations; everything is new, new heavens, new earth, with no dark future beyond. But I look forward to a future bright, glorious, grand; and I look forward with a peaceful calmness that is surprising to me. There is no fear, for I cannot fear what is good."

Many more testimonies of the same kind would be at our disposal were it necessary to enlarge on the point. All those who, whether near or at a distance, have found themselves in a position similar to that of Theodore Parker, will understand that communications of the kind were to him so many delights. They will understand, consequently, this word which occurs in a letter to one of his friends: "A poet has not more joy in singing than I have in preaching."

CHAPTER VI.

AN AMERICAN REFORMER.

Idea of perfection—Ordinary life and religious life—Protestant bigotry—Vivifying religion—The Gospel and Buddhism—American society—The four great powers—Social misery—How it is not always easy to do good—The two political principles—A sower gone forth to sow—The drunkard's song and the minister's text—Music Hall—Parker's preaching—Sermons and political discourses—Philanthropy—Detested, but listened to.

It is important to give yet more exact accounts of the end which Parker proposed to himself, and the means which he employed to attain it.

With him, as we have seen, religion corresponded to an in-born want of human nature, and was designed to be the purifying leaven, the vivifying motive of man's daily life. To be religious and to aim at perfection on all the domains which man has to traverse, was with him the same thing. For if religion is summed up in the love of God, God, whom he did not attempt to define, was to Parker essentially the living and absolute perfection.

Liberty the fullest—civil, political, religious liberty, is one of the first consequences of such principles, one of the first requirements of their application. For man cannot unfold himself in the way of perfecting his being except on condition of his being free. When one beholds what, owing to a freedom so often restricted, to a development still much obstructed, man has already realized in the way of progress, reforms, conquests over brute na-

ture; when one observes that definitely true morality and true piety regularly profit by discoveries and ameliorations which emancipate men from the servitude and impulses of purely sensual life; when one apprehends in both history and one's own heart that law of continual perfectionment which is nothing else than the incessant action of the Creator in his intelligent creature, whom he thus draws up toward his own transcendent excellence, whom he brings to himself by radiating before his eyes the splendour of the ideal,—religion changes not indeed in principle, but in substance and form. If it is conscience and the voluntary tightening of the bond which unites man to God, it must call forth a profound and ceaseless sentiment of the duty of seeking perfection not only in but around yourself. Then worship, public or private, religious exercises in general, instead of being its own object in which you may rest and be satisfied, or the price paid for a purchasable salvation, becomes an assemblage of means intended to induce and to facilitate the perfection of the entire man—body, intelligence, and heart.

This view deserves a little reflection. In the ages when man, a stranger to the idea of progress, saw in the Divinity only a formidable power with whom it was of untold importance to stand well, whatever the cost, it might be by means of magic rites or sacerdotal absolutions, or the profession of dogmas accounted necessary to salvation, religious life and ordinary life were two things not only distinct, but separate; juxtaposed the one to the other, but without reciprocal penetration. Man laboured, earned subsistence, married, gave himself up to the pleasures he preferred and to the labours of his position; and *then*, he prayed, he performed rites, he went to the priest, he frequented the Church, he told the beads of his rosary, or mumbled the articles of his creed. Without doubt, religious forms of a somewhat higher kind, especially Christianity, always undertook to direct ordinary life by their ethical teachings; but as the transgressions, which were inevitable, were expiated or compensated by one or the other of the external and factitious means which we have enumerated, it followed that, in the final issue, religious life, with its superiority over ordinary life, acquired a character of its own, and continued to form a pure and simple antithesis thereto. Thus, in order to be religious, it became necessary to curtail the natural life as much as possible—for instance, to pass hours and days in prayers indefinitely reiterated, in fasts, in religious ceremonies. The monastery, in a word, became the ideal. All could not enter it, for all were not capable. But those who remained outside could do nothing better than approach the monastic life as much as was permitted by the exigencies of the age. All this was absurd, but logical; God and the world were considered as separate from each other, and opposed to each other. Consequently such was the relative position of religious life and secular life. Such is the fundamental idea which determines the direction followed by Catholic piety in the middle ages.

The Reformation did much to put an end to this dualism. To a large extent it caused religious life to enter into secular life. No longer recognizing magical rites and real sacerdotal power, restoring the sanctity of married life and family life, denying all merit to external works, and not admitting that man could be saved except by his own individual faith, it considerably contracted the reserved space previously occupied by religious life as ecclesiastically considered, as well as rendered more intense and more continuous the action of religious principles on the acts of man's daily existence. Nevertheless, it did not follow out its principle in full. It committed the fault of confounding faith with certain dogmatical theses, which often remaining without any influence over

the heart and the conscience, were in reality as external, as foreign to them, as aforetime had been the priest's words or the paper indulgences.* This dualism rested also on the view, a little theoretically modified by the Reformation in its earliest days, of a God and a world standing opposite to each other. Hence it came that Protestantism also had, and has, its bigotry, its formalism, and its petty hostilities to a thoroughly human life. Often did the opinion gain ground in its bosom that the most religious men were those who read the Bible most, heard the greatest number of sermons, prayed the most frequently, and professed the strictest fidelity to confessional orthodoxy. Protestantism, consequently, had its Biblical dialect, just as Catholicism had its mass-book jargon, and what in appearance was only ridiculous, was at the bottom the sign of an hostility more or less decided to a simple and natural mode of life. Hence that sombre Puritanism which condemned, as diabolical art, science, and innocent pleasure. The important is that you *practise*, says the ultramontane bigotry, the essential is that you *profess*, says the Protestant bigotry.

Here both, the one as well as the other, have deviated from the fundamental Christian thought. What is important, what is essential, Jesus says, is to love; love and you will practise what you ought to do; love and you will see what you ought to believe. *Ama et fac quod vis* (love and do what you like), said Augustin, in one of his last moments; and we add, *Ama et crede quod poteris* (love and believe what you can).

Suppose now that instead of separating God from the world you see in the world the permanent manifestation of God himself; that in consequence you investigate the

* Scraps of paper or parchment on which were written or printed the remission of sins granted to A. B. on certain (often pecuniary) conditions by the sacerdotal authority under the papacy. T.

immanent laws of the physical and moral world, saying that they are so many divine volitions; that thereby man is led to the conclusion that he is called of God to labour, to live in society as a son, a husband, a father, a citizen of a town and a country, finally as a member of the great human family,—then that kind of religion which consists in forms, in rites, in dogmas, has lost all value. Religious doctrine, considered as what is essential, will lay down certain principles very rich in application, but in themselves very simple. Religious life, considered as a distinct kind of life, will hold relatively a very small place in existence, but—and this is the grand side of the view—it will act within on the entire man. According to the profound expression of an apostle, eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, rest, labour, all will be and conduce *to the glory of God* (1 Cor. x. 31). The labourer at the plough, the artisan in the timber-yard, the weaver in the factory, the mother by the cradle's side, the merchant in his counting-house, the artist in his studies, the chemist in his laboratory, the astronomer in his observatory, all will have with them, no less in small things than in large, the love, the desire, the thirst for perfection. Actuated by religion, they will do their best to imprint on all the seal of the exact, the beautiful, the grand; in a word, the perfect. Actuated by religion, they will also reverently abstain from whatever sullies, enervates, or enslaves the soul. Actuated by religion, they will, moreover, exert their energies to put an end to social corruption and miseries. Actuated by religion, men will be liberal in politics, peacefully reforming, and skilfully philanthropic. Actuated by religion, they will ever desire more light and still more light, not for themselves only, but for others as well. "More light, you can never see too well," that will be the continual homage which such a religion will render to God, who is himself light. And by the con-

currence of all these pure desires, all these ardent efforts, all these valiant struggles against evil, against darkness, the kingdom of God will at length come on earth, as it has already come in the heart of those who enrol themselves in this holy crusade. Religion thus conceived, appears almost annihilated to partisans of the religion of the past, habituated, as they are to consider it as necessarily bound to special acts and forms. Nevertheless, it is as real, as continuous, as beneficent as the invisible sap which vitalizes the trunk, the branches, and the smallest twigs of a sound and vigorous tree. It plunges its roots into the legitimate element of mysticism, often exaggerated, often misunderstood. On the sole condition of not presenting itself as an enemy to reason and conscience, mysticism—that intense joy that you have in a sense of personal communion with God—is a delight no less strengthening than desirable.

Either we are altogether deceived, or this is the religion which the 19th century needs. Specially is this the religion which the 20th century will demand. On this side only it is that henceforwards there will be joy, pure and confiding joy, that sacred sign of the great things which are already commencing. This religion of our modern times is at the bottom nothing else than the blossoming of the evangelical principle, become life and power in Jesus of Nazareth. To love God with all your heart, that is to say, ideal perfection realized, is not this the first of all the commandments? And to love man as yourself, that is to say, the being who possesses virtual perfection, the being who is perfectible, is not this "the second commandment, like unto the first?" And on this depend the law and the prophets, all true morality, all saintly hope. Those who have accused the Gospel of Jesus of diminishing human energy, and thus made it collateral with Buddhism, have not understood its first words. Buddhism did know the love of man, hence its moral value and its beauty; but it did not know the love of God, hence its feebleness and its sterility. Our readers will pardon this lengthened digression. If we have left our subject, we have not ceased to coast along it. Certainly Theodore Parker would have approved of all we have just said in terms scarcely different from what he employed in order to popularize views altogether similar. Those who make religion consist in many rites observed and many dogmas professed, will probably be disposed to find religion with him reduced to an imperceptible *minimum;* for his confession of faith was very short, and never was any one less a formalist, less a ritualist, than he. This went so far, that in our opinion he was not always just in the semi-indifference with which he regarded the two simple sacraments of the Protestant Church, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. But if you place yourself at the point of view which we have endeavoured to present, you will hardly fail to acknowledge that few men have possessed and put forth as much religion as our American Reformer.

The religious, moral, and social advancement of man, war declared against the ignorance, servitude, and corruption which retard it in those three several ways—this was his great task. But that task he had to discharge in a determinate age and country, in the 19th century, and in the United States of America. He had before him powers more or less interested in, or enslaved to, the abuses he wished to root out, and a people very superior to many others in various relations, but nevertheless a prey to evils either similar to those from which all nations suffer, or ensuing from their particular temperament and situation. Let us trace, in making use of his own

words, the state of things such as it offered itself to him, and how he was led to the line of conduct which he adopted for the reformation of the American nation.*

"The great obvious social forces in America may be thus summed up:—

"1. There is the organized trading power—having its home in the great towns, which seeks gain with small regard to that large justice which represents alike the mutual interests and duties of all men, and to that humanity which interposes the affectional instinct when conscience is asleep. This power seems to control all things, amenable only to the all-mighty dollar.

"2. The organized political power, the parties in office, or seeking to become so. This makes the statutes, but is commonly controlled by the trading power, and has all of its faults often intensified; yet it seems amenable to the instincts of the people, who, on great occasions, sometimes interfere and change the traders' rule.

"3. The organized ecclesiastical power, the various sects which, though quite unlike, yet all mainly agree in their fundamental principle of vicariousness—an alleged revelation, instead of actual human faculties, salvation from God's wrath and eternal ruin, by the atoning blood of crucified God. This is more able than either of the others; and though often despised, in a few years can control them both. In this generation no American politician dares affront it.

"4. The organized literary power, the endowed colleges, the periodical press, with its triple multitude of journals—commercial, political, theological—and sectarian tracts. This has no original ideas, but diffuses the opinion of the other powers whom it represents, whose will it serves, and whose kaleidoscope it is.

"I must examine these four great social forces, and show what was good in them, and what was ill; ascertain what natural religion demanded of each, and what was the true function of trade, government, a church, and a literature. When I came to a distinct consciousness of my own first principle, and my consequent relation to what was about me, spite of the good they contained, I found myself greatly at variance with all the four. They had one principle and I another; of course, our aim and direction were commonly different and often opposite. Soon I found that I was not welcome to the American market, state, church, nor press. It could not be otherwise; yet I confess I had not anticipated so thorough a separation betwixt me and these forces which control society, but had laid out

* What follows is taken from "Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister," addressed by him in a letter to his people in 1859, the last year of his life.

work I could not execute alone, nor perhaps without the four.

"When I first came to Boston I intended to do somet perishing and dangerous classes in our great towns. The poverty and consequent immorality in Boston is terrible t while you remember the warning of other nations, and day after to-day? Yet it seemed to me the money give and private charity—two fountains that never fail in Bos ton—was more than sufficient to relieve it all, and gradu the deep-seated and unseen cause which, in the hurry of l of money, is not attended to. There is a hole in the dis bridge, where many fall through and perish! Our mercy out of the water; it does not stop the hole, nor light the warn men of the peril. We need the great charity th effects of wrong, and the greater justice which removes th

"Then there was drunkenness, which is the greate curse of the labouring Protestant population of the Nor most hideous and wide-extended desolation. It is as fata tion to the Irish Catholic. None of the four great soci its foe. There, too, was prostitution; men and wome polluted and polluting, blackening the face of society wi woe. Besides, in our great towns I found thousands, es poorer Irish, oppression driving them to us, who, save th of occasional work, got no education here except what taught them in childhood, or the Popish priest and the demagogue—their two worst foes.

"Still more, I learned early in life that the criminal i victim of society, rather than its foe, and that our penal l to the dark ages of brute force, and aims only to protect vengeance on the felon, not also to elevate mankind by r In my boyhood I knew a man, the last result of generatio tral crime, who spent more than 20 years in our State died there, under sentence for life, whose entire illegal the amount to twenty dollars! and another, not better born fully stole houses and farms, lived a 'gentleman,' and at a considerable estate, and the name of Land-shark. Wh logical student I taught a class in the Sunday School o Prison, often saw my fellow-townsmen, became well acqu several convicts, learned the mode of treatment, and hea mons and ghastly prayers which were let fly at the heads unprotected wretches; I saw the 'orthodox preachers helps,' who gave them 'spiritual instruction,' and learne insufficiency of our penal law to mend the felon or prevent in wickedness. When I became your minister I hoped to thing for this class of men, whose crimes are sometimes of their congenital misfortune or social infamy, and who

of the sympathy of mankind, and unconstitutionally beset with sectarian ministers, whose function is to torment them before their time.

"For all these, the poor, the drunken, and the ignorant, for the prostitute, and the criminal, I meant to do something, under the guidance, perhaps, or certainly with the help, of the controlling men of the town or state; but, alas! I was then fourteen years younger than now, and did not quite understand all the consequences of my relation to these great social forces, or how much I had offended the religion of the state, the press, the market, and the church. The cry, 'Destroyer,' 'Fanatic,' 'Infidel,' 'Atheist,' 'Enemy of mankind,' was so widely sounded forth that I soon found I could do little in these great philanthropies, where the evil lay at our own door. Many as you are for a religious society,* you were too few and too poor to undertake what should be done; and outside of your ranks I could look for little help, even by words and counsel. Besides, I soon found my very name was enough to ruin any new good enterprise. I knew there were three periods in each great movement of mankind —that of sentiment, ideas, and action: I fondly hoped the last had come; but when I found I had reckoned without the host, I turned my attention to the two former, and sought to arouse the sentiment of justice and mercy, and to diffuse the ideas which belonged to this five-fold reformation. Hence I took pains to state the facts of poverty, drunkenness, ignorance, prostitution, crime; to show their cause, their effect, and their mode of cure, leaving it for others to do the practical work. So, if I wanted a measure carried in the Legislature of the town or state, or by some private benevolent society, I did my work by stealth. I sometimes saw my scheme prosper, and read my words in the public reports, while the whole enterprise had been ruined at once if my face or name had appeared in connection with it. I have often found it wise to withhold my name from petitions I have myself set a-going and found successful: I have got up conventions, or mass meetings, whose 'managers' asked me not to show my face thereat.

"This chronic and progressive unpopularity led to another change of my plans, not abating my activity, but turning it in another direction. To accomplish my work, I must spread my ideas as widely as possible, without resorting to that indecency of advertising so common in America. There was but one considerable publishing-house in the land that would continue to issue my works—this only at my own cost and risk. As it had only a pecuniary interest therein, and that so slight in its enormous business, my books did not have the usual opportunity of getting known and circulated. They were

* Parker's congregation consisted of from seven to eight thousand souls.

seldom offered for sale, except in one book-store in Boston; for other States I must often be my own bookseller. None of the Quarterlies or Monthlies was friendly to me; most of the newspapers were hostile; the *New York Tribune* and *Evening Post* were almost the only exceptions. So my books had but a small circulation at home in comparison with their diffusion in England and Germany, where, also, they received not only hostile, but most kindly notice, and sometimes from a famous pen. But another opportunity for diffusing my thought offered itself in the Lyceum or public lecture. Opposed by these four great social forces at home, I was surprised to find myself becoming popular in the lecture-hall.

"I saw the nation had reached an important crisis in its destination, and, though ignorant of the fact, yet stood hesitating between two principles. The one was slavery, which I knew leads at once to military despotism—political, ecclesiastical, social—and ends at last in utter and hopeless ruin; for no people fallen on that road has ever risen again; it is the path so many other Republics have taken and finished their course, as Athens and the Ionian towns have done, as Rome and the Commonwealths of the Middle Ages. The other was freedom, which leads at once to industrial democracy—respect for labour, government over all, by all, for the sake of all, rule after the eternal right as it is writ in the constitution of the universe—securing welfare and progress. I saw that these four social forces were advising, driving, coaxing, wheedling the people to take the road to ruin; that our 'great men,' in which 'America is so rich beyond all other nations of the earth,' went strutting along that path to show how safe it is, crying out 'Democracy,' 'Constitution,' 'Washington,' 'Gospel,' 'Christianity,' 'Dollars,' and the like; while the instincts of the people, the traditions of our history, and the rising genius of men and women well-born in these times of peril, with still, small voice, whispered something of self-evident truths and inalienable rights.

"I knew the power of a great Idea; and spite of the market, the State, the Church, the press, I thought a few earnest men in the lecture-halls of the North might yet incline the people's mind and heart to justice and the eternal law of God—the only safe rule of conduct for nations, as for you and me—and so make the American experiment a triumph and a joy for all humankind.

"Since 1848, I have lectured eighty or a hundred times each year —in every Northern State east of the Mississippi, once also in a Slave State, and on slavery itself. I have taken most exciting and important subjects, of the greatest concern to the American people, and treated them independently of sect or party, street or press, and with what learning and talent I could command. I put the matter in quite various forms—for each audience is made up of various capacities. For eight or ten years, on an average, I have spoken to sixty

or a hundred thousand persons in each year, besides addressing you on Sundays, in the great hall you throw open to all comers.*

"Thus I have had a wide field of operation, where I might rouse the sentiment of justice and mercy, diffuse such ideas as I thought needful for the welfare and progress of the people, and prepare for such action as the occasion might one day require. As I was supposed to stand nearly alone, and did not pretend to represent any one but myself, nobody felt responsible for me; so all could judge me, if not fairly, at least with no party or sectarian prejudice in my favour; and as I felt responsible only to myself and my God, I could speak freely: this was a two-fold advantage. I hope I have not spoken in vain. I thought that by each lecture I could make a new, deep, and lasting impression of some one great truth on five thoughtful men, out of each thousand who heard me. Don't think me extravagant; it is only *one-half of one per cent.!* If I spoke but thus efficiently to 60,000 in a winter, there would be 300 so impressed, and in 10 years it would be 3000! Such a result would satisfy me for my work and my loss of scholarly time in this home mission for lectures. Besides, the newspapers of the large towns spread wide the more salient facts and striking generalizations of the lecture, and I addressed the eyes of an audience I could not count nor see.

"Nor was this all. I had been ecclesiastically reported to the people as a 'disturber of the public peace,' 'an infidel,' 'an atheist,' 'an enemy to mankind.' When I was to lecture in a little town, the minister, even the Unitarian, commonly stayed at home. Many, in public or private, warned their followers 'against listening to that bad man. Don't look him in the face!' Others stoutly preached against me. So, in the bar-room 'I was the song of the drunkard,' and the minister's text in the pulpit. But, when a few hundreds, in a mountain town of New England, or in some settlement on a prairie of the West, or, when many hundreds, in a wide city, did look me in the face, and listen for an hour or two while I spoke, plain, right on, of matters familiar to their patriotic hopes, their business, and their bosoms, as their faces glowed in the excitement of what they heard, I saw the clerical prejudice was stealing out of their mind, and I left them other than I found them. Nay, it has often happened that a man has told me, by letter or by word of mouth, 'I was warned against you, but I *would go and see for myself;* and when I came home I said, 'After all, this is a man, and not a devil; at least, he seems human. Who knows but he may be honest, even in his theological notions? Perhaps he is *right* in his religion. Priests have been a little mistaken sometimes before now, and said hard words against rather good sort of men, if we can trust the Bible. I am glad I heard him.'"

* He sometimes attended meetings convened in order to encourage abuses he desired to root up, and took part therein despite the anger and shouts of their advocates. "On one such occasion we (says Miss Cobbe, preface to her edition of Parker's 'Collected Works,' p. 28) have been told by an eye-witness that he was standing in a gallery at a large pro-Slavery meeting in New York, when one of the orators tauntingly remarked, 'I should like to know what Theodore Parker would say to that.' '*Would* you like to know?' cried he, starting forwards into view; 'I'll tell you what Theodore Parker says to it!' Of course there instantly arose a tremendous clamour, and threats of killing him and throwing him over. Parker simply squared his broad chest, and looking to the right and left, said undauntedly, 'Kill me? Throw me over? You shall do no such thing. Now I'll tell you what I say to this matter. His bravery quelled the riot at once."

This quotation, selected from his autobiography, discloses the secret of one of those careers whose results can hardly be appreciated because they are measurable neither by the pound nor by the yard. Those results indeed are invisible, impalpable, and your practical men do not hesitate to value them at nothing. Nevertheless, the past has seen some sowings, to all appearance lost, which have not failed to exercise a powerful influence over the destinies of the human race. How well those calculators know the fact! It is mind, not matter, that governs the world. If the American Union comes victorious out of the fearful crisis in which it is engaged, it will owe the happy result to the awakening of a liberal and truly republican spirit and the moral fermentation of these last few years; and who more than Theodore Parker contributed to call forth those free and liberal tendencies? Scarcely would it be too much to affirm that among the valiant men to whom the Union owes its salvation,* Parker did the most to communicate to the people their generous and unconquerable ardour. You do not sufficiently represent to yourselves the pervasive and kindling power

* The translator, by a slight change, makes the text here speak of an accomplished fact, Dr Reville's prevision having been amply justified.

which a breath of pure and genuine religion adds to the regenerating views of civil and political society. And then, Parker did not restrict himself to preaching conformably to such a spirit, he lived therein himself.

In 1852, the always increasing numbers attracted by his preaching in Boston determined his friends to provide for him accommodation yet more spacious and convenient than the Melodeon. This was the Music Hall, a fine edifice which a philharmonic society had just built, and whose interior arrangements were more suited to the requirements of public worship. This new building was not less filled than the other, every Sunday, by an eager and attentive auditory. We here transcribe a note from his journal, dated the day of his first sermon in the Music Hall, November 21st, 1852:

"There was a great audience, which made me feel less than ever. That is the sad part of looking such a crowd in the face, Whence shall I have bread to feed so many! I am but the lad with five barley loaves and two small fishes. Yet I have confidence in my own preaching."

It appears that Parker prayed with an unction and a depth of piety which from the beginning of the service captivated those of his auditors who were attracted by curiosity rather than a desire for edification. Then came the sermon, a manly utterance, which, striking out right and left, seized the attention, regardless of personal considerations, and seeking to benefit all, as remote from sentimental mawkishness as from the dryness of pure intellectualism. Original, like its author, the discourse would often have astonished, sometimes shocked, a European unused to the free allurements of the American pulpit. The preacher gave in the subject he handled preference either to some question by which the public mind was at the moment agitated, or to points of social

and religious life, the most delicate and important. Ordinarily he opened his discourse by an exposition of abstract principles or of well-known facts. This introduction was generally cold and devoid of ornament. By little and little the sacred fire kindled up the man. Then came applications of what he had set forth, without much order, but pressing the one on the other, and captivating the audience—no holding back, but the whole said, and boldly said, in a form at once positive and poetic, such as is without example in our European literature. The same utterance often passed, and in an instant, from a humour which provoked smiles to a sensibility and tenderness the most exquisite. You might think that in Parker an austere sentiment of duty, a manly energy, an ardent passion put at the service of momentous interests, would predominate, so as to stifle what we may call the feminine side of the heart—tenderness, sympathy, indulgence. You would err, and if you would form a just conception of his supple and varied talent, read one of his sermons most marked by his personality, the sermon on *Old Age*, some extracts from which will be found hereafter. The pervasive warmth of his sentiments now and then occasioned incidents not a little curious. One day, when he was speaking of God's forgivingness, and showed how many means Infinite love set in movement to lift up even the most guilty, a man seated in the gallery suddenly cried out, "Yes, yes, I know it is so." Parker stops; then addressing the speaker, observes, "Yes, my friend, it is as you say, and you can never get so far away that God is unable to bring you back." Another time thunders of applause which he could not prevent, or rather which the people could not restrain, covered his words. A fugitive slave, named Shadrach, had been arrested the week before. On the Saturday he was forcibly set at liberty by an indignant population. There was

much reason to fear he would be retaken by the Federal police. On the Sunday all hearts beat with anxiety. Parker entered the pulpit, holding a note in his hand: "When I came among you," he said, "I expected to do and to endure many rough things, but I never thought I should have to protect one of my people against slave-hunters, nor to be requested to read a note such as this: 'The fugitive slave, Shadrach, asks for the prayers of this Church and of all Christian people for aid in seeking his liberty.' But," he added, "Shadrach has no longer need of our prayers. God be praised, we know he is in safety, already afar off, on the high road of freedom." Parker had himself contributed to conceal his getting away, and could without danger communicate the "glad tidings of great joy." The public conscience, relieved of an enormous burden, could not withhold its bursting delight. Several times rounds of applause reverberated over the hall:—but this was the only time such expressions were not energetically repressed by the preacher. Never did a man who was unpopular—at least with the majority, and suffering from being so—do less to recover by concession the ground compromised or lost by his freedom. His sermons were every moment directed against what he called "the people's sins;" that is, the faults and the vices to which the Americans yield complacently, and which consequently find either apologist disposed to palliate the wrong, or indulgent judges inclined to ignore it. Nor did he spare persons of high repute when they laid themselves open to conscientious animadversion. While doing full justice to the foremost men of the Union, he never feared to attack them, especially when he felt called on to reproach them with being, from interested or ambitious views, unfaithful to their avowed principles. One kind of religious discourse, such as those which he consecrated to Quincy Adams, to Zachary Taylor, to Daniel

Webster, is unknown in Europe, and indeed would be impossible here. Imagine a London or Paris preacher ascending the pulpit the day after the demise of an eminent statesman, laying hold of the whole of his political career, and criticising it from end to end in the name of Christian morality, with as much severity for its aberrations as minute care to throw its virtues into full relief. This is what Parker did in Boston; and to read his discourse on Adams and that on Webster will suffice to convince any one that never can hardihood and impartiality of judgment be carried to a greater extent. Woe to a Boston Mayor who had set an example of intemperance. Woe to Zachary Taylor who had bought forty slaves in the years which preceded his presidency. Woe to Daniel Webster who had received a pension from rich merchants in the North, who wished that able defender of liberalism to compose to sleep under the flowers of his rhetoric the growing reaction against slavery. There was one incorruptible voice in Boston. Fearlessly did it stigmatize their disgraceful misdeeds. Equally did Parker hesitate not to denounce the war in Mexico as unjust, disloyal, mean, as a national crime, committed solely for the interests of the slave party, and he appealed to the conscience of the nation against a false patriotism too proud of victories gained and territories conquered. He even ran great perils in thus assailing the passions of the multitude. In a meeting at Boston, where he was to speak against the war, volunteers, returned from the camp, got into the hall, arms in their hands. Not the less did Parker describe, in words burning with indignation, the evil which the war had done, and the shame which was reflected on the Federal flag; when vociferations were heard. It was the volunteers expressing their dissatisfaction. "*Turn him out*," they shouted. Parker turned toward them and put them to silence by saying to them

simply, "*Turn him out? Well, what then?*" And he continued his speech; but he was far from moderating his language; the murmurs and groanings recommenced. They were even accompanied with cries of a more sinister charater: "*Kill him! kill him!*" and a noise was heard as if of loading muskets. Parker refused to yield. "*Turn him out?*" he cried with a re-echoing voice; "I tell you that you shall not turn me out. Do you want to kill me? Well, I will go home alone and unarmed, and not one of you shall touch a hair of my head." He did what he promised, and as he foretold, so it was. It must be added that never, except in the name of morality trampled under-foot, did he directly meddle with political affairs. His ceaseless desire, viz., the moral reformation of the people as a basis of their religious improvement, impelled him to oppose with similar eagerness the other causes of corruption and wretchedness. He was not very fond of temperance societies with their pledges of absolute abstinence. Nevertheless, to shelter himself against all possible suspicions, he consented to become a member of one of those associations. He thought that reformers ought to turn men away from the abuse, and teach them the rational use of fermented liquors, without which the task would have to be ever done over again. He insisted on police regulations and a diligent application of the law as a means of diminishing intoxication, and directly or indirectly he succeeded in getting excellent arrangements made. A considerable part of his efforts was devoted to the inducing individuals and cities to make due efforts in order to diffuse the light of instruction among the humbler classes, and certainly he is one of those who most contributed to realize the magnificent display of schools of all kinds, of which the North may justly take to themselves the honour. He equally interested himself on behalf of the Irish paupers that encumbered the streets

of Boston, and whom he thought victims of their institutions and their superstitions much more than of their native heedlessness. He did much on their behalf, and often undertook their defence against the intolerant prejudices of a narrow Americanism, and also against the displeasure with which the native population witnessed, thanks to *the gentlemen of Corrk*, as from their guttural accent the Irish were called, the increase of the number of souls that received and blindly executed the word of command from Rome, without at all caring for the interests of their new country. Toward the end of his life, however, the concern he felt for them grew less, especially when he saw that on the question of slavery, Paddy, pleased to think that there were on earth human beings of a condition inferior to his own, always took part with the South in favour of its slave policy, and applauded all the measures that aggravated the hideous wound so disfiguring to the republic. The education of girls was also one of his favourite subjects, and he carried on an unsparing war against the prejudices which excluded women from scientific studies. It was from enlightened mothers that he expected a generation superior to the average of his own days. Possibly, carried away by his zeal for so worthy an object, he sometimes went beyond the limit fixed by nature as well as social organization. If he did well to aim at reforming the numerous abuses in the instruction given to females in America, and in the legislation which fixed their civil position, it may be doubted if he was on the side of right when he claimed for them a share in social functions now reputed to be the prerogatives of the other sex. Let us elevate, let us instruct, let us protect woman, but, pray, let us not make her into man; she would gain by the change no more than could man made into woman. Parker assuredly better understood his mission when he directed his genius, now

caustic, now indignant, against a venal press, an idle or an indulgent pulpit, senators, representatives, faithless to their consciences, capitalists "adoring God Dollar and serving him alone." It was by such preaching that his pulpit became one of the powers of the land. The frowning unpopularity of his early days insensibly changed into a kind of respectful fear in regard to that man of iron whom no menace could shake, and no prospect of advantage seduce, and who never before speaking asked if what he was going to say would please his auditors. He was sometimes reproached with being a minister having no regular Church; he might have replied that his Church was America, and that he was its preacher detested indeed but still listened to. "This," as has been said by a learned theologian, himself author of very remarkable sermons; "this is the true mark of a good preacher."

But specially is it in his contest with the partisans of slavery that Parker showed himself worthy of admiration. In that line of duty we must now follow his steps.

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUESTION OF SLAVERY.

The question of slavery in the United States—How opinion in Europe has got wrong in its appreciation of the American war—*Uncle Tom*—Political and social consequences of slavery—Dogs protectors of public order—Two nations there where but for slavery only one would be—Prolonged apathy of the North of the Union—W. L. Garrison—The fugitive slave law—Parker's growing hostility to slavery—Provisions and productions.

SLAVERY of the coloured race was for the first time in the modern world abolished in 1751, under the inspiration of a sincere and fervent Christianity, but the abolition was only local. The powerful gale of liberty which brought the War of Independence led all the Northern States of America to abolish it at a later day; the Confederation did not the less allow it to continue in States which thought themselves obliged to preserve it. It was then the general feeling that it would disappear of itself by the act of the States which maintained it, and specially that it would not extend. The opposite took place. The hour came when the South, having always made its particular interests depend on the continuance of slavery, saw itself placed in the alternative, either to endure momentarily great losses by letting the hateful institution fall, or to induce the North to aid in consolidating and extending it. For slavery, its partisans are well aware, cannot live alongside a country that is free and decided to do nothing that resembles any alliance with the evil.

It is a thing which must die if it cannot grow. Manufacturers established themselves in the North; the South complacently undertook, in return for its slave privileges, to favour protecting tariffs. Ere long slave labour found favour in the eyes of New York and Boston capitalists, because it produced abundantly a material requisite for manufacturing industry, namely, cotton, and because the South consumed a large portion of its products. The same servile labour furnished their large freights of tobacco, sugar, and textile materials to the innumerable Northern clippers, by whom they were conveyed to the markets of Europe. All this interchange of important secular interests soon put the conscience of the North to sleep, and a word of command went forth that its slumbers should not be disturbed. This was carried so far, that in large cities the directory committees of Churches enjoined on their preachers not to introduce the question of slavery in the pulpit. Doubtless there were instances of honourable disobedience to these selfish injunctions, but they were too feeble to constitute a serious opposition.

When however some day the future shall write the moral history of the 19th century, it will find it very difficult to explain how, if conscience were stifled, self-interest did not sooner turn the Americans away from the gulf into which they fell while closing their eyes in regard to all measures which tended to consolidate slavery. The astonishment will be redoubled when it shall be perceived that even in Europe, where slavery is condemned by the general conscience and by the laws of truly civilized states, an insurrection imprudently illegal, the soul of which was the maintenance of slavery at all costs, found not only among the adherents of religious and political despotism, but also in manufacturing and commercial circles, ardent, and in no way disguised, sympathies. You may to some extent give yourself a reason for this in

England, where long-standing enmities caused many to see without displeasure their transatlantic rival weaken itself by division. On the continent antipathies, provoked by the disdainful and inconsiderate policy of Union statesmen toward other nations, augmented the number of those who would have rejoiced at its dissolution. Rarely was that policy altogether the work of the Southern party, in whose hands the indolence of the North allowed political power to remain during more than 30 years. What specially contributed to sustain that partial but powerful current of opinion in Europe was the assertion, a thousand times repeated, that at the bottom the men of the North did not like the negroes more than those of the South, and even while granting them their liberty, treated them worse than the latter who held them in bondage. The speciousness there may be in this argument, open to question as to the fact on which it rests, ought not to have misled public opinion to the extent in which we have seen it go wrong from the commencement of the civil war. It is idle talk that nothing hinders the negro who lives in the North of the Union from leaving it if he is not well off there, while in the Southern States he was forced to remain where he was ill off.

Strange phenomenon! The public writers devoted to the interests of the South went at last so far as to place a garland on the head of slavery. When the famous novel of *Uncle Tom*, written by one who saw with her own eyes what she spoke of, made its appearance before the public, it was charged with exaggeration by many who did not take the trouble of reflecting that the true lesson of that book was not that the slaves, under the whip of greedy and cruel planters, were greatly to be pitied, but rather that, supposing the masters were mild and humane, as are the greater number of those whom Mrs Stowe describes, slavery is an accursed institution,

bearing its condemnation in its inevitable consequences. In order to maintain it are you not compelled to take from the slave property, family, instruction, even modesty? What has not been properly understood is that at the bottom slavery was the sole cause of that American civil war from which the whole world has suffered. Without doubt neither of the two parties were willing, especially at the beginning, to avow the fact officially, and there were people simple enough to fancy that millions of men were cutting each other's throats—these to obtain protective tariffs, those to make free trade triumphant. As if it needed great deductive skill to understand that such a war is not possible except between two communities that had become deeply and bitterly hostile to one another, being no longer able to live such as they are, either united or side by side, and that slavery is the generative source of that antipathy. As if slavery in modern times bore different fruit from what it bore in antiquity!

In effect, who does not see that, despite republican forms, slavery has for one of its consequences to constitute a great territorial aristocracy which soon acquires the bad qualities, and, to some extent, the good ones, of its predecessors. Servile labour is largely remunerative only when it is applied to extensive properties. Moreover, it degrades labour itself, since it makes it the token of abject dependence. Whence it follows that those who possess nothing become soldiers, hunters, adventurers, &c., leaving the lands and their culture to the aristocracy, and that the sons of that aristocracy which is vain-glorious, idle, easily growing weary of a regular and unexciting life, desire in a morbid love of distinction to become officers, magistrates, representatives, diplomatists, but by no means agriculturists, merchants, tradesmen. In the midst of such, those who desire to direct state affairs offer themselves in great number, and you may safely presume that

their policy may shine by its talent and energy, but it will completely lack moral scrupulosity and soon moral integrity. When from infancy human beings are accustomed to commit, without even thinking of it, the most flagrant robbery that can be conceived, to take from others, whether by force of money, or force of muscle, or force of custom, that primordial property which alone gives to all other property its meaning and its legitimacy, and which is called our human personality, they may but too easily be led to trample under feet, as so many prejudices, that which older nations respect under the title of the Rights of Nations. Finally, in the interior of Slave States, all interests turning on the fundamental institution, men are drawn on by the force of things, and by the approbation of the majority, to commit any act which will tend to maintain it. Besides, is it not ascertained that the negroes are happy, the obvious interest of their owners being to feed them well and not to overwork them? But what else is this than the interest of the carman who takes due care of his horses because they are his property? The plea shows marvellous simplicity! It cannot indeed be denied, you say, that there are brutes, slaves of passion, stupidly greedy of gain, who treat their slaves worse than their beasts of burden. But this, you judge, is a trifle, and need not be regarded in legislation. Society is always in the right, the slave always in the wrong. And how can it be otherwise? A negro, who has committed the crime of considering himself ill-used, and hence takes to flight, *robs* the master to whom he belongs; he ought then to be treated and punished as a robber, and as a robber he is flogged in order to teach him not again to steal himself from his owner. And as a runaway slave is not easily re-taken, his master is obliged to employ a severe punishment, in order to deter others. Then a slave owner is not at liberty to sell a recovered

slave at the same price as an obedient negro, any more than a horse dealer may pass off a vicious animal as a trustworthy one. The fugitive negro must therefore be branded as much as the half-savage buffalo. This is the only way to prevent the crime punished by all civilized codes under the head of "Deception as to the quality of the merchandise sold." The slave who knows what awaits him, uses his legs vigorously, and stimulated by the fear of punishment, not less than by the desire of liberty, runs so fast that he is not easily caught; or crafty, as men of servile condition generally are, he conceals himself so well that the cleverest detectives would fail to lay hands on him. A pretty affair truly! There are however dogs which have a keener nose for runaway negroes than smugglers' dogs have for custom-house officers on the Belgian frontier. These are a race of large mastiffs, strong in the jaws, and without more prejudices than their masters in regard to those *blocks of Ebony*. Such animals become one of the protective institutions of the country. This is not irony, it is history, a history whose record is on high, crying for vengeance! And then, in favour of slavery though you are, especially when you have no slaves yourself, you may feel inclined to loosen some links of the system. But once any link drops, good-bye to the whole. There is then a grave danger in yielding to the mass of the people power to make laws and to apply them. As a precaution you must decree that in the electoral committees, each owner of slaves shall have so many votes as there are heads in his gangs. Please to remember in this particular that those heads belong to men. Universal suffrage has received a new homage, nevertheless political power does not leave certain opulent families, interested in maintaining slavery no matter at what price.*

* We need not enlarge on the deplorable consequences of slavery on private morality. The fact is demonstrated that, all being weighed, the whites do not suffer less than the blacks. With both the moral level sinks deplorably low. Not a few Southern planters have been known to sell their own sons and daughters. If the reader wishes to form an exact idea of all that we here merely hint at, let him read an excellent work, rich in facts and figures, and breathing a laudable spirit, lately published by Mr R. Dale Owen, under the title of "The Wrong of Slavery, the Right of Emancipation." Philadelphia, 1864.

It may now be easily conceived how it happened that a population spread indeed over an immense territory, but without natural limits; united by language, by religion, by common institutions, by a federal bond, guaranteeing to each division of the nation much internal self-government; united also by glorious and sacred recollections, found itself at the end of some years separated into two sections, so hostile the one to the other as to hold it impossible to live together in peace. And do you not see how, all other things being equal, good and bad qualities, advantages and disadvantages of climate being compensated, slavery was on one side the first link of an iron chain, the other links of which were called contempt of labour, military ascendancy, cruelty, servile habits, servile morals, servile pleasures; while on the other in virtue of affiliation not less close, liberty produced its natural consequences, that is to say, the development of well-being, of intelligence, of industry, of commerce, of democracy, with its susceptibilities, its philanthropic tendencies, its constant endeavours for the physical and moral elevation of disinherited classes? * Assuredly we are not one of those who close their eyes to the faults

* It is to this difference of internal regimen that we ought to ascribe the success of the patrons of slavery in the commencement of the war. In a military point of view they were much better prepared, organized, and disciplined than the men of the North. More able generals, a far greater facility of concentration, and especially measures taken by the Southern government before Lincoln's advent to power, did the rest.

and wrong-doings of the free States of the Union. Men are still far from angels, and when such a conflict bursts out, it is very rare that both sides have not each its share of sins to expiate. But we could never take part in human affairs were we not to enlist until a faultless army passed by our doors. In cases of the sort details must be disregarded, and you must go back to principles. When there you have only one thing to do; namely, to determine on which side floats the banner of humanity, and to follow where it leads.

We have felt it our duty to recall these circumstances, that those of our readers who are not familiar with the American question may clearly understand the nature of the obstacles which Parker and his abolitionist friends had to overcome; and that they may be able to judge of the ardour, the passion which he put forth in that struggle in which the energies of his last years were concentrated.

The principal ground of reproach against the North was that apathetic indifference in which it slumbered in political matters, in spite of multiplied warnings from those who had studied the history of the world enough to perceive clearly the peril that threatened their own country. How often have men called practical—merchants, manufacturers, agriculturists—had occasion to regret having treated as dreamers or crack-brained prophets men whose work is thinking, men who know that above pecuniary interests there reign great historical laws, the majesty of which no nation despises with impunity. It is certain that the great American crisis might have been prevented if, at the beginning, and before the South had enclosed itself in a pass out of which was no egress, the North had given utterance to the voice of its large majority, and had taken energetic measures for confining slavery within the narrow circle in which it would have quietly died of itself without a compulsory abolition. On the contrary, happy

at being exempt from the plague in their own borders, absorbed in their physical labours and lucrative operations, dazzled with its prodigious prosperity, the North allowed the evil to grow to such a pitch that the remedy became too costly and painful. Not even did the North take care, as it might easily have done, to secure a majority devoted to its principles in the councils of the Union. The Presidents were always from the South, or pledged to the partisans of slavery. The highest offices of the army and the navy, the federal magistracy, the clerks of the civil service, were overrun with Southerners. In 1854, of 40,000 Union functionaries 36 might be ranged in that category.

However, as early as 1831 a humble printer of Boston, William Lloyd Garrison, published a journal which fomented a certain abolitionist agitation. At first it called forth but a faint echo, enough nevertheless to excite notice from Southern spies, who in violent terms denounced to the Massachusetts authorities the incendiary character of "that impertinent paper." The mayor of Boston took special pains to calm their alarms. It resulted from his inquiries, he wrote to them, that the movement was absolutely insignificant, that he had found only a very small number of obscure adherents, and that Garrison himself was a very poor writer, "living in a sort of hole with a negro boy for his household." "The frequent contempt of intelligent men for the small beginnings of great events is," as Parker afterwards remarked, "an astounding circumstance. There was at one time some one who had not even a hole where to lay his head, and not the shadow of a negro boy in his service. He did not stand too well with the mayors and governors of his country. Yet that did not prevent his at last exercising some influence on the destinies of the world." In truth, notwithstanding the hole and the negro boy, the movement

spread. A party formed itself around that courageous publicist. But a long time had to pass before that party was able to influence the movement of public affairs in a marked manner. Nay, during many years, the abolitionist party, even in the North, had to suffer all the disadvantages of being unpopular. It was considered as the enemy of the Union, and politicians, desirous of rising into power, or of retaining the power they possessed, found it convenient to decline all connection therewith. Southern agents profited by this state of opinion to throw the Union more and more into a direction the avowed end of which was universal slavery. The North let them have their way, or merely murmured. Men were found who tried to compose the Northern conscience by such narcotics as saying that, after all, Providence intended the black race to be enslaved to the white, that it was written in the Bible how that the children of Ham were condemned to be slaves to the children of Shem and Japhet; as if the blacks were Ham's descendants, and as if we were the testamentary executors of the ancient patriarch. Then it was added that for love of the Union they must let the question sleep; not occasion disquiet to their Southern brethren; that slavery produced an enormous number of dollars; and that all commercial interests would be compromised if that source of certain gain were suffered to run dry. Finally, as we have said, the South had succeeded in representing the lot of its slaves as so happy that it was asked if it was not barbarous to immolate that idyllic felicity to the fanaticism of a few psalm-singers, and to the Utopian fancies of speculators who knew nothing of the facts.

One thing however greatly annoyed the South. Every year, and in spite of the most cruel measures of repression, a considerable number of slaves fled from that paradise, and at the peril of their lives reached the infernal regions of freedom. The long-suffering of the North had endured so much that the Southern planters ventured on one step more. In 1850 they obtained the infamous "Fugitive Slave Law," which by means of certain ridiculous formalities, invested any and every Southerner with the rights of a kidnapper (that was the word employed), who, whether by guile or by force, commonly by both, seized if he could the person of every coloured man inhabiting the Free States, took him before a federal judge, and caused his victim to be secured to him by the armed force of the Union, after a certain process in which everything was done to prevent the accused from escaping from the robber. A reward of ten dollars was offered per head for every kidnapped negro. Well may the North have begun to ask if the requirements of its Southern associates were not turning into the most hateful tyranny that could be imagined. The publication of this abominable enactment marks the time when Parker's abolitionist crusade became active and ardent. His declared adhesion was a happy thing for the emancipation party. It procured for them an orator of the first order, a defender whose disinterestedness was above suspicion, and who excelled in the art of arousing slumbering consciences. With Parker, Sumner, Wendell Phillips, Beecher Stowe, brother and sister, abolitionism could boast of having for organs the most eloquent tongues in the Union.

Parker's ideas on slavery had not from his youth up taken the same decided turn as his religious views. Not that he was ever a friend of that odious institution; the gentle and pious Channing had already denounced in his own circle, and for intelligent ears everywhere, the peril, the shame, the immorality of slavery. But you may see that the young religious reformer did not yet attach par-

ticular importance to the question. In a letter which in 1836 he addressed from Washington to Miss Cabot we read what follows:

"Plenty of negroes one sees here, terribly blue, all the week. I saw in the paper of to-day an advertisement offering cash for 700 negroes of both sexes. That sounds harsh to Northern ears. They are a queer set, those negroes; some of them are very merry, dancing and capering about on the side-walk as if they had nought to do but dance. I saw two negro lovers walking arm-in-arm, cooing and billing, as if they could not restrain their joy in one another's presence. Why should *colour* prevent them?"

Manifestly the institution is theoretically repugnant to him, but he is not grieved at seeing human beings in the condition of slaves. But in the degree in which he reflected on the destinies of his country and the moral obstacles which stood in the way of their glorious accomplishment, he saw the gulf grow broader and deeper which threatened to swallow up the honour and the conscience of the American Union.

In 1842 the evil appeared to him so serious that he entreated a lady friend, who was leaving for Georgetown in Virginia, to make careful inquiries on the spot, and to communicate to him what she learnt. From 1845, the year of the annexation of the Texas, he never let an opportunity slip of thundering against the great "sin of the nation." The more time went on, the more he saw the storm thicken, and the great majority of his fellow-citizens go forwards to meet it, these with the blindness of selfishness, those with the blindness of frivolity. His correspondence and his discourses abound in prophetic intuitions of the great cataclysm which the sages of materialist politics hardened their hearts not to see. In 1851 he wrote what follows to Mr Allen:

"I think if the slave power continue to press their demand as they have done for a few years past, that there will be a civil war, which will either decide the Union or else extirpate slavery. The time is not come for fighting. How soon it will come nobody knows; it may not come at all. God grant it do not. But this is ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων, ἀλλ' οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος (*the beginning of* labour pangs, but *the end is not yet*, Matt. xxiv. 6, 8)."

In May, 1854, at the time of the Crimean War, he wrote to Professor Desor:

"The South takes side with Russia. Alone of all Europe she never found fault with American slavery; she sympathizes with us. This is what the Southern journals have said openly all the winter. We must have a dreadful chastisement one day. I suppose it will come from our towns, from civil war."

About the same time he wrote to Mr Seward, afterward Secretary of State of the Union, Lincoln's friend and counsellor, a letter of rare insight, and of which we transcribe the greater part:

"It seems to me that the country has now got to such a pass that the people must interfere, and take things out of the hands of the politicians who now control them, or else the American State will be lost. Allow me to show *in extenso* what I mean. Here are two distinct elements in the nation, viz., Freedom and Slavery. The two are hostile in nature, and therefore mutually invasive; both are organized in the institutions of the land. These two are not equilibrious; so the nation is not a figure of equilibrium. It is plain (to me) that these two antagonistic forms cannot long continue in this condition. There are three possible modes of adjusting the balance; all conceivable:—

"1. There may be a separation of the two elements. Then each may form a whole, equilibrious, and so without that cause of dissolution in itself, and have a national unity of action, which is indispensable. Or,—

"2. Freedom may destroy Slavery; then the whole nation continues as a harmonious whole, with national unity of action, the result of national unity of place. Or,—

"3. Slavery may destroy Freedom, and then the nation become an integer—only a unit of despotism. This, of course, involves a complete revolution of all the national ideas and national institutions. It must be an industrial despotism; a strange anomaly. Local self-government must give place to centralization of national power; the State Courts be sucked up by that enormous sponge, the Supreme Court of the United States, and individual liberty be lost in the monstrous mass of democratic tyranny. Then America goes down to utter ruin, covered with worse shame than is heaped on Sodom and Gomorrah. For we also, with horrid indecency, shall

have committed the crime against nature, in our Titanic lust of wealth and power.

"1. Now I see no likelihood of the first condition being fulfilled. Two classes rule the nation; 1. the mercantile men, who want money, and 2. the political men, who want power. There is a strange unanimity between these two classes. The mercantile men want money as a means of power; the political men want power as a means of money. Well, while the Union affords money to the one and power to the other, both will be agreed, will work together to 'save the Union.' And as neither of the two has any great political ideas, or reverence for the higher law of God, both will unite in what serves the apparent interest of these two—that will be in favour of Slavery, and of centralized power."

At the end of the letter he announces his intention, with a view to consider of means for warding off the danger, to take part in a grand convention of the free States convened at Buffalo, and he closes by assuring his correspondent of the confidence he felt in him "in these days of peril for liberty."

In 1856, in a letter written to Miss H., then in Europe, we read as follows:

"There are two constitutions in America, one written on parchment and deposited at Washington; the other written also on parchment, but on a drum-head. It is to the latter we shall have to appeal, and that very soon. I am making all my pecuniary arrangements in the prevision of a civil war"

Here follows a fragment from a discourse delivered the same year:

"We are going on toward a civil war worse than that of the Crimea. How long will it last? 'Until slavery has thrown liberty on the ground,' say our Southern masters; and we reply energetically, 'Until liberty has driven slavery out of America.'"

Passage from another discourse, preached in 1858:

"We have too much neglected our militia; we may want soldiers at a moment when we least think so."

Extract from a letter written from Rome, in 1859, to Mr Francis Jackson:

"The American people will have to march to rather severe music, I think, and it is better for them to face it in season. A few years ago it did not seem difficult first to check slavery, and then to end it without any bloodshed. I think this cannot be done now, nor ever in the future. All the great charters of HUMANITY have been writ in blood. I once hoped that of American Democracy would be engrossed in less costly ink; but it is plain, now, that our pilgrimage must lead through a Red Sea, wherein many a Pharaoh will go under and perish. Alas! that we are not wise enough to be just, or just enough to be wise, and so gain much at small cost!"

A portion of a letter written from Rome in the same year, to Miss Osgood:

"I do not wonder at Captain Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry: it is only the beginning, the end is not yet. But such is my confidence in democratic institutions that I do not fear the result. There is a glorious future for America, but on the other side of the *Red Sea*."

These citations do honour to the keenness of Parker's foresight. They also explain to us the devouring zeal he put forth in opposition to a plague of which he, before others, saw so vividly both the nearness and the horrors.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KIDNAPPERS.

The *Charleston Courier*—Black fugitives—Committees of Vigilance—The underground railway—Conscience and law—William and Ellen Craft—Marriage of the proscribed—Apology of an abolitionist minister—Shadrach—Thomas Sims—Letter to the Syracusans—Anthony Burns—A meeting at Faneuil Hall—A blow missing its mark—A ransomed slave—Judicial prosecutions.

LONG would be the list of all the discourses delivered by Theodore Parker against slavery. The Southern press was eager in denouncing *that mad parson*, who thus kept howling at the sacred ark. The *Charleston Courier* distinguished itself by the bitterness of its attacks. In reply Parker satisfied himself with publishing the advertisements of negroes offered to be sold by public auction like other merchandise, which were contained in the number in which he had been so coarsely assailed. Here were offered bargains of negroes, "old but vigorous," "fine and lively;" there, "valuable negroes;" in another part, "children nine years old," "four years," even "six months;" further on, "an intelligent dark woman." In the same column and mixed up with the foregoing the ensuing might be read: On sale, "oxen and stallions," "a young buffalo and his harness," "a good cook, in the flower of his age."

Parker's answer sufficed.

His opposition to slavery led him more than once from theoretical controversy to physical struggle. We

have mentioned the painful impression which the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law produced from one end of the Northern States to another. The able statesmen of the South had not foreseen this, at least in the degree in which it showed itself from the very first. When you have hardened yourself in disdaining the sympathetic affections of human nature, you forget that in other people they may still remain very vivid, and you no longer count them among the serious forces whose power of resistance you have to encounter. Imagine the inexpressible anguish which suddenly seized thousands of coloured people who had long lived peacefully in the towns and villages of the North, not much loved by the white population, but far more at their ease in the open atmosphere of liberty than in the old house of bondage. Many of them had got together a little property, had married, had done well, and that honestly. All of them laboured and freely filled functions, subaltern indeed, but not so badly remunerated, and which a proud Yankee would have been unwilling to undertake. They were domestics, clerks, shoemakers, tailors, &c. Like the whites, they were protected by the law; they could procure for their children the benefits of education, and if white society was all but hermetically sealed against them, Christian charity ministered to their necessities. But the infamous law once passed, everything was changed as if by a clap of thunder. Any moment each one of them might by the authority of Federal law be apprehended and sent back to his former master to undergo severe bodily chastisement, and to be consigned to a worse condition of slavery than ever. In the three days which followed the signing of the bill by the President more than forty ex-slaves fled from Boston. An exode of the same kind commenced in other cities.

Then did the honest people of the North begin to feel themselves seized with one of those Anglo-Saxon fits of

indignation which resemble a tide rising under the impulse of a yet distant tempest. At the first moment, you may think them inoffensive, but by little and little the hurricane unchains itself, when it pours forth furious billows, which no power in the world can stay.

In many places *Indignation Meetings* were held, and committees of vigilance were organized. The task of the latter was to prevent the arrest of fugitive slaves, or, when arrested, to furnish them with such legal aid as might prevent their being sent back into captivity. The Southern slave-hunters soon discovered that it was difficult and sometimes dangerous to carry on their traffic in the Free States. The opinion spread among the blacks, as well as the whites, that the law could not be executed, and that it would remain a dead letter. With this end in view the famous "Underground Railway," which played so important a part in the history of slavery in the States, was organized. Its object was to furnish secret aid by which fugitive slaves might escape the hands of the kidnappers, the officers of police, and the blood-hounds set on foot to pursue and seize them. Less precautions have been taken, less mystery has been practised, to overturn dynasties full of suspicion and armed from top to toe, than to facilitate the passage of those pitiable runaways into Canada. What a disgrace for the American Republic that human beings not even accused of crime, should during several years wait for the instant when touching soil subject to her Britannic Majesty, they could breathe at ease and exclaim, *At last I am free!* Every year, down to the outbreak of the civil war, nearly a thousand fugitives profited by the underground railway.

It must not, however, be imagined that this reaction of popular opinion was already universal, or that it was powerful enough to neutralize the efforts of the opposite party. The inclination to concede to the South was of

too long standing for things to admit of a change so early and so widely spread. In the rural districts and in the small towns the indignation was general. But the bulk of the black population was not in them. In the large towns where it was much condensed there was by its side a white *mob*, consisting mainly of Irishmen, who saw no inconvenience in the fact that the execution of the law had the effect of raising certain salaries. This mob, moreover, was the blind instrument of high political and commercial influences which attached great importance to the laws being carried into effect. Daniel Webster, the most eminent politician of the North, who aspired to the honours of the Presidency, wishing to conciliate the support of the South, put forth all the resources of his talents to persuade his fellow-citizens not to encourage the abolitionists, and to resign themselves to the fugitive slave enactments out of respect for the law and for love of the Union. Sad apostasy of a man endowed with rare merit, who belied the liberalism of his youth under the fascination of that presidential chair from which Southern ingratitude and his own approaching death excluded him for ever. It is easy to conceive the embarrassment experienced by the honest people of the North to whom it had just been said, "It is a severe law, nevertheless a law it is, and every good citizen is bound to obey the law. Respect for law is an Anglo-Saxon virtue."* Then the South began to utter threats of secession if regard was not paid to what it called its rights. There were even, especially in the pulpits of the large cities, preachers who, to the delight of the local authorities and the chief men of their churches, represented obedience to the infamous law as a duty toward God. Owing to this neutralization, half honest, half selfish, of the efforts of

* See No. 5 of the Extracts at the end.

the committees, about 200 arrests took place in the Northern States during the six years which followed the promulgation of the law. This is little in comparison with what the slavery-mongers had hoped for; but taken in itself the figure is by no means inconsiderable. Of the number a dozen kidnapped slaves were delivered by popular indignation; some others succeeded in legally establishing their freedom. The remainder were sent back into the South and again put into chains. Boston was one of the first Northern cities that organized a Committee of Vigilance, and Theodore Parker was one of the first in Boston to take part in its deliberations and endeavours. He was soon made its president. Then came the moment when his words were to pass into deeds.

Kidnappers arrived in Boston in October, 1850. They bore warrants to arrest two runaway slaves of Georgia, a young man named Craft and his companion Ellen. The young people lived quietly on their labour and formed part of Parker's Church. The Southern agents thought it of special consequence to consolidate the authority of the new law by a striking capture, effected in even the stronghold of abolitionism. The young people were forthwith placed under the protection of the Committee of Vigilance. They knew what awaited them if they were arrested—cruel punishment for the man, a brothel for the woman, who was young. The population of Boston, aroused by the Committee, had decided not to allow the theft to be committed. The kidnappers tried to draw their prey into a snare. Their guile was defeated. But they could make a second effort, and at the worst, the Federal police were obliged to give them effectual aid. Parker concealed Ellen in his own home. Thereby he made himself liable to a fine of a thousand dollars and imprisonment for six months. The young woman remained in his house nearly a week. Her husband had

armed himself, and owing to support from the people, was able to move up and down in the city. An extract from Parker's journal will show the sentiments by which he was animated at the moment:

> "I am not a man who loves violence; I respect the sacredness of human life, but this I say, solemnly, that I will do all in my power to rescue any fugitive slave from the hands of any officer who attempts to return him to bondage. I will resist him as gently as I know how, but with such strength as I can command; I will ring the bells and alarm the town; I will serve as head, as foot, or as hand to any body of serious and earnest men, who will go with me, with no weapons but their hands, in this work. I will do it as readily as I would lift a man out of the water, or pluck him from the teeth of a wolf or snatch him from the hands of a murderer. What is a fine of a thousand dollars, and gaoling for six months, to the liberty of a man? My money perish with me if it stand between me and the eternal law of God!"

Meanwhile he was compelled to seek protection in arms himself, a report being in circulation that his house was to be entered by night. But after having let the kidnappers and the policemen know that whoever should make their way into his house would do so at the peril of their lives, he went to the hotel where the kidnappers lodged, and, in a personal interview, set before their eyes so dark a picture of the feelings of the population in regard to them that they judged it prudent to decamp by the first train.

During this time the Committee of Vigilance had collected a sum of money sufficient to pay the passage of the two proscripts to England, and to aid them to settle in London. Until they were embarked under the protection of the British flag it was to be feared that the pro-slavery party would take their revenge. William and Ellen had for years lived together as man and wife, but it was after the negro fashion, the Southern planters not choosing to legitimate the civil condition of their human cattle. Before they left they desired to be married conformably to the laws

of the United States. Parker united them. What he did on the occasion may be declared in his own words.

"Before the marriage ceremony I always advise the young couple of the duties of matrimony, making such remarks as suit the peculiar circumstances and character of the parties. I told them what I usually tell all bridegrooms and brides. Then I told Mr Craft that their position demanded peculiar duties of him. He was an outlaw; there was no law which protected his liberty in the United States; for that, he must depend on the public opinion of Boston, and on himself. If a man attacked him, intending to return him to slavery, he had a right, a natural right, to resist the man unto death; but he might refuse to exercise that right for *himself*, if he saw fit, and suffer himself to be reduced to slavery rather than kill or even hurt the slave-hunter who should attack him. But his *wife* was dependent on him for protection; it was his duty to protect her, a duty which it seemed to me he could not decline. So I charged him, if the worst came to the worst, to defend the life and the liberty of his wife against any slave-hunter at all hazards, though in doing so he dug his own grave and the grave of a thousand men.

"Then came the marriage ceremony; then a prayer such as the occasion inspired. Then I noticed a Bible lying on one table and a sword on the other. I took the *Bible*, put it into William's right hand, and told him the use of it. It contained the noblest truths in the possession of the human race, &c., it was an instrument he was to use to help save his own soul, and his wife's soul, and charged him to use it for its purpose, &c. I then took the *sword* (it was a 'Californian knife;' I never saw such a one before, and am not well skilled in such things); I put that in his right hand, and told him if the worst came to the worst to use that to save his wife's liberty, or her life, if he could effect it in no other way. I told him that I hated violence, that I reverenced the sacredness of human life, and thought there was seldom a case in which it was justifiable to take it; that if he could save his wife's liberty in no other way, then this would be one of the cases, and as a *minister of religion* I put into his hands these two dissimilar instruments, one for the body, if need were—one for his soul at all events. Then I charged him not to use it except at the last extremity, to bear no harsh and revengeful feelings against those who once held him in bondage, or such as sought to make him and his wife slaves even now. 'Nay,' I said, 'if you cannot use the sword in defence of your wife's liberty without hating the man you strike, then your action will not be without sin.'

"I gave the same advice I should have given to white men under the like circumstances—as, escaping from slavery in Algiers."

The young couple succeeded in quitting the States

and in reaching England. This took place in 1851, the year of the first Great Exhibition. Crowds flocked to the Crystal Palace to see the Crafts. The North American Union, which shone but moderately in that industrial competition, were however able to exhibit to the eyes of the "Old World" a truly indigenous product, namely, two rescued slaves who sang *God save the Queen*, to thank Heaven for having caused the slave-hounds to lose their scent. The incident was recited by Parker to his susceptible fellow-citizens in that caustic tone which marked his eloquence. Still better, he wrote a letter to President Fillmore, to tell him what he himself had done in order to remain faithful to his religion, that is to say, to his respect for God's laws. He received no reply, but it was not thought advisable to have them pursued. At a conference of Boston ministers, held in May of the same year, 1851, Parker offered his apology of the conduct which he, as minister, had observed in regard to the Crafts. His adversaries bitterly reproached him with being a violator of the laws of his country, and with encouraging their infraction both by word and by example. He defended himself so effectively as to take from his aggressors all desire to revive the subject. Let us cite at least the termination of that vigorous discourse.

"I have in my church black men, fugitive slaves. They are the crown of my apostleship, the seal of my ministry. It becomes me to look after their bodies in order to 'save their souls.' This law has brought us into the most intimate connection with the sin of slavery. I have been obliged to take my own parishioners into my house to keep them out of the clutches of the kidnapper. Yes, gentlemen, I have been obliged to do that; and then to keep my doors guarded by day as well as by night. Yes, I have had to arm myself. I have written my sermons with a pistol in my desk,—loaded, a cap on the nipple, and ready for action. Yea, with a drawn sword within reach of my right hand. This I have done in Boston; in the middle of the nineteenth century; been obliged to do it to defend the [innocent] members of my own church, women as well as men!

"You know that I do not like fighting. I am no non-resistant, 'that nonsense never went down with me.' But it is no small matter which will compel me to shed human blood. But what could I do? I was born in the little town where the fight and bloodshed of the Revolution began. The bones of the men who first fell in that war are covered by the monument at Lexington, it is 'sacred to liberty and the rights of mankind:' those men fell 'in the sacred cause of God and their country.' This is the first inscription that I ever read. These men were my kindred. My grandfather drew the first sword in the Revolution; my fathers fired the first shot; the blood which flowed there was kindred to this which courses in my veins to-day. Besides that, when I write in my library at home, on the one side of me is the Bible which my fathers prayed over, their morning and evening prayer, for nearly a hundred years. On the other side there hangs the firelock my grandfather fought with in the old French war, which he carried at the taking of Quebec, which he zealously used at the battle of Lexington, and beside it is another, a trophy of that war, the first gun taken in the Revolution, taken also by my grandfather. With these things before me, these symbols; with these memories in me, when a parishioner, a fugitive from slavery, a woman, pursued by the kidnappers, came to my house, what could I do less than take her in and defend her to the last? But who sought her life—or liberty? A parishioner of my brother Gannett came to kidnap a member of my church; Mr Gannett preaches a sermon to justify the fugitive slave law, demanding that it should be obeyed; yes, calling on his church members to kidnap mine, and sell them into bondage for ever. Yet all this while Mr Gannett calls himself 'a Christian,' and me an 'Infidel;' his doctrine is 'Christianity,' mine only 'Infidelity,' 'Deism, at the best!'

"O my brothers, I am not afraid of men, I can offend them. I care nothing for their hate, or their esteem. I am not very careful of my reputation. But I should not dare to violate the eternal law of God. You have called me 'Infidel.' Surely I differ widely enough from you in my theology. But there is one thing I cannot fail to trust; that is, the infinite God, Father of the white man, Father also of the white man's slave. I should not dare violate His laws come what may come;—should you? Nay, I can love nothing so well as I love my God."

The pro-slavery party of Boston felt not a little disconcerted by the failure of its first attempt. Their Southern friends resolved to have their revenge at any price. Their measures this time were secretly taken. A black, by name Shadrach, was apprehended in Boston on the 15th of February, 1851, and placed before the tribunal which

was to replace him in the hands of his former masters. Again the law was more feeble than public opinion. Amid applause from the people a band of coloured men rushed into the court and carried Shadrach off even before the police saw what was the nature of the transaction. A placard affixed to all the walls of the city by the committee over which Parker presided had heated men's minds.

Proceedings were taken against Shadrach's liberators. The legal members of the Vigilance Committee gave the accused the benefit of their counsels. A formal charge could be got up only against the leader of the liberating band, a young mulatto, named Robert Morris, a law student. He received a unanimous acquittal from the jury.

This second defeat exasperated the patrons of slavery. It must be stated that at the time the Federal power, the post-office, the police, the army—everything was at the disposal of the party. The more the opinion of honest Northerners rose in hostility against the execution of the iniquitous law, the more the self-love of the Southern slave-mongers became interested in braving and overcoming it. Boston contained more than 9000 men of colour, and more than a year had passed since the law was promulgated without yielding the small success of a single captive. The failure became intolerable. A regular plot was laid to avenge the authority of law at the expense of a poor negro named Thomas Sims, who was kidnapped in the streets of Boston on the night of the 3rd of April, 1851. Passers-by attempted to interfere, but they were induced to desist by the statement that Sims was seized, not as a fugitive slave, but as a disturber of the public peace. He was immediately taken before the tribunal without being able to obtain a verdict from a jury; and, although the laws of Massachusetts required such a preliminary, he was condemned. A herd posted in the court

for the purpose, applauded the judgment. But, despite the imposing forces arrayed to intimidate the people, the police durst not send off their victim in open day. Profiting by the veil of night, however, they stealthily put their prisoner on board a vessel ready to sail. Some days after he was put on shore at Savannah and thrown into prison, where he suffered whipping several times. This is the last that is known of the unhappy man.

Great indignation prevailed in Boston. For the first time the legal crime of man-stealing had been committed in the streets of that proud city. A few days after, the public conscience was avenged by Theodore Parker in his famous discourse entitled *The Chief Sins of the People.** The business was passing beyond the region of words. A year later an eminent and decided enemy of slavery, Charles Sumner, one of Parker's friends, was made a member of that American Senate in which he was to renew the tradition of ancient virtues by the courageous energy with which he planted, in open Congress, and in face of the opposite party, now all-powerful, that banner of emancipation which to-day floats victorious above the counsels of the Union. The slave-hunters dared not forthwith repeat their insolent defiance to the public opinion of Boston. The next year, on the anniversary of Sims's extradition, Parker delivered in a public sitting of the Committee of Vigilance, another speech, replete with facts and brilliant with eloquence, which produced a deep impression. Among other remarkable things it contained an overwhelming application of the best-known passages of the New Testament:

"Out of the iron house of bondage, a man, guilty of no crime but love of liberty, fled to the people of Massachusetts. He came to us a wanderer, and Boston took him in to an unlawful jail; hungry, and she fed him with a felon's meat; thirsty, she gave him the gall and vinegar of a slave to drink; naked, she clothed him with chains; sick and in prison, he cried for a helper, and Boston sent him a marshal and a commissioner; she set him between kidnappers, among the most infamous of men, and they made him their slave. Poor and in chains, the government of the nation against him, he sent round to the churches his petition for their prayers;—the churches of commerce they gave him their curse: he asked of us the sacrament of freedom, in the name of our God; and in the name of *their* Trinity, the Trinity of money,—Boston standing as godmother at the ceremony,—in the name of their God they baptized him a slave. The New England church of commerce said, 'Thy name is Slave. I baptize thee in the name of the golden eagle, and of the silver dollar, and of the copper cent.'"

* See the end of the volume.

This event forced the Vigilance Committee to redouble their efforts. Evidently their best tactics were to send those who were threatened with capture off before legal measures could be taken against them. The plan succeeded more than once. In this way 400 persons of colour were enabled to escape into Canada within the space of a single year. Moreover the several Committees of Vigilance combined with a view to mutual aid. In other places besides Boston, e. g. Syracuse (New York), slaves taken by guile were forcibly delivered by the people aroused by the tocsin. Parker wrote to the Syracusans a letter of congratulation, in which among other passages full of passion and irony were these words:

"The Fugitive Slave Bill is one of the most iniquitous statutes enacted in our time; it is only fit to be broken. In the name of justice, I call upon all men who love law, to violate and break this Fugitive Slave Bill; to do it 'peaceably if they can; forcibly if they must.' We can make it like the Stamp Act of the last century, which all Britain could not enforce against disobedient Americans. I do not suppose this can, in all cases, be done without individual suffering; loss of money, imprisonment, that must be expected. Freedom is not bought with dust. I think Christianity cost something once. I mean the Christianity of Christ; there is another sort of 'Christianity' which costs nothing—and is dear even at that price."

These fatiguing occupations were added to all those which we have previously enumerated. Parker suffered greatly from the impossibility of carrying on his scholarly

studies in the midst of this continual storm, but he resigned himself to the duty of the day and the hour, postponing to a less agitated period the composition of several voluminous works which he had long contemplated. Meanwhile the slave party pursued in Congress its triumphant career, and presented the Kansas Nebraska Bill, the success of which struck another blow at the liberal principles and the rights of the Free States. Unhappily that took place which so often takes place when there is a protracted struggle between a population animated with generous sentiment but not willing to be carried into revolution, and an organized power, master of social influences, material forces, and vulgar interests; if only that power takes care not to exasperate too much the feelings which are hostile to it, it may almost without fail calculate on the lassitude of people's minds and the gradual cooling down of early passions.

Thus events proceeded in America during the years 1852—1854. The original ardour displayed against the Fugitive Slave Law had lessened, particularly at Boston. From the time of the seizure of Thomas Sims, the slave agents prudently allowed the brutal law to sleep, as they found the Vigilance Committee ever ready to counteract their doings. On the other hand, the ascendency which the South owed to their cohesion, their audacity, their effrontery, in time imposed on many Northern people. Accordingly, as soon as the Nebraska Bill was passed, the pro-slavery power resolved to employ its new victory for the consolidation of former ones. Another poor negro was arrested on the 24th of May, 1854, under a false charge of theft. He was put into irons, while awaiting the force of a trial which was sure to send him back to his *soi-disant* owner, Colonel Suttle, of Alexandria, in Virginia. Parker immediately set the Committee of Vigilance in movement. He himself went to visit the

unhappy prisoner, and succeeded in getting his chains removed; but he was not restored to liberty. At the same time an "indignation meeting" was convened at Faneuil Hall, the ordinary *Forum* of the Boston citizens. The crisis was serious. In view of certain possibilities Federal soldiers guarded the approaches to the prison, and, as was said, order had been given to shoot the prisoner rather than let him escape. The Federal authority had also concentrated troops around the city. Finally, the militia were under arms. All this array to reduce a single negro into slavery! An indignant multitude filled Faneuil Hall. Their ardour was carried beyond bounds by Parker's burning words:

"'There is no North,' said Mr Webster. There is none. The South goes clear up to the Canada line. No, gentlemen: there is no Boston, to-day. There *was* a Boston, once. Now, there is a North suburb to the city of Alexandria,—that is what Boston is. And you and I, fellow-subjects of the State of Virginia,—(Cries of 'No, no!' 'Take that back again!') I will take it back when you show me the fact is not so. Men and brothers, I am not a young man; I have heard hurrahs and cheers for liberty many times; I have not seen a great many deeds done for liberty. I ask you, are we to have deeds as well as words?"

Then he told his auditors that the municipal authorities were leagued with the slave dealers, that on the morrow their fellow-citizen Anthony Burns (the name of the apprehended negro) was to be sent back into the land of bondage, and that it depended on them to prevent this fresh insult and this additional crime.

"Gentlemen: I am a clergyman and a man of peace. I love peace. But there is a means, and there is an end; liberty is the end, and sometimes peace is not the means towards it. Now, I want to ask you what you are going to do? (A voice: 'Shoot, shoot!') There are ways of managing this matter without shooting anybody. Be sure that these men who have kidnapped a man in Boston are cowards—every mother's son of them; and if we stand up there resolutely, and declare that this man shall not go out of the city of Boston, *without shooting a gun*—(Cries of 'That's it!' and great applause)—then he won't go back. Now, I am going to propose

that when you adjourn, it be to meet at *Court Square to-morrow morning, at nine o'clock.* (A large number of hands were raised, but many voices cried out, 'Let's go to-night!' 'Let's pay a visit to the slave-catchers at the Revere House; put that question.') Do you propose to go to the Revere House to-night? then show your hands! (Some hands were held up.) It is not a vote. We shall meet at Court Square, at nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

Parker's intention was to call forth a demonstration, pacific indeed, but so imposing in number and determination as to make the return of Burns into servitude impossible. Unfortunately some over-heated persons lost patience, and even before the meeting was dispersed an attack was made on the prison. At first the soldiers were driven off, the prison-gates were broken open, and one of the Marshal's force was killed. When, however, the soldiers discovered that the assailants were small in number, they began to fire at them indiscriminately. Seized with panic at this the people fled in all directions. The next day the city bristled with troops. The day was lost, and Parker's pacific plan was frustrated.

The abolitionists' defeat emboldened their adversaries, and, as is usual, the hesitating many placed themselves on the side of success. Burns was restored to his master, although Parker and his friends offered a large sum of money for his ransom. Insurrectionary proposals were made to the committee, but they shrank from the prospect of a greater effusion of blood. Besides, what was wanted was not to dissolve the Union, but to save it, and to save it the abolitionists felt they must remain in it. Events of this nature, however much to be regretted in themselves, had the great advantage of awakening public opinion, and strengthening the reaction against the preponderance of the Southern faction. Did Burns's master understand the moral bearing of the robbery which had been committed in his name? Or as Burns was intelligent and possessed of a certain eloquence, though devoid of education, did Colonel Suttle think it imprudent to have on his estate an effective talker who could tell what he had seen and heard in a land of freedom? This, however, is certain, that hardly had Burns been placed in his hands when he lent an ear to the offers of purchase which he had previously rejected. The protectors of Burns, thinking he might make a good preacher for the men of his blood, placed him in the Oberlin College in Ohio. He repaid the sacrifices which had been made on his behalf by his zeal to learn all he was taught. There remain in letters left by Theodore Parker some lines from him testifying his gratitude and the hope he cherished of contributing to the elevation of his people. Appointed minister of a society of coloured men at Saint Catherine, he discharged his duties with admirable devotedness, and died at his work in the year 1862. If he had remained a slave, some one may say, he would perhaps have been alive still. Probably so, considering that a sagacious owner would have felt it to be unprofitable to overwork his slave any more than his ox or his ass. The sole question to be answered is, which is preferable, a degraded life or a Christian death. Slavery-partisans will answer it according to their own views; for us, we say and say again, with the *Old Sergeant* of the popular poet,

Ce n'est pas tout de naître:
Dieu, mes enfans, vous donne un beau trépas! *

While Burns was in prison at Boston, Parker, instead of an ordinary sermon, preached what he called *A Lesson for the day*, † in which he gave free vent to his indignant grief, and stigmatized, as it deserved, the conduct of the Boston magistrates. In truth, they had not only obeyed the law perfunctorily, but had manifested a real eagerness

* The quotation from Béranger may be rendered thus: *Birth is not everything; may God, my children, grant you an honourable death.*

† See the end of the volume.

to facilitate the doings of the kidnappers. To use an expression that fell from Mr Sumner, he erected for them an immortal *Pillory* where they will be spectacles to remote generations. This was an additional reason for including the orator in the prosecutions directed against the instigators and the authors of the attempt made for Burns's deliverance. His speech in Faneuil Hall was looked on as a provocation to a riot. This was a misrepresentation. Wendell Phillips, the eloquent abolitionist, who had also spoken at the meeting, was implicated in these prosecutions. Parker was delighted with this opportunity of measuring himself with the enemy face to face before the eyes of the whole of America. He prepared his defence, and relied for his acquittal on a jury of honest New Englanders. But the magistrates charged with deciding on the propriety of the prosecution doubtless took the same view, for under pretext of legal informalities, they set the trial aside. Yes; you may have on your side the government, the army, the navy, and still be a slave to fear.

After the stealing of Anthony Burns, no more kidnapping was attempted in Boston.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST DAYS OF A JUST MAN.

The Nebraska Bill—Mr Brooks's arguments—Parker's printed works—American revival—Resumption of theological hostilities—Conversion or death—Presentiment of early death—Alarming symptoms—At Santa Cruz—At Montreux—At Combe Varin—At Rome—A pontifical Mass—How Cardinal Antonelli might have given a president to the United States—John Brown—His execution—Parker's farewell to the earthly life—Prophetic delirium—Lilies and roses—An ascension—The Protestant Cemetery at Florence.

THE terrible crisis occasioned by the perpetual encroachments of the pro-slavery policy advanced rapidly. In proportion as men of foresight tried to arouse public opinion to act against Southern tyranny, the latter hastened to strengthen its preponderance by securing new guarantees, and accomplishing new facts by which return to a better policy was made more costly, and, in many respects, more appalling. In 1853-54 the Missouri Compromise, by which slavery was precluded from passing the 36th degree of latitude, was set aside by the South; which obtained from Congress the admission of Nebraska into the Union as a Slave State. In the same year the odious institution was imposed on Kansas, unwilling to receive it, by armed bands sent from the South. This new State was ravaged by civil war, and with the scarcely disguised connivance of the Federal power. Parker's friend, Sumner, was the first to denounce in Congress this new crime against humanity. The partisans of the

South, though still a majority in the Chambers, began to feel ill at ease before that voice which no intimidation could silence, and before that conscience inaccessible to the seductions which had till then so often succeeded with Northern politicians. It followed that on the 21st of May, 1856, while between the sittings of Congress, Sumner, the representative of Boston, had remained at his desk to write some letters, a brutal representative of the South, and whose name ought to be preserved, a certain fellow, called Brooks, struck Mr Sumner a blow on the head which well-nigh killed him. The savage deed called forth in the South nothing but loud commendations. The combined facts suffice to show to what an extent slavery extinguishes, in those who profit by it, every sentiment of probity and honour. Who could have supposed that the North would not have been unanimous to put an end to so deplorable a state of things? In the elections for the Presidency, which took place in 1856, the abolitionist and republican candidate, Colonel Fremont, did, it is true, obtain a million and a quarter of votes. This was a striking sign of the change which was taking place in the mind of the public, but it was not enough for a victory over the pro-slavery candidate, Mr Buchanan. The North may now well applaud itself for its condescendance. That it is which gave Buchanan and his friends opportunity to prepare at their ease, during four years, for the attempted secession of the South; which has had so disastrous an issue for its originators. The principal reason is that the tide of abolitionism went on rising steadily and continually.

From 1854 to 1858 we see Theodore Parker at every instant on the breach, haranguing, writing, lecturing, preaching, travelling, ceaselessly; corresponding with Sumner, Banks, Seward, Chase, Emerson, Bancroft, the eminent historian, and a crowd of political and literary

notabilities, accomplishing with his own head and hands the work of 10 men. It was "the great sin of slavery" that furnished its principal object to this unrelaxing activity. Nevertheless, Parker did not on that account discontinue his attention to the local miseries of Boston, the needy, abandoned children, unprotected young women, &c. His sermons ever drew larger audiences, and were more readily read. To satisfy a continually increasing demand he himself published several collections, and his sermons, together with his speeches against slavery, form the greater part of the 12 volumes published in the United States under his name.* Besides the writings of which we have spoken, the collection contains a volume of Miscellanies, comprising several remarkable compositions in religious criticism, among others that on Bernard of Clairvaux, and that on German Theology, also a volume of 10 sermons on different subjects of religion and morality; a third entitled "Sermons on Theism;" then two other volumes of "Additional Speeches;" which were afterwards followed by three fresh collections of speeches, addresses, &c.†

This long series of writings presents a faithful image of that agitated life. The perusal of them is singularly attractive, not only on account of the number of subjects handled, but also because the most trodden paths of religion and morality are made verdant by Parker's manly and intelligent eloquence.

* The work for the English reader is the edition of Parker's "Collected Works," in 12 volumes, edited by Miss Cobbe, and published (1863—1865) by Trübner and Co., Paternoster Row, London. See the end of the volume.—T.

† We know (says Dr Reville) Parker's Works only in the last edition published in his lifetime, which is incomplete and defective in regard to typographical execution. We are glad to be able to recommend the excellent and complete edition which has just appeared in England, and which is due to the pious care of Miss Cobbe.

Nevertheless, Parker did not in his intentions restrict himself to this incessant production, called forth by the wants of the hour. He prepared materials for two considerable works, one of which was to consist of a critical history of celebrated natives of America, the other—the most interesting to us, and requiring researches of all kinds—would have treated of the origin of forms of religion among the dominant races of humanity. The latter Parker was most anxious to complete and publish. He hoped to embody in it the definitive results of his studies and experience. He even announced that when 50 years of age he should discontinue his practice of weekly preaching in order to give himself wholly to this great undertaking. But already the voice of the Infinite Father was on the point of saying to him: "Enough, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

He was, however, still to find himself the object of those religious animosities, which, during his last years on earth, disturbed him but comparatively little, whether from his own lassitude or their impotence. In 1859 America was overrun with that kind of religious wild-fire, commonly called a "Revival," which, coming from the other side of the Atlantic, set Ireland, Scotland, and England in a blaze, and finally went out on the downs of Holland, in which naturally tranquil land it only flickered in two or three insulated points. In the often grotesque phenomena of this movement there were serious elements which might be discerned by a piercing and impartial eye. As long as in the Protestant masses of England and America there shall not reign a more intelligent idea of religion and of the salvation of souls, as long as an orthodoxy, at once formalist and dominated by the dualism of the middle ages, shall maintain the separation of the world from God, and consequently of ordinary life from religious life, they will understand piety in no other way

than as a radical revolution, a sudden and complete rupture with the entire past. In ordinary times the multitude listens only to the voice of its lower interests, its pleasures, its physical wants, and remains indifferent to the aspirations of the soul. But in certain crises, and especially under the vague fear of great revolutions, or when heavy calamities press on society, moral shocks are felt which spread as if by contagion, and then you hear of nothing but what are called *conversions;* which rush from village to village and from land to land, some serious, some insane, and others—as the fashion may be. Commonly also these revivals are connected with twofold fervour in orthodox vigour. The crowd naturally confound the gospel with the traditional form of Christianity, with which alone they are acquainted. The doubts, the objections of vulgar unbelief, are covered and absorbed by the surging waves of religious excitement. Thereupon the *awakened* fancy it to be their duty not only to correct their faults (which would be very proper), but also to be domineering and insolent toward all who vary from the popular type of orthodoxy. One is tempted to suppose that this manifestation of ill-will is that which they find easiest, among the new duties which flow from their conversion. The American revival which broke out in the years 1857-58 had for its principal causes the gloomy perspectives in political matters, and especially the financial crisis which covered the country with private and public disasters. Nations are led to serious reflections by the same causes as individuals. With both, these returns to a more glowing piety, however desirable in themselves, have their weak sides, and even their dangerous ones. Too often men take shattered nerves for a vivified religious sentiment, and a narrow theology for an increase of fidelity to God. Hence it comes that charity, a spirit of equity, of fraternity, of good-will, that genuine

fruit of the Holy Spirit, suffer in the degree in which the so-called conversions are multiplied. The *revivalists* of Boston, as might have been expected, failed not to re-open fire against the arch-enemy of their Puritan Theology. Will it be believed? meetings were held at which the Omnipotent One was implored to send Parker CONVERSION OR DEATH.

It is no exaggeration. Here is an authentic specimen of prayers addressed to Heaven on one of these occasions:

"O Lord, if this man is a subject of grace, convert him, and bring him into the kingdom of Thy dear Son! But if he is beyond the reach of the saving influence of the gospel, remove him out of the way, and let his influence die with him."

"O Lord, send confusion and distraction into his study this afternoon, and prevent his finishing his preparation for his labours tomorrow; or if he shall attempt to desecrate Thy holy day by attempting to speak to the people, meet him there, Lord, and confound him, so that he shall not be able to speak!"

"Lord, we know that we cannot argue him down, and the more we say against him, the more will the people flock after him, and the more will they love and revere him! O Lord, what shall be done for Boston, if Thou dost not take this and some other matters in hand?"

"O Lord, if this man will still persist in speaking in public, induce the people to leave him, and to come up and fill this house instead of that."

One pious brother invited his associates to beseech God to put a hook into the jaws of the man so that he might be forced to hold his tongue. Another, more poetical, begged the Lord to confound him, as of old he confounded Saul of Tarsus, and to make him a defender of that faith which he had so long tried to destroy. Another advised his brethren to pray for Parker's conversion every day when the clocks struck one, wherever they might be, whether in the street or at their business. One of the features of this revival, alike in America and in England, ascribed special efficacy to the simultaneousness of numerous petitions put up for one and the same object. What artillerymen mean by concentric fire is well known; it is the most deadly manœuvre of their special arm. This practice seems to have been transferred to that application of the soul to God which is called prayer.

At the same time Parker received innumerable letters entreating him to be converted. His answer, bearing date April 9th, 1858, to one of these is addressed to a lady who had written to him with that view.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in my spiritual welfare, and obliged to you for the letter which has just come to hand. I gather from it that you wish me to believe the theological opinions which you entertain and refer to. I don't find that you desire anything more.

"I make no doubt the persons who pray for my conversion to the common ecclesiastical theology, and those who pray for my death, are equally sincere and honest. I don't envy them their idea of God when they ask Him to come into my study and confound me, or to put a hook into my jaws so that I cannot speak. Several persons have come to 'labour with me,' or have written me letters to convert me. They were commonly persons quite ignorant of the very things they tried to teach me; they claimed a divine illumination which I saw no proofs of, in them, in their lives, or their doctrines. But I soon found it was with them as it is with you; they did not seek to teach me either piety, which is the love of God, or morality, which is the keeping of the natural laws He has written in the constitution of man, but only to induce me to believe their catechism and join their church. I see no reason for doing either.

"I try to use what talents and opportunities God has given me in the best way I can. I don't think it is my fault that I regret the absurd doctrines which I find in the creed of these people who wish to instruct me on matters of which they are profoundly ignorant.

"But the Catholics treated the Protestants in the same way, and the Jews and the Heathens thus treated the Christians. I find good and religious men amongst all classes of men, Trinitarians, Unitarians, Salvationists, and Damnationists, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mohammedans, Heathen. There is one God for us all, and I have such perfect love of Him that it long since cast out all fear."

Alas! the good souls did not know that their prayers were superfluous. Already the first symptoms of the inexorable malady had appeared which were to reduce that courageous voice to silence. The hour came in which the love of God in Parker was to find itself in conflict

with the grief of knowing himself incapable of working any longer, for the sacred cause of God and his country. During many years he had been compelled to dispute with illness, constantly recurring, some time to employ with the diligence already described. His health, shaken as early as his college studies, had never become robust. Nothing but the internal fire which burned in him, could have supported the prodigious expenditure of the life he had led down till now. On the 11th of February, 1858, he wrote to one of his best friends, the Rev. S. J. May:

"This has been a stupid winter to me. I have less than half my old joyous power of work, hence I have not written to you these *three months!* I grind out one sermon a week; that is about all I can do. I have lectured 73 times—always close at hand—and have done for the season. Last year I lectured 80 times—all the way from the Mississippi to the Penobscot, gave temperance and anti-slavery addresses besides, and preached to two congregations, besides *reading* a deal of hard matter, and writing many things. I am 47 by the reckoning of my mother; 74 in my own (internal) account. I am an *old man*. Sometimes I think of knocking at Earth's gate with my staff, saying, 'Liebe Mutter, Let me in!' I don't know what is to come of it. My father died at 77, a great hale man, sick 10 days, perhaps. My grandmother lived to be 93, and, I think, had ne'er a doctor after her eighth baby was born in her 36th year, or thereabout. But nine of my ten brothers and sisters are already gone forward. None of them saw the 49th birthday. One lives yet, aged 60. There is a deal of work to do. I enlisted 'for the whole war,' which is not half over yet."

The terrible disease which brings to an early tomb so many of the Northern inhabitants, viz., pulmonary consumption, had seized the family of the vigorous agriculturist of Lexington. It is possible that the germs had been deposited in the constitutions of his children by the miasmata which came from marshy plains near the spots where they spent their youth. Possibly by managing himself better Theodore might have prolonged his existence beyond the fatal hour appointed for his brothers and sisters. But such a life as his had been could not but

favour the development of the formidable disease. One winter night wholly passed in an open conveyance, in the midst of inundated meadows in Albany, gave him his death-blow. From that time he was incessantly tormented by an obstinate cough. He attempted to continue his preaching duties.

The 9th of January, 1859, a few hours before the time of the service, he was seized with a pulmonary hemorrhage of the worst augury, and was compelled to write to his people already assembled that it was impossible for him to preach that day.

"Sunday Morning, Jan. 9, 1859.

"WELL-BELOVED AND LONG-TRIED FRIENDS,—I shall not speak to you to-day; for this morning, a little after four o'clock, I had a slight attack of bleeding in the lungs or throat. I intended to preach on 'The Religion of Jesus and the Christianity of the Church; or the Superiority of Good-will to Man over Theological Fancies.'"

"I hope you will not forget the contribution for the poor, whom we have with us always. I don't know when I shall again look upon your welcome faces, which have so often cheered my spirit when my flesh was weak.

"May we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, and his blessing will be upon us here and hereafter; for his infinite love is with us for ever and ever!

"Faithfully your friend,
THEODORE PARKER."

But on Sunday the society determined that his stipend should be continued on its ordinary footing until he had fully recovered his health, and his physicians recommended a year's holiday, advising him to pass the time at Santa Cruz, one of the Danish Antilles. The first effects of this leisure, spent under the skies and near the sea of the tropics, appeared very auspicious. His strength returned as if by enchantment. Then it was that he wrote his most interesting, impressive, and valuable autobiography (*Experience as a Minister*) in reply to a most affectionate letter he had received from his

congregation. He gave himself up to an old passion, botany, and to a more recent one, the noble thought which had filled his latter years, namely, emancipation of the slaves. He found at Santa Cruz a black population which had been free 11 years, and whose progress delighted him, although the whites had done little to accelerate it. But the intense heat of summer came. It was thought that a voyage into Europe would do him good. On the contrary, the visit to the old world seems to have ill agreed with him. On the 1st of June, 1859, he was in London, where he had the joy of seeing Mr and Mrs Craft, who were happy as well as grateful for what he had done for them. Then he travelled through England, France, and Switzerland, with the alternately favourable and alarming changes of health characteristic of the malady which was to end his days. The letters which he wrote during these latter months of his earthly life show us him as always engaged in great interests, drawing from the condition of Europe, such as it appeared to his eyes, prognostics favourable to liberty of every kind, without concealing from himself the severe trials through which we must pass before we reach the promised land. It was the time of the Italian war. The terrible French regiments had passed the Alps, and their irresistible onslaught had broken through the iron wall of the Austrian army. Parker took a lively interest in those events, although he somewhat doubted the aptitude of Italy to profit much by the chance of revival which was offered her. Frequently does he also speak to his friends of himself and of the state of his health. It is evident that he wishes to spare them disquietude; sometimes he even seems to recover a hope of so prolonging existence as, if not to live as he had lived, yet to finish the works which he had commenced. He had for some time seen with satisfaction tokens of progress in American Protestantism.

It was, however, painful to him to receive a salary for duties which he was unable to discharge. On the 12th of September he sent in his resignation. It was not accepted. The refusal was couched in the kindest terms. After having sojourned some time at Montreux, on the borders of the Lake of Geneva, which at that spot spreads out all the magnificence of its shores and its waters, he went to pass the ardours of the year in the Jura mountains in the cottage of Combe Varin, which belonged to his learned friend, Mr Desor.

We are indebted to the professor of Neuchâtel for a pleasing account of the manner in which the invalid passed his time in that picturesque retreat, where men, differing alike in country and opinions, but for the most part eminent in science and literature, assembled one with another, and, by conversation of the highest interest, charmed the leisure hours imposed on them by care needful for their health. Parker formed an intimacy with the excellent Hans Küchler, minister of the German Catholic Church of Heidelberg, one of the most respectable of the men that took part in the not altogether satisfactory movement occasioned twenty years ago by the ex-priest Ronge. The sudden death of Küchler, at Nidau, at the moment when he was about to rejoin his family, threw a deep shadow over the circle of Combe Varin.* From the conversations held in that Swiss Cottage came forth an Album under the care of Professor Desor, in which, by the side of excellent scientific articles, stands a freak from

* Mr Hanz Lovenz Küchler was a barrister at Heidelberg, distinguished by the courage which he employed in the service of the victims of the Baden insurrection of 1848, who fell under the exceptional jurisdiction of the Prussian Councils of War. In spite of the most discouraging circumstances Küchler succeeded in saving from death a number of the accused, and was the support and the consolation of others whom he was unable to rescue.

Parker's pen. *A Bumblebee's Thought on the Plan and Purpose of the Universe.** It is a biting satire on the language, the reasonings, the pedantic habits of learned societies, and in particular of certain theories founded entirely on man's pretension to be the final end of creation. Perhaps some writers in Europe and America, too much disposed to interpret the laws of nature in a way exclusively favourable to human pride, would gain by seriously meditating on this playful criticism. The same album contained a medallion giving in profile a portrait of Parker. His large open forehead, his beard, which he wore unshorn, white before its time, features deeply cut and expressive, denoting a singular mixture of benevolence and irony—his whole physiognomy corresponds to what we know of him from his history. During a last return of his physical energy, he hewed down with the axe some firs destined for the saw-mill. He thus went back to one of the occupations of his youth. The finest tree of all, which he cut down with a skill that astonished the spectators, was sound only in appearance; its heart was diseased. This was a sad presage.

Parker was advised to go and pass the winter in Madeira or in Egypt. A sort of impulse, which he could not explain to himself, took him to Rome, whose libraries he wished to consult in view of the works he was preparing for, and whence he hoped to proceed, in company with his friend Desor, to visit the volcanic regions of the South of the Italian peninsula.

Accordingly you may in fancy see him again traversing that Italy which he had visited 15 years before, under very different auspices. As it often happens in such diseases as his, comparative improvement followed each change of climate, and he passed the autumn of 1859 in

* Vol. xii. Miss Cobbe's edition.

great intellectual activity, too much stimulated by the news which reached him from America, and by the study of the antiquities in which Rome is so rich for one who is familiar with history and theology. In a letter written from Rome to his friend, Mr Ripley, he drew out a plan of study for the six months he intended to pass in that city: "I intend," he said, "to study, 1st, the geology of Rome; 2nd, its flora and its fauna; 3rd, its archæology; and 4th, its architecture. I have already made a beginning, though here only a few days. This labour will take me out every fine day, and will divert my mind from myself, one of the most disagreeable objects of contemplation."

On the 5th of November he wrote to another of his friends, Mr Manley, a letter, the greater part of which we transcribe. It is interesting to see what impression was made on such a spirit as his by those pontifical ceremonies to which certain persons persist in ascribing a great virtue for the conversion of souls.

"Rome, St Guy Fawkes' Day (5th Nov.), 1859.

"MY DEAR JOHN MANLEY,—Yesterday I went into the church of St Carlo (Carlo *Borromaeo*, you know), and saw the Pope, a kind-looking, fat-headed old man. There were some 60 Cardinals (in full toggery), and lots of Bishops, Archbishops, and Senators in the church. Eight men toted the old Pope round in the great chair, while he held up his right hand to bless the people. Mass was said by some high functionary, and the Pope sat in a great chair, where many of the dignitaries came up to kiss his hand—he holding it under his robe—so it was only the old clothes they kissed. I think that would not quite content a youthful lover. The Pope rode in a splendid state coach, drawn by six horses (I had the honour of talking with his coachman), followed by one or two other empty state coaches, to give additional dignity to his Holiness. Cardinals and others had elegant carriages, several to one person sometimes—with three footmen to each. Antonelli's coach is a quite plain one. But the significant part of the thing is this: there were 200 French soldiers in the street, and a battalion of Italian horse; and besides, in the church the Pope's Swiss Guard and about 200 Italian soldiers—all fully armed, with bayonets fixed. This was to make it safe for 'the

Father of the People' to come and bless 'his children!' That is a comment on the Roman Question! I walked about in the street, after I had seen enough of the tomfoolery in the church, looked at the carriages, talked with the soldiers, &c.; and then went to other business. Afterwards I saw the whole boodle of them go off. It really was a grand show. The Roman religion is nothing but a show; the Pope is a puppet, his life a ceremony; only his taking snuff is real, and he does that 'after the worst kind,' as the Yankees say; I mean, to the fullest extent. Get converted to Romanism at Rome! One must be a fool to think of it. I should as soon go over to the worship of 'Osiris, Orus, Apis, Isis,' after looking at the mummies of Thebes, as accept Romanism after seeing Rome."

Let us also quote a description of Roman politics, in 1859. Parker had the information from a reliable source, and communicated it to the same Mr Manley on the 6th of January, 1860.

"Chief City of Ecclesiastical Humbug, Jan. 6, 1860.

"I think I have no Roman news to write. Of course, you know all the public acts of the Pope and his gang, from the extracts of European newspapers at home; but here is one little item which shows how things are managed here. You remember the ferocious attack made on Mr Perkins and his family last summer, at Perugia. Mr Stockton, the American minister, visited Cardinal Antonelli, the Pope behind the Pope, and demanded satisfaction and money. A. put him off with evasions and foolish arguments, and so the interview ended in nothing. But the next day a priest visited Mr S., and talked over the matter freely; he was a great friend to America, thought the conduct of the soldiers at P. was atrocious, &c. S. was a little cautious, but told his opinions freely. Then the priest asked, 'If A. does not comply with your request, what shall you do?' and S. replied, 'There is only one thing for me, i. e. to demand my passports immediately and go home; there the affair will make so much noise that I shall probably be the next President!' The priest went off, and the next day came a letter from A., telling S. that his terms should be forthwith acceded to! So much for spunk and a sharp look-out. Of course the priest was a spy of the Cardinal, sent to find out how the matter lay on the minister's mind."

This is one of the last letters in which Parker shows ease and gaiety. In truth, his stay in Rome was in no way propitious to him. The winter had been early, wet, and cold. The symptoms of his disorder had grown

worse. Besides, the news he received from home greatly agitated him. During the autumn of 1859, John Brown made the attack on Harper's Ferry, which cost him his life, without doing much to break the bonds of the slave, which he hoped to sunder at a single blow.

Captain Brown, a native of North Elba (New York), had in Kansas distinguished himself in defence of the rights of the new State against the barefaced invasions of pro-slavery partisans. Foreseeing the frightful future which the upholding of slavery reserved for his country, he conceived a plan, more original than sensible, to hasten on its abolition. His notion was to establish himself in a strong position on the frontier of the Slave States, and inviting the blacks to join him there, to force the planters to emancipate their people, from fear of a revolt. He had kept his secret, and the abolitionist committees, especially that which was presided over by Parker, had confided to him considerable sums, to be employed generally in promoting emancipation, without knowing exactly how he would use the money. Great confidence was, however, felt in his ability. He had been seen to lead a whole troop of negroes out of the bosom of servitude, avoiding the police and their dogs, and defeating all the efforts made by mayors and governors to put a stop to the exodus. On Sunday, the 16th of October, he, at the head of a small band, surprised and took the arsenal of Harper's Ferry. He was soon compelled to surrender to superior forces, after a combat which he wished to avoid, and which seems to have been the result of a misunderstanding. Indeed it has never been possible to learn exactly what he intended to do after the capture of the arsenal, or in what his expectation was disappointed. It is probable that he expected to receive support from the interior, and that the affair having failed, he preferred being silent to compromising his associates. However it

may have been, his fate was not doubtful, and he yielded to no illusion on the subject. He went forwards to death, calm and resolute, refusing aid from pro-slavery clergymen, and in full Christian hope, being deeply assured of the holiness of his cause. As he drew near toward the place of execution, he perceived an infant negro whom its mother carried in her arms, and kissed it tenderly; then he began to speak of the beauty of the country. "You are more cheerful than I, captain," said the officer, who had superintended the melancholy affair, and who walked by his side. "Yes," Brown replied, "I may well be so."

Oh! if then the South could have been told that the days drew near when volunteers flocking from the North to repel their aggression against the capital of the Union, would bring on their superb territory the plague of War while singing

"The soul of old John Brown leads our way!"

The simple truth is that Brown, in the work of American emancipation, was one of those nobly insensate forerunners who attempt the impossible, such as Pisacane was in Sicily, and rush on to certain death, as if they were moved by an assurance of the necessity of martyrs to the success of every righteous cause.

Information of his undertaking, of his failure, and of his condemnation, with the addition that his execution was fixed for the 2nd of the ensuing December, reached Theodore Parker in the last days of November. He gathered up his remaining forces to fulminate a long accusation against slavery, in the form of a letter which he addressed to Mr Francis Jackson, and which was laid before the public. He loved John Brown on account of his character, his bravery, his self-devotement. He had foretold that he would die like a martyr and a saint, nor

less that his death would reverberate powerfully and long in the heart of the American people.

"I suppose you would like to know something about myself," he added at the close. "Rome has treated me to bad weather, which tells its story on my health and certainly does not mend me. * * * The sad tidings from America—my friends in peril, in exile, in jail, killed, or to be hung, have filled me with grief, and so I fall back a little, but hope to get forwards again. God bless you and yours, and comfort you!"

On the 2nd of December of the same year, he wrote in his journal what follows:

"'Santa Bibiana's Day.' Day appointed to hang Capt. Brown.—It is now 6 P.M., and I suppose it is all over with my friends at Charlestown, Va., and that six corpses lie there, ghastly, stiff, dead. How the heart of the slave-holders rejoices! But there is a day after to-day. John Brown did not fear the gallows; he had contemplated it, no doubt, as a possible finger-post to indicate the way to heaven. It is as good as a cross. It is a pity they could not have had two thieves to hang with Brown. There have been anti-slavery meetings to-day, at Boston, Worcester, Salem, New Bedford, Providence, &c. The telegraph has spread the news of Brown's death, I suppose, over half the Union by this time. It is a great dark day in America. Thunder and lightnings will come out of it."

Some days after he wrote to Professor Desor, while relating to him the mournful tale of Harper's Ferry.

"We are coming upon a great crisis in American history, and a civil war seems at no great distance. The slave-holders will be driven, by the logic of their principles, to demand what the free men of the North will not consent to: then comes the split—not without blood! All national constitutions are writ on the parchment of a drum-head, and published with the roar of cannon!"

With what grief must his ardent soul have been devoured at the thought of being kept from his post at such a moment! His abode at Rome, where he had all the trouble in the world to learn what was going on in the

scientific and political world, became to him more and more insupportable. In January, 1860, he felt himself more ill than ever, and began to feel that his end was approaching. The very day of the Carnival he wrote to Mr Ripley:

"O George, the life I am here slowly dragging to an end—tortuous, but painless—is very, very imperfect, and fails of much I meant to hit and might have reached, nay, should, had there been 10 or 20 years more left for me! But, on the whole, it has not been a mean life, measured by the common run of men; never a selfish one. Above all things else, I have sought to teach the true idea of man, of God, of religion, with its truths, its duties, and its joys. I never fought for myself, nor against a private foe; but have gone into the battle of the 19th century, and followed the flag of humanity. Now I am ready to die, though conscious that I leave half my work undone, and much grain lies in my fields, waiting only for him that gathereth sheaves. I would rather lay my bones with my fathers and mothers at Lexington, and think I may; but will not complain if earth or sea shall cover them up elsewhere. It is idle to run from death!"

However, he was desirous not to die in Rome;—"this land, crushed," he said, "under two curses." Mr Desor, having joined his friend, found him aged by 10 years. His wife, who lavished on him the tenderest cares, his friends, Doctor Appleton, Mr Joseph Lyman, Miss Stevenson, who had followed his steps or joined him in Europe, had now to give up all hope. He himself felt a feverish need of quitting the papal territory—he wished to die on a free soil. In five days he travelled in a carriage from Rome to Florence. Mr Desor relates that being, as he had expressly directed, aroused at the instant he was passing the boundary, he fixed his moist eyes on the first tricoloured post he met with on his road. This last salutation, made by the dying Parker to the Italian colours, recalls the benediction which Baron Bunsen addressed from his death-bed "to Italy and her liberty." To have received at her baptism the best wishes of two

such men as Parker and the venerable author of *The Signs of the Times*, is a happy augury for a nation who after so many trials is rising into a new life.

At Florence, one of his fervent admirers whom we have already mentioned, Miss Cobbe, had the painful pleasure to see him for the first time. Sharing with Mrs Parker and Miss Stevenson the attentions required by the dying man, she has traced with the charm of a well-executed pen, directed by a loving heart, the *novissima verba* (last words) of her illustrious friend.*

"You are not to think or say you have seen me—this is only the *memory* of me. Those who love me most can only wish me a speedy passage to the other world, of course. I am not afraid to die,"—he said this, adds Miss Cobbe, with what I could have supposed his old fire,—"but there was so much to do!" I replied, "You have given your life to God, to his truth and his work, as truly as any old martyr of them all." "I do not know," he rejoined: "I had great powers committed to me; I have but half used them." The next day his knowledge of what was going on around him began to get confused and dim. Miss Cobbe gave him a nosegay of lilies, the flowers he liked best. He asked what day it was. She said, "It is Sunday—a blessed day." "Yes, a most blessed day," said he suddenly, seriously, "when one has got over the superstition of it." He fell back in a vague reverie. Miss Cobbe respectfully kissed his hand and retired.

A few days after he suddenly raised himself, and seeing Miss Cobbe at his pillow, took her hand and whispered into her ears; "I have something to say to you; there are now two Theodore Parkers; one dies here in Italy, the other I have planted in America. The latter will live and finish my work. God bless you!" he added, giving

* Vol. i. of her edition of Parker's "Collected Works." T.

her a handsome bronze inkstand which he had put aside for her. Then the torpor, which had become his habitual state, took the upper hand and continued till his death, interrupted solely by some words denoting that he thought himself travelling on his way back. "Oh when we are at home, settled in the country, how quiet and happy we shall be!" One night he said to his wife who was watching near his bed: "Lay your head on the pillow, my dear, and sleep; it is so long since you had any sleep." Some days after, the 10th of May, 1860, he passed away without a struggle, calm as a child that falls asleep. His head, venerable before its time, framed in his white beard, reposed under a garland of Florence roses, which had shed perfume on his last sigh.

On Sunday, the 13th, at four o'clock in the afternoon, that is, at the moment when he began his service in Boston, an old friend, the Rev. Mr Cunningham, accompanied his mortal remains to their last resting-place. It was a festival day in Florence; banners floated from all the windows. At first his friends felt hurt; but a sudden impulse effaced the idea of any incongruity, and they whispered to each other: "It *is* a festival, the feast of ascension," and they called to mind the closing words of his last sermon, "Friend, come up higher."

There is at Florence, near the Pinti Gate, a small Protestant cemetery of great simplicity, admirably situated and well shaded with trees. That is the spot where Theodore Parker was interred. At his own request the minister read over his coffin the Beatitudes which open the sermon on the mount. In that humble gathering-place of the dead, near the centre, the traveller, desirous of saluting the ashes of one of the noblest beings of the 19th century, may discover without much trouble a simple marble slab bearing this inscription:

THEODORE PARKER,

BORN AT LEXINGTON, MASS.,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AUG. 24, 1810,

DIED AT FLORENCE, MAY 10, 1860.

An American pine, similar to those under whose shade he was so fond of praying in his early days, overhangs the modest monument. It is a symbol of his far-off native land, his dear home where his ancestors sleep. But ever, when any of his numerous Boston auditors, whom he encouraged or consoled with his manly and religious voice, pass through Florence, the tomb of this man of God is visited out of gratitude. He rests under the flowers he loved so much, and often are they renewed.

CHAPTER X.

THIS MAN WAS A PROPHET.

A comment on his work—Questions serving as a touchstone—Slavery and bibliolatry—The religion of the future—Criticisms—Sympathies—Channing and Schleiermacher—What a prophet is—How religious truth advances—A rock taken for a vessel.

ARRIVED at this the end of all biographies, we must ask ourselves what remains of that brilliant existence which we have sketched, and to what extent Parker's vision was prophetic when on his death-bed he saw himself doubled and continuing his work in America, while his body dissolved in an Italian soil.

Parker founded neither a church nor a school. His ministry, his words, his writings, his entire life, was a demonstration of spirit and power, rather than the construction of anything visible and organized; consequently it is difficult to indicate the positive results of his efforts, although the latest energy of the principles which he proclaimed, and the impressions which he left behind, are incontestable. Let it also be observed that our age does not bend itself readily to those individual actions that may be exactly distinguished from all that is not they, and that may be traced in the different domains of human activity. All, whatever the ground on which we try to build, whether science, art, politics, religion; let our rank be elevated or obscure in the hierarchy of mind;—all of us have co-workers, and no sovereign, consequently it ever

becomes less easy to detect, in the web of social destinies, the personal threads, the interlacement of which forms its substance. Finally, the terrible commotions which, during the last five years, have shaken the United States to their centre, must come to a full end before the American people can again enter into the condition of a normal development. It is no less true that these periods of concussion and delay are seasons of prolific incubation which afterwards accelerate the growth of seeds previously sown.

In another view what a fine comment have those five years furnished on the social and religious teachings of the Boston preacher. Hardly had his ashes grown cold, when the Union arrived on the border of that Red Sea which he had so often foretold. It arrived there without suspecting the depth of the water, and imbued with illusions and prejudices, which could not but make the passage more difficult and painful than the most clear-sighted could have foreseen. Let it be observed that to a certain point, the two portions of the United States who were to engage in that gigantic struggle, correctly estimated their respective situation. The North had reason to think that it had at its disposal vastly greater resources than the South. On the other hand, the South was not wrong when it founded its hopes of success on a more skilful and overwhelming employment of the forces which it had at command. Everything would depend on the spirit that predominated in the North. It is in vain to have immense resources, you grow weary of throwing them away; and if patriotism, if the moral element, had been lacking in the North, certainly the able heads that directed the secession would have succeeded in their sinister enterprise. Then we should have had in the 19th century a great republic based on slavery. The triumph of the North has consequently proved in the end a fact in the

moral order of the universe, due to moral causes, the might of which the assailants could not calculate. If now we go back to days preceding this fearful duel, we may say without the least exaggeration that Parker shines in the first rank of those who cried to the North most energetically, *Be on your guard;* and who contributed most largely to arouse the mind of the people out of that torpor into which it had been thrown by material prosperity. The city of Boston has always been the first in determination and sacrifices to defend the Federal cause, and with it, the cause of humanity. The Massachusetts volunteers were the first in the hour of greatest peril to make their bodies a rampart around the Federal capital, seriously menaced by the insurgent army. The silver and gold of New England never ceased to flow forth even in the darkest hours, to sustain the good cause. If Lincoln, whose republican greatness was not sufficiently appreciated in his life-time, if that admirable man never lost courage, it is because he felt himself supported by the best men of the Union, by honourable people, resolved as much as he, not to give way an inch, and ready for everything except to yield. At length the day came when the president of the United States saw himself able to proclaim the abolition of slavery, which he did amid the plaudits of that same crowd that selfish sophists had so long tried to blind touching interests the most manifest. Parker's ashes may well have thrilled with joy when touched by the news reverberating from the other side of the Atlantic. We have no wish to glorify our hero by letting persons little instructed in American affairs, take the impression that the Boston pastor was the principal author of that patriotic revolution. But we must not underrate the glorious part which belongs to him, and if only you know the man you will comprehend the influence which he exercised on those eminent citizens of

the Union, Wendell Philipps, Chase, Seward, Sumner, Hale, Banks, Horace Mann, and others, his friends, his admirers, his fellow-combatants, with whom he ceaselessly conversed and corresponded, encouraging them, consoling them, commending them, sometimes frankly blaming them, always feeling a warm interest in their noble endeavours, always ready to enhance his public instructions by his generous and faithful example. Who, moreover, can measure the amount of liberal feeling which his numerous lectures poured into the different States of the Union? How often ears of corn, ripened before others under the rays of that frank and enlightened liberalism, foretold the hour of the coming harvest! All that cannot be calculated, but it has weight, immense weight, in the scales of the history of God's kingdom on earth.

Slavery was the special question that offered itself to the American reformer; a question of immediate and urgent importance. Each age has its general principles which are admitted in virtue of their being self-evident, so long as you are disinterested as to their practical consequences. The touchstone in regard to convictions is the conflict which those principles are sure to produce with institutions or traditions, to which men are attached more than they like to own even to themselves. Then is it that sophistry comes to the aid of alarmed interests and prejudices. Then too is it that you may discern what men's minds really are, and learn on what side they are inclined to by their secret leanings. That which the question of slavery was to the republicans of the United States, the same is the question of the temporal power of the popes to European liberalism. On this delicate point we see liberal convictions, thought to be most solid, hesitate, seek loop-holes, and even belie themselves in the most lamentable fashion, in the same way in the United States. You see republicans make a display of their

democratic sentiments, all the while that they pleaded for the retention of slavery. This incredible contradiction has been well laughed at on this side of the Atlantic, but the liberal European who, while an advocate of national sovereignty, of the right of every people to choose its own government, of the independence of civil society, does not fear to sacrifice a nation to the fancied good of a Church, holds a position not less ludicrous than the pro-slavery democrat of the American Union. Though on all other questions the former be as liberal and the latter as democratic as you like, not the less does it ensue from the trial which lays their heart bare, that the one is more of a Romanist than a liberal, and the other more of an aristocrat than a republican. Among the elements which best aid man to feed himself on illusions as to the real tendency of his opinions, the first rank is held by those which he thinks he derives from the order of religious ideas. There is a "well done" of a particular kind which you pronounce on behalf of yourself when you can declare that you make to religion sacrifices which you would not have made to things of a secular nature, or that religion sanctions that which would be blameworthy if viewed simply as a matter of justice. Here is the reason why the influence of religious and truly liberal men is always very great when they clear the way of progress from obstacles placed there by religion misunderstood. It is certain that on the question of slavery the Americans are the victims of their religious narrowness. A Protestant people, of the Puritan type, much divided into sects, but united in veneration, often superstitious, for the sacred books, the citizens of the United States could long close their ears to the crying contradiction there was between their political principles and the institution of slavery, while saying that neither the Old Testament nor the New opposed slavery, and that both even admitted it as a

normal element of human society. Doubtless it is easy to reply that the Old Testament is only the preparation of a better order of things, and that the New has deposited in our race its divine principles in leaving men to draw hence successively individual or social consequences; that to place slavery side by side with the brotherhood of men, children of the same Father, heirs of the same salvation, is as absurd as to give a court, a diplomacy, and an army to the successor of One whose "kingdom is not of this world." But, let it be carefully observed, this reply is valid only if you consent to acknowledge that there are imperfections in the sacred books. Evidently it is an imperfection of the New Testament that its authors did not see the bearing of the principles of Christianity in regard to an institution so important and so general in their day, as slavery. How can one imagine that a book dictated by God to teach man in all ages all verities and duties, should have been silent on a point of such gravity? Thus it was that the superstitious worship of the Bible contributed in the United States to maintain that accursed institution. Theodore Parker undermined slavery by his bold criticism of the Bible, more perhaps than by the discourses directly prompted by the horror the observance called forth in his mind. And as a theology, more liberal than that which prevailed around him, was in his hands a marvellous instrument of political liberalism, so the future will show us America profiting by its political liberalism to realize sooner and better than any other nation, the religious liberalism after which the soul of our age is sighing. For all liberalisms, like all liberties, are linked together.

It is chiefly as a religious thinker and writer that Theodore Parker belongs to the future. The moment is near when the question of slavery will have passed away. For us in Europe it exists no longer except by rebound,

and in virtue of the mutual relationship which unites us to other parts of the world. But what ought we in general to think of Parker's religious work? This question interests the old world not less than the new.

We may describe Parker's religion as Christian Theism, and the characteristic of that mode of religion is this, that to one or two very simple, and, if I may so speak, very sober doctrines, it adds a great richness of applications to individual and social life. For ourselves, there is not the slightest doubt that all the currents of our modern life lead us to that side of religion, and we are not shaken in that conviction by the cries of terror, uttered by those who desire at any cost that we should remain immured in a past, where we should be stifled; any more than by the frivolous predictions which fall from those who, disowning one of the most ineradicable instincts of human nature, go about declaring that we are hastening on to the end of all religion. The human mind is one; it feels itself made to be free; it feels itself impelled to worship. In this twofold tendency of our being there is an irrefragable proof that we are not truly ourselves, truly faithful to our nature, except in worshipping freely, and in living religiously in our freedom. Man cannot for long remain faithless to his nature, and this is the reason why out of the antithesis actually formed by irreligion and superstition, both of them materialistic,—even if, or perhaps because, the great majority is at this hour divided between those two evil tendencies,—there will arise in the near future a prolific synthesis of religion and liberty, under the ægis of spiritualism. Under what form and to what point has Theodore Parker contributed to prepare this magnificent future?

I will not discuss a question which perhaps more than one of my readers has put to himself. Was Parker justified in quitting the constituted body of Unitarian

churches, to become the minister of a community altogether after his own heart? To reply as it ought to be done to this question, we need more information than we possess touching the chances he still had (and which, any way, his rupture diminished considerably) of infusing more religious knowledge and more liberalism into the church of his infancy and youth. Especially would it be necessary that that should not have taken place in America. Whatever may be said, the United States have a national religion; and it is Protestantism. You cannot fancy the great American republic religiously bound to submit to a priest, dwelling on the other side of the ocean. *America for the Americans*—this, called the Monroe doctrine, is, in the mind of a true Yankee, still more evidently just and true, if possible, in religion than in politics. But not only there is no state church, there is not even what is called in Europe, in France, for instance, in Holland, in Switzerland, a *national church*, that is, a church considering itself the natural church of the Protestants of the country, which has not ceased, while undergoing much modification, to perpetuate itself, over all the surface of the land, down from the earliest days of the Reformation, and which, sharing in the dark and in the fine days of the national past, having its roots in the most glorious or the most afflicting national traditions, has become a kind of religious home, which is loved like the home of our natural birth, and which no one would abandon except in the last extremity. It may be added that, as a general rule, it is in the bosom of these national churches that religious liberalism finds in Europe its most favourable soil and its best guarantees against dogmatic narrowness. There is here a whole class of sentiments and ideas which is only half understood in England, and which is totally unknown in America. As much as schism is repugnant to the great majority of continental

Protestants, so much does it seem in America a perfectly simple matter as soon as ever it is recommended by any kind of dissent; and what shows the difference of different countries in this regard is this, that in the numerous controversies Parker had to carry on no endeavour was made to blame or praise him on the point. You see that, in the opinion of his friends as well as of his foes, there was nothing unusual, nothing to except to, nothing to boast of, in the position he took in Boston, by putting himself at the head of an entirely new community. Without prosecuting this special question further we will inquire what opinion we ought to hold of his religious teachings taken in themselves.

From time to time I have made certain reserves. These I must complete. Thus I avow that I occasionally regret to find Parker so bitter and so violent in his controversies. His chief quality is energy; by no means is his taste always good; and often the blows he deals are heavy rather than just. The old dogmas, erroneous as they are, deserve the respect which should never be refused to good intentions. Men have not so long believed in everlasting fire for the pleasure of thinking that the great majority of the human race is destined to burn throughout eternity; a horror of moral evil, considered as infinite evil, certainly formed part of the sentiment. Calvinistic predestination has consequences which revolt; but in combating it we ought to bear in mind that the fundamental thought whence it was deduced was the assurance of salvation—a thought which should be put on a better basis, but without which it is quite true to say that neither is peace possible nor energy durable. This, however, ought to be said in exculpation of Parker: that he, more than most, suffered from the aberrations of an exclusive orthodoxy; that all his life he had bitter experience of that anti-Christianism which speaks of nothing

but gospel and grace, but which in reality hates the light, and does not allow the Holy Spirit to manifest himself on earth unless He wears the cockade of its particular form of opinion; that he saw his purest intentions, his most generous deeds, his truest words, even his private life, odiously disfigured by that canting hypocrisy which pardons no one by whom it is unmasked. But all this does not prevent that, in pure justice, one ought to lay to his charge a certain iconoclastic rage, which is leagued with even his theories as to the origin and formation of religions. He knew that each form of religion bequeathed to us by the past was in its day true; that is, that at a certain point of the development of the human mind it was the form which corresponded to that conception of God which was then possible. But if this is so, then had not Protestant orthodoxy—the last of the religious forms of the past—some right to that consideration with which, in touching pages, Parker speaks of the religion of the poor Cherokees? It is also to be presumed that, viewed in the light of our modern European theology, Parker's religious ideas had a certain incompleteness and inconsistency, which occasion numerous objections. Parker's eye was deep-sighted, but his mind was not scientifically speculative. I mean that, while with rare promptitude he seized the two extreme points of a series of connected truths, he was less happy in unrolling the intermediate links. Hence, occasionally defective proofs, which leave the reader's mind in suspense. Especially in his discourses on physical and moral evil, by the side of admirable pieces of eloquence, do you find instances of this logical defect. Faithful on this point to the old method of religious evidence, he undertook to show that pain in itself was a good—that it was necessary to the order of things—without perceiving that the difficulty lies precisely in the fact of such necessity. Perhaps a more

philosophic, more severe way of contemplating that great problem would have preserved him from the bad taste into which he often fell, of calling God mother as well as father. Neither the one nor the other of the denominations can be taken in metaphysical strictness; and this is not a fault in our eyes, for God is not to be defined; but the title mother has the inconvenience of throwing into relief the apparent antinomy which exists between the facts of experience and the religious affirmation of the Divine love. His views also touching the moral nature of man fail in respect of completeness. He does not seem to have thought of the grave question of determinism (moral necessity), and in his fiery reaction against Calvinism, which teaches the total corruption of human nature, he, always leaning to optimism, frequently forgot that in man the angel begins with the animal. A minute criticism might prolong these remarks, but to what good result? We must not look for a professor of systematic theology in Theodore Parker; he is an originator; he is a singer inspired with the future. You may reject many of his ideas, but if you at all love religious liberty and social progress, you cannot but warmly sympathize with the man. It is much less a system of doctrine he will give you than impressions, consolations, hopes, courage, faith. His religion is not an abstract theory, but a spontaneous fact of his nature. As he himself remarked, "his head is not more natural to his body than his religion to his soul." His science, his erudition, very great in reality, and of the best grain, are not the servants, but the auxiliaries, the friends of his unshaken faith in the living God, and aid him to put away everything in the dogmas and institutions of former days which hindered him from enjoying the Heavenly Father's immediate presence, and from bathing in the waters of infinite love.

Truth in Parker is, you feel, a necessity, a passion of

his nature, on account of which you pardon his outbursts, such is the courage and loyalty of his soul. Not with that intrepidity did the excellent Channing cut in the breached walls of the traditional faith a modest retreat, for which he asked nothing more than a peaceful view of God's love and of man's heart. Not with that clearness of design and operation did Schleiermacher, and the fastidious theologians of his school, raise constructions of the composite order, in which modern thought and the old dogmas blend together at the cost of so much trouble, and, sometimes, of so much plaster. Without doubt many will continue to prefer the gentle moralist, the American Fenelon (Channing), whom Mr Laboulaye has made known to Europe, or the unctuous Berlin preacher (Schleiermacher), who for a moment flattered himself with having reconciled science and orthodoxy in the depths of his religious sentiment. Let us not cease to admire all those admirable men, but let us also remember that the age is going forwards, that modern society in its imperious exigencies calls henceforth for more radical and exact solutions than the compromises which up till now have been accounted satisfactory. For that, need is there of the generous audacity of Parker, going straight ahead, without troubling himself about the dust he raises in passing through so many ruins, his eyes ever fixed on the everlasting light. Moreover it would be unjust to see in him only the severe and energetic wrestler. There is in his nature—and this constitutes its charm—by the side of and below his revolutionary ardour, a pure and rich mysticism, delightful to contemplate. If Parker is sometimes the dupe of his theoretic optimism, the reason is that his profound faith in the living God carries him beyond the poor world in which we live, and transports him before the time into the region of celestial harmonies. He is one of those thinkers who to unsparing censure of

the men and the things of their own times, have joined the most serene anticipations of the definitive future of humanity. To the feverish agitations of his career as a reformer, his religion is that which the depths of the ocean are to the surface which the winds toss into confusion. After every tempest the inviolable calm of the abyss resumes its mastery over the entire mass which, again peaceful and smiling, reflects the boundless azure of the sky.

To sum up; Parker was essentially neither a moralist, nor a theologian, nor a philosopher; he was a prophet; and he is one of those contemporaneous appearances which, better than laborious researches, enable us to understand certain phenomena which at first sight one would think belonged exclusively to the past. What were the prophets in the bosom of Israel? Not diviners, not utterers of supernatural oracles, as is too often fancied. They were the organs of a grand idea, a simple, austere, even abstract idea, hidden in the heart of the national tradition, the idea of pure monotheism. In order to disengage that idea from what disfigured it, from the people's sins which caused it to be misapprehended, from the abuses of a priesthood and a throne interested, as they thought, in its remaining forgotten, the prophets persisted in their path of duty in spite of all opposition, and notwithstanding the ill-will of which they were the objects at every step, they came forth from the old soil of Israel, always with a deeper faith and a stouter heart. For their force sprang from the fact that at the bottom the spirit of Israel conspired with their spirit, and the more hostility that spirit encountered, the more did it become conscious of itself, and the more it asserted itself clearly and demonstratively. Kings, priests, people, —all might find the prophets unendurable, but within a secret voice declared to them that nevertheless the prophets were in the right. In the same way the spirit of Protestantism and of the American constitution took possession of Theodore Parker near his father's windmill, as of old the spirit of monotheism seized the prophet by the side of his plough or under his wild fig-trees. This man, who might have lived at ease beneath the shadow of his pines, in the midst of the flowers of his parsonage, and who goes out to preach from city to city "against the people's sins,"—this man, overruled by an idea simple, grand, implicitly contained in the religion of his childhood and the constitution of his native land,—the idea of the free development of the human personality;—who consecrates his existence to the task of disembarrassing that idea from all the shackles created by interests, by vices, by sacerdotalism, by official prerogatives; this man who refuses every compromise, who has no kind of indulgence for political or commercial necessities; who, in spite of the many bitter cups he is forced to drink, joyously proclaims on the house-tops, and foretells with an assurance that is disconcerted by nothing, the final victory of truth and liberty—THIS MAN IS A PROPHET.

Not only for the United States was Parker a prophet. His patriotism was not exclusive, he felt himself to be literally a citizen of the world, and if he loved America so well it is because in her he saw the predestined soil where some day the ideal, dreamt of in our Europe, would receive full realization. For us also, at the moment when long-established edifices and traditions nod to their fall, when it is anxiously asked whether they will not, in their fall, crush both those who uphold and those who assail them, such a man as Parker is a prophet of consolation and hope. He is right; no cowardly fears! whatever happen, man will remain man. In his very nature, such as God has made it, there will ever be the revelations and the promises which produce beautiful lives and

beautiful deaths. And what more is needed? Happy the churches who shall find in their essential principles the right to open themselves without resolution to that imperishable Christianity of which Theodore Parker was the inspired preacher! Many of his arguments will be refuted; many of his opinions will fall into oblivion; but the fundamental truth which he maintained, namely, that in the last analysis everything rests on conscience, that God reveals himself to whosoever seeks after Him, that the salvation of man and society, on earth as well as in heaven, depends not on dogmas, not on rites, not on miracles, not on priesthoods, not on books, but on "Christ in us," on a pure and honest heart, on a loving soul, on a will devoted and active:—this truth will live and cause us to live with it. And the church for which he prayed, which shall be spacious enough to contain all the sincere, all the disinterested, all the morally great, all the innocent, and all the repentant—that church truly universal, which in the past already unites so many noble souls separated by barriers now tottering—that church will never perish. Be not deluded by the anathemas which have long been hurled against the Christianity of the future. Such maledictions are always the companions of religious progress, and certainly something would be lacking to the truth which tends to disengage itself from the errors of the past, if its appearance were not saluted by the thunder-bolts hurled by reactions of all kinds. Even the death of the prophets would not for an hour retard the triumph of the truth which they preach, and the moment ever comes when humanity, confused and yet grateful, perceives that it was ignorantly stoning the organs of the Holy Spirit. Theodore Parker wrote from Santa Cruz to his people whom he was never to see again on earth, a long and touching farewell, from which we detach this passage:

"In these tropic waters, not far off, in time of strife, on a dark night, but towards morning, an English ship-of-war once drew near what seemed a hostile vessel under sail. She hailed the stranger, who answered not; then hailed again—no answer; then fired a shot across the saucy bows, but still there was no reply; next fired at her, amidships, but got not a word in return. Finally, the man-of-war cleared for action, began battle in earnest, serving the guns with British vigour, but found no return, save the rattle of shot rebounding and falling back into the heedless sea. Daylight presently came with tropic suddenness, and the captain found he spent his powder in battering a great rock in the ocean! So, many a man has fought long against a truth which he fancied was but a floating whim, bound to yield to his caprice; but, at last, the dawning light has shown him it was no passing ship, of timber and cordage and canvas, driven by the wind and tossed by the undulations of the sea, but a SAIL-ROCK, resting on the foundations of the world, and amenable neither to the men-of-war that sailed in the wind, nor yet to the undulation of the sea whereon they came and went. It is one thing to rejoice at the sickness and death of a short-lived heretic, but it is another and a little different, to alter the constitution of the universe, and put down a fact of spontaneous human consciousness, which, also, is a truth of God."

EXTRACTS

FROM

THE WRITINGS OF THEODORE PARKER.

I.

THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my word shall not pass away."
LUKE xxi. 33.

"IN this sentence we have a very clear indication that Jesus of Nazareth believed the religion he taught would be eternal, that the substance of it would last for ever. Yet there are some who are affrighted by the faintest rustle which a heretic makes among the dry leaves of theology; they tremble lest Christianity itself should perish without hope. Ever and anon the cry is raised, 'The Philistines be upon us, and Christianity is in danger.' The least doubt respecting the popular theology, or the existing machinery of the church; the least sign of distrust in the religion of the pulpit, or the religion of the street, is by some good men supposed to be at enmity with faith in Christ, and capable of shaking Christianity itself. On the other hand, a few bad men, and a few pious men, it is said, on both sides of the water, tell us the day of Christianity is past. The latter—it is alleged—would persuade us that, hereafter, Piety must take a new form; the teachings of Jesus are to be passed by; that religion is to wing her way sublime, above the flight of Christianity, far away, toward heaven, as the fledged eaglet leaves for ever the nest which sheltered his callow youth. Let us, therefore, devote a few moments to this subject, and consider what is *transient* in Christianity, and what is *permanent* therein. The topic seems not inappropriate to the times in which we live, or the occasion that calls us together.

"Christ says, his word shall never pass away. Yet, at first sight,

nothing seems more fleeting than a word. It is an evanescent impulse of the most fickle element. It leaves no track where it went through the air. Yet to this, and this only, did Jesus intrust the truth wherewith he came laden to the earth; truth for the salvation of the world. He took no pains to perpetuate his thoughts: they were poured forth where occasion found him an audience—by the side of the lake, or a well; in a cottage, or the temple; in a fisher's boat, or the synagogue of the Jews. He founds no institution as a monument of his words. He appoints no order of men to preserve his bright and glad relations. He only bids his friends give freely the truth they had freely received. He did not even write his words in a book. With a noble confidence, the result of his abiding faith, he scattered them broadcast on the world, leaving the seed to its own vitality. He knew that what is of God cannot fail, for God keeps his own. He sowed his seed in the heart, and left it there, to be watered and warmed by the dew and the sun which heaven sends. He felt his words were for eternity. So he trusted them to the uncertain air; and for 1800 years that faithful element has held them good—distinct as when first warm from his lips. Now they are translated into every human speech, and murmured in all earth's thousand tongues, from the pine forests of the North to the palm groves of eastern Ind. They mingle, as it were, with the roar of a populous city, and join the chime of the desert sea. Of a Sabbath morn they are repeated from church to church, from isle to isle, and land to land, till their music goes round the world. These words have become the breath of the good, the hope of the wise, the joy of the pious, and that for many millions of hearts. They are the prayers of our churches; our better devotion by fireside and fieldside; the enchantment of our hearts. It is these words that still work wonders, to which the first recorded miracles were nothing in grandeur and utility. It is these which build our temples and beautify our homes. They raise our thoughts of sublimity; they purify our ideal of purity; they hallow our prayer for truth and love. They make beauteous and divine the life which plain men lead. They give wings to our aspirations. What charmers they are! Sorrow is lulled at their bidding. They take the sting out of disease, and rob Adversity of his power to disappoint. They give health and wings to the pious soul, broken-hearted and shipwrecked in his voyage through life, and encourage him to tempt the perilous way once more. They make all things ours: Christ our brother; time our servant; death our ally, and the witness of our triumph. They reveal to us the presence of God, which else we might not have seen so clearly, in the first wind-flower of spring, in the falling of a sparrow, in the distress of a nation, in the sorrow or the rapture of the world. Silence the voice of Christianity, and the world is well-nigh dumb, for gone is that sweet music which kept in awe the rulers and the people, which cheers the poor widow in her lonely toil, and

comes like light through the windows of morning, to men who sit stooping and feeble, with failing eyes and a hungering heart. It is gone—all gone! only the cold, bleak world left before them.

"Such is the life of these words; such the empire they have won for themselves over men's minds since they were spoken first. In the mean time, the words of great men and mighty, whose name shook whole continents, though graven in metal and stone, though stamped in institutions, and defended by whole tribes of priests and troops of followers—their words have gone to the ground, and the world gives back no echo of their voice. Meanwhile, the great works, also, of old times, castle, and tower, and town, their cities and their empires, have perished, and left scarce a mark on the bosom of the earth to show they once have been. The philosophy of the wise, the art of the accomplished, the song of the poet, the ritual of the priest, though honoured as divine in their day, have gone down a prey to oblivion. Silence has closed over them; only their spectres now haunt the earth. A deluge of blood has swept over the nations; a night of darkness, more deep than the fabled darkness of Egypt, has lowered down upon that flood, to destroy or to hide what the deluge had spared. But through all this the words of Christianity have come down to us from the lips of that Hebrew youth, gentle and beautiful as the light of a star, not spent by their journey through time and through space. They have built up a new civilization, which the wisest Gentile never hoped for, which the most pious Hebrew never foretold. Through centuries of wasting these words have flown on, like a dove in the storm, and now wait to descend on hearts pure and earnest, as the Father's Spirit, we are told, came down on his lowly Son. The old heavens and the old earth are indeed passed away, but the Word stands. Nothing shows clearer than this how fleeting is what man calls great, how lasting what God pronounces true."

After this homage rendered to the imperishable power of the gospel, the preacher comes to the numberless diversities that fill up the history of Christianity. He points out what an enormous distance separates the different conceptions of the gospel which have succeeded each other—a distance sometimes greater than "that which separates Mahomet from the Messiah or Jesus from Plato." Our conception of Christianity will also pass away. In actual Christianity, that is, in that portion of Christianity which is preached and believed, there seems to have been, ever since the time of its earthly founder, two elements,

the one transient, the other permanent. The one is the thought, the folly, the uncertain wisdom, the theological notions, the impiety of man; the other, the eternal truth of God. These two bear, perhaps, the same relation to each other that the phenomena of outward nature, such as sunshine and cloud, growth, decay, and reproduction, bear to the great law of nature, which underlies and supports them all. As in that case more attention is commonly paid to the particular phenomena than the general law, so in this case more is generally given to the transient in Christianity than to the permanent therein. Thus is it in the Christian Church that men are enamoured of "forms and doctrines which may be fine and useful, but which in reality are the vestment and not the angel himself." You may satisfy yourself of the variable and transitory character of theological doctrines by studying their history. Let us take an example in the idea men have formed for themselves of the authority of the Old and the New Testaments. There was a time when individuals were condemned to the stake, whose sole crime was the assertion of astronomical and physical doctrines opposed to certain passages in the Bible, when every word of that collection of Hebrew writings was held to be miraculously inspired; and how many absurd beliefs, of exorbitant pretensions, of gross and even immoral ideas of God have been founded on that authority which was considered absolute. Nevertheless neither Jesus nor Paul ascribed such a quality to the sacred books of the Jews. To-day criticism, even when but elementary, and the good sense of the people absolutely preclude a return to these errors. You may observe the same diversities and similar facts in regard to the New Testament. "An idolatrous regard for the imperfect Scripture of God's word is the apple of Atalanta, which arrests theologians who are running for the land of divine truth." The modest

authors of the collection of New Testament writings never fancied they would receive the worship afterwards paid to them. At present opinions are changing in respect to them also, and are changing for the better. Nothing is more easy than to exhibit still more numerous diversities touching the nature of Jesus and his authority. Opinions varied much on this point among the earliest Christians, some declaring him a man, others raising him into God, while others placed him midway between the two. These diversities at length issued in the doctrine which in time gained for itself the name of orthodox, and which represents Christ as at once altogether man and altogether God. With the 16th century fresh diversities begin to arise.

"No doubt the time will come when its true character shall be felt. Then it will be seen, that, amid all the contradictions of the Old Testament; its legends, so beautiful as fictions, so appalling as facts; amid its predictions that have never been fulfilled; amid the puerile conceptions of God, which sometimes occur, and the cruel denunciations that disfigure both Psalm and Prophecy, there is a reverence for man's nature, a sublime trust in God, and a depth of piety, rarely felt in these cold northern hearts of ours. Then the devotion of its authors, the loftiness of their aim, and the majesty of their life, will appear doubly fair, and Prophet and Psalmist will warm our hearts as never before. Their voice will cheer the young and sanctify the grey-headed; will charm us in the toil of life, and sweeten the cup Death gives us when he comes to shake off this mantle of flesh. Then will it be seen that the words of Jesus are the music of heaven, sung in an earthly voice, and the echo of these words in John and Paul owe their efficacy to their truth and their depth, and to no accidental matter connected therewith. Then can the Word, which was in the beginning and now is, find access to the innermost heart of man, and speak there as now it seldom speaks. Then shall the Bible—which is a whole library of the deepest and most earnest thoughts and feelings, and piety, and love, ever recorded in human speech—be read oftener than ever before, not with superstition, but with reason, conscience, and faith, fully active. Then shall it sustain men bowed down with many sorrows; rebuke sin, encourage virtue, sow the world broadcast and quick with the seed of love, that man may reap a harvest for life everlasting.

"With all the obstacles men have thrown in its path, how much

has the Bible done for mankind! No abuse has deprived us of all its blessings. You trace its path across the world from the day of Pentecost to this day. As a river springs up in the heart of a sandy continent, having its father in the skies, and its birth-place in distant, unknown mountains; as the stream rolls on, enlarging itself, making in that arid waste a belt of verdure wherever it turns its way; creating palm groves and fertile plains, where the smoke of the cottager curls up at eventide, and marble cities send the gleam of their splendour far into the sky; such has been the course of the Bible on the earth. Despite of idolaters bowing to the dust before it, it has made a deeper mark on the world than the rich and beautiful literature of all the heathen. The first book of the Old Testament tells man he is made in the image of God; the first of the New Testament gives us the motto, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. Higher words were never spoken. How the truths of the Bible have blessed us! There is not a boy on all the hills of New England; not a girl born in the filthiest cellar which disgraces a capital in Europe, and cries to God against the barbarism of modern civilization; not a boy nor a girl all Christendom through—but their lot is made better by that great book.

"Doubtless the time will come when men shall see Christ also as he is. Well might he still say, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?' No! we have made him an idol, have bowed the knee before him, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' called him 'Lord, Lord!' but done not the things which he said. The history of the Christian world might well be summed up in one word of the evangelist—'and there they crucified him;' for there has never been an age when men did not crucify the Son of God afresh. But if error prevail for a time and grow old in the world, truth will triumph at the last, and then we shall see the Son of God as he is. Lifted up, he shall draw all nations unto him. Then will men understand the word of Jesus, which shall not pass away. Then shall we see and love the divine life that he lived. How vast has his influence been! How his spirit wrought in the hearts of his disciples, rude, selfish, bigoted, as at first they were! How it has wrought in the world! His words judge the nations. The wisest son of man has not measured their height. They speak to what is deepest in profound men, what is holiest in good men, what is divinest in religious men. They kindle anew the flame of devotion in hearts long cold. They are spirit and life. His truth was not derived from Moses and Solomon; but the light of God shone through him, not coloured, not bent aside. His life is the perpetual rebuke of all time since. It condemns ancient civilization; it condemns modern civilization. Wise men we have since had, and good men; but this Galilean youth strode before the world whole thousands of years, so much of Divinity was in him. His words solve the ques-

tions of this present age. In him the Godlike and the human met and embraced, and a divine life was born. Measure him by the world's greatest sons—how poor they are! Try him by the best of men—how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet, perhaps, come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother; the son of man, as we are; the Son of God, like ourselves? His excellence—was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love, piety—sweet and celestial as they were—are they not what we also may attain? In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble. Viewed in this way, how beautiful is the life of Jesus! Heaven has come down to earth, or, rather, earth has become heaven. The Son of God, come of age, has taken possession of his birthright. The brightest revelation is this—of what is possible for all men, if not now, at least hereafter. How pure is his spirit, and how encouraging his words! 'Lowly sufferer,' he seems to say, 'see how I bore the cross. Patient labourer, be strong; see how I toiled for the unthankful and the merciless. Mistaken sinner, see of what thou art capable. Rise up, and be blessed.'

"But if, as some early Christians began to do, you take a heathen view, and make him a God, the Son of God in a peculiar and exclusive sense, much of the significance of his character is gone. His virtue has no merit, his love no feeling, his cross no burthen, his agony no pain. His death is an illusion, his resurrection but a show. For if he were not a man, but a god, what are all these things? what his words, his life, his excellence of achievement? It is all nothing, weighed against the illimitable greatness of Him who created the worlds and fills up all time and space! Then his resignation is no lesson, his life no model, his death no triumph to you or me, who are not gods, but mortal men, that know not what a day shall bring forth, and walk by faith 'dim sounding on our perilous way.' Alas! we have despaired of man, and so cut off his brightest hope.

"In respect of doctrines, as well as forms, we see all is transitory. 'Everywhere is instability and insecurity.' Opinions have changed most on points deemed most vital. Could we bring up a Christian teacher of any age—from the 6th to the 14th century, for example, though a teacher of undoubted soundness of faith, whose word filled the churches of Christendom—clergymen would scarce allow him to kneel at their altar, or sit down with them at the Lord's table. His notions of Christianity could not be expressed in our forms, nor could our notions be made intelligible to his ears. The questions of his age, those on which Christianity was thought to depend—questions which perplexed and divided the subtle doctors—are no questions to us. The quarrels which then drove wise men mad, now only excite a smile or a tear, as we are disposed to laugh or weep at the

frailty of man. We have other straws of our own to quarrel for. Their ancient books of devotion do not speak to us: their theology is a vain word. To look back but a short period, the theological speculations of our fathers during the last two centuries; their 'practical divinity;' even the sermons written by genius and piety—are, with rare exceptions, found unreadable: such a change is there in the doctrines.

"Now who shall tell us that the change is to stop here; that this sect or that, or even all sects united, have exhausted the river of life, and received it all in their canonized urns, so that we need draw no more out of the eternal well, but get refreshment nearer at hand? Who shall tell us that another age will not smile at our doctrines, disputes, and unchristian quarrels about Christianity, and make wide the mouth at men who walked brave in orthodox raiment, delighting to blacken the names of heretics, and repeat again the old charge, 'He hath blasphemed'? Who shall tell us they will not weep at the folly of all such as fancied truth shone only into the contracted nook of their school, or sect, or coterie? Men of other times may look down equally on the heresy-hunters, and men hunted for heresy, and wonder at both. The men of all ages before us were quite as confident as we, that their opinion was truth, that their notion was Christianity and the whole thereof. The men who lit the fires of persecution, from the first martyr to Christian bigotry down to the last murder of the innocents, had no doubt their opinion was divine. The contest about transubstantiation, and the immaculate purity of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Scriptures, was waged with a bitterness unequalled in these days. The Protestant smiles at one, the Catholic at the other, and men of sense wonder at both. It might teach us all a lesson, at least of forbearance. No doubt an age will come in which ours shall be reckoned a period of darkness—like the 6th century—when men groped for the wall, but stumbled and fell, because they trusted a transient notion, not an eternal truth; an age when temples were full of idols, set up by human folly; an age in which Christian light had scarce begun to shine into men's hearts. But while this change goes on, while one generation of opinions passes away, and another rises up, Christianity itself, that pure religion, which exists eternal in the constitution of the soul and the mind of God, is always the same. The word that was before Abraham, in the very beginning, will not change, for that word is Truth. From this Jesus subtracted nothing; to this he added nothing. But he came to reveal it as the secret of God, that cunning men could not understand, but which filled the souls of men meek and lowly of heart. This truth we owe to God; the revelation thereof to Jesus, our elder brother, God's chosen son.

"To turn away from the disputes of the Catholics and the Protestants, of the Unitarian and the Trinitarian of old school and new

school, and come to the plain words of Jesus of Nazareth, Christianity is a simple thing, very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion; the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart—there is a God. Its watchword is, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. The only form it demands is a divine life; doing the best thing in the best way, from the highest motives; perfect obedience to the great law of God. Its sanction is the voice of God in your heart; the perpetual presence of Him who made us and the stars over our head; Christ and the Father abiding within us. All this is very simple—a little child can understand it; very beautiful—the loftiest mind can find nothing so lovely. Try it by reason, conscience, and faith—things highest in man's nature—we see no redundance, we feel no deficiency. Examine the particular duties it enjoins; humility, reverence, sobriety, gentleness, charity, forgiveness, fortitude, resignation, faith, and active love; try the whole extent of Christianity, so well summed up in the command, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;' and is there anything therein that can perish? No, the very opponents of Christianity have rarely found fault with the teachings of Jesus. The end of Christianity seems to be to make all men one with God as Christ was one with Him; to bring them to such a state of obedience and goodness, that we shall think divine thoughts and feel divine sentiments, and so keep the law of God by living a life of truth and love. Its means are purity and prayer; getting strength from God, and using it for our fellow-men as well as ourselves. It allows perfect freedom. It does not demand all men to *think* alike, but to think uprightly, and get as near as possible at truth; not all men to *live* alike, but to live holy, and get as near as possible to a life perfectly divine. Christ set up no Pillars of Hercules, beyond which men must not sail the sea in quest of truth. He says, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. . . Greater works than these shall ye do.' Christianity lays no rude hand on the sacred peculiarity of individual genius and character. But there is no Christian sect which does not fetter a man. It would make all men think alike, or smother their conviction in silence. Were all men Quakers or Catholics, Unitarians or Baptists, there would be much less diversity of thought, character, and life, less of truth active in the world, than now. But Christianity gives us the largest liberty of the sons of God; and were all men Christians after the fashion of Jesus, this variety would be a thousand times greater than now: for Christianity is not a system of doctrines, but rather a method of attaining oneness with God. It demands, therefore, a good life of piety within,

of purity without, and gives the promise that whoso does God's will shall know of God's doctrine.

"In an age of corruption, as all ages are, Jesus stood and looked up to God. There was nothing between him and the Father of all; no old world, be it of Moses or Esaias, of a living Rabbi or Sanhedrim of Rabbis; no sin or perverseness of the finite will. As the result of this virgin purity of soul and perfect obedience, the light of God shone down into the very deeps of his soul, bringing all of the Godhead which flesh can receive. He would have us do the same; worship with nothing between us and God; act, think, feel, live, in perfect obedience to Him; and we never are *Christians* as he was the *Christ*, until we worship, as Jesus did, with no mediator, with nothing between us and the Father of all. He felt that God's word was in him; that he was one with God. He told what he saw—the truth: he lived what he felt—a life of love. The truth he brought to light must have been always the same before the eyes of all-seeing God, 19 centuries before Christ, or 19 centuries after him. A life supported by the principle and quickened by the sentiment of religion, if true to both, is always the same thing in Nazareth or New England. Now that divine man received these truths from God; was illumined more clearly by 'the light that lighteneth every man;' combined or involved all the truths of religion and morality in his doctrine, and made them manifest in his life. Then his words and example passed into the world, and can no more perish than the stars be wiped out of the sky. The truths he taught; his doctrines respecting man and God; the relation between man and man, and man and God, with the duties that grow out of that relation—are always the same, and can never change till man ceases to be man, and creation vanishes into nothing. No; forms and opinions change and perish; but the word of God cannot fail. The form religion takes, the doctrines wherewith she is girded, can never be the same in any two centuries or two men; for since the sum of religious doctrines is both the result and the measure of a man's total growth in wisdom, virtue, and piety, and since men will always differ in these respects, so religious *doctrines* and *forms* will always differ, always be transient, as Christianity goes forth and scatters the seed she bears in her hand. But the *Christianity holy men feel in the heart*, the Christ that is born within us, is always the same thing to each soul that feels it. This differs only in degree, and not in kind, from age to age, and man to man. There is something in Christianity which no sect, from the 'Ebionites' to the 'Latter-Day Saints,' ever entirely overlooked. This is that common Christianity which burns in the hearts of pious men.

"Real Christianity gives men new life. It is the growth and perfect action of the Holy Spirit God puts into the sons of men It

makes us outgrow any form or any system of doctrines we have devised, and approach still closer to the truth. It would lead us to take what help we can find. It would make the Bible our servant, not our master. It would teach us to profit by the wisdom and piety of David and Solomon, but not to sin their sins, nor bow to their idols. It would make us revere the holy words spoken by 'godly men of old,' but revere still more the word of God spoken through conscience, reason, and faith, as the holiest of all. It would not make Christ the despot of the soul, but the brother of all men. It would not tell us that even he had exhausted the fulness of God, so that he could create none greater; for with Him 'all things are possible,' and neither Old Testament nor New Testament ever hints that creation exhausts the Creator. Still less would it tell us, the wisdom, the piety, the love, the manly excellence of Jesus, was the result of miraculous agency alone, but that it was won, like the excellence of humbler men, by faithful obedience to Him who gave his Son such ample heritage. It would point to him as our brother, who went before, like the good shepherd, to charm us with the music of his words, and with the beauty of his life to tempt us up the steeps of mortal toil, within the gate of heaven. It would have us make the kingdom of God on earth, and enter more fittingly the kingdom on high. It would lead us to form Christ in the heart, on which Paul laid such stress, and work out our salvation by this. For it is not so much by the Christ who lived so blameless and beautiful 18 centuries ago, that we are saved directly, but by the Christ we form in our hearts and live out in our daily life, that we save ourselves, God working with us both to will and to do.

"Compare the simpleness of Christianity, as Christ sets it forth on the Mount, with what is sometimes taught and accepted in that honoured name; and what a difference! One is of God; one is of man. There is something in Christianity which sects have not reached; something that will not be won, we fear, by theological battles, or the quarrels of pious men; still we may rejoice that Christ is preached in any way. The Christianity of sects, of the pulpit, of society, is ephemeral—a transitory fly. It will pass off and be forgot. Some new form will take its place, suited to the aspect of the changing times. Each will represent something of truth, but no one the whole. It seems the whole race of man is needed to do justice to the whole of truth, as 'the whole Church, to preach the whole Gospel.' Truth is intrusted for the time to a perishable ark of human contrivance. Though often shipwrecked, she always comes safe to land, and is not changed by her mishap. That pure ideal religion which Jesus saw on the mount of his vision, and lived out in the lowly life of a Galilean peasant; which transforms his cross into an emblem of all that is holiest on earth; which makes sacred the ground he trod, and is dearest to the best of men, most true to what

is truest in them—cannot pass away. Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of religion and love, they can never outgo the flight of truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly towards a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory.

"If we look carelessly on the ages that have gone by, or only on the surfaces of things as they come up before us, there is reason to fear; for we confound the truth of God with the word of man. So at a distance the cloud and the mountain seem the same. When the drift changes with the passing wind, an unpractised eye might fancy the mountain itself was gone. But the mountain stands to catch the clouds, to win the blessing they bear, and send it down to moisten the fainting violet, to form streams which gladden valley and meadow, and sweep on at last to the sea in deep channels, laden with fleets. Thus the forms of the church, the creeds of the sects, the conflicting opinions of teachers, float round the sides of the Christian mount, and swell and toss, and rise and fall, and dart their lightning, and roll their thunder, but they neither make nor mar the mount itself. Its lofty summit far transcends the tumult, knows nothing of the storm which roars below, but burns with rosy light at evening and at morn, gleams in the splendours of the mid-day sun, sees his light when the long shadows creep over plain and moorland, and all night long has its head in the heavens, and is visited by troops of stars which never set, nor veil their face to aught so pure and high.

"Let then the transient pass, fleet as it will; and may God send us some new manifestation of the Christian faith, that shall stir men's hearts as they were never stirred; some new word, which shall teach us what we are, and renew us all in the image of God; some better life, that shall fulfil the Hebrew prophecy, and pour out the spirit of God on young men and maidens, and old men and children; which shall realize the word of Christ, and give us the Comforter, who shall reveal all needed things! There are Simeons enough in the cottages and churches of New England, plain men and pious women, who wait for the consolation, and would die in gladness if their expiring breath could stir quicker the wings that bear him on. There are men enough, sick and 'bowed down, in no wise able to lift up themselves,' who would be healed could they kiss the hand of their Saviour, or touch but the hem of his garment; men who look up and are not fed, because they ask bread from heaven and water from the rock, not traditions or fancies, Jewish or heathen, or new or old; men enough who, with throbbing hearts, pray for the spirit of healing to come upon the waters, which other than angels have long kept in trouble; men enough who have lain long time sick of theology, nothing bettered by many physicians, and are now dead, too dead to bury their dead, who would come out of their graves at

the glad tidings. God send us a real religious life, which shall pluck blindness out of the heart, and make us better fathers, mothers, and children! a religious life, that shall go with us where we go, and make every home the house of God, every act acceptable as a prayer. We would work for this, and pray for it, though we wept tears of blood while we prayed.*

* "Collected Works," vol. viii. p. 1, *et seq.*

II.

RELIGIOUS JOY.

A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion. Book I chap. vii. sect. 3.

"No doubt there is joy in the success of earthly schemes. There is joy to the miser as he satiates his prurient palm with gold: there is joy for the fool of fortune when his gaming brings a prize. But what is it? His request is granted; but leanness enters his soul. There is delight in feasting on the bounties of Earth, the garment in which God veils the brightness of His face; in being filled with the fragrant loveliness of flowers; the song of birds; the hum of bees; the sounds of ocean; the rustle of the summer wind, heard at evening in the pine-tops; in the cool running brooks; in the majestic sweep of undulating hills; the grandeur of untamed forests; the majesty of the mountain; in the morning's virgin beauty; in the maternal grace of evening, and the sublime and mystic pomp of night. Nature's silent sympathy—how beautiful it is!

"There is joy, no doubt there is joy, to the mind of Genius, when thought bursts on him as the tropic sun rending a cloud; when long trains of ideas sweep through his soul, like constellated orbs before an angel's eye; when sublime thoughts and burning words rush to the heart; when Nature unveils her secret truth, and some great Law breaks, all at once, upon a Newton's mind, and chaos ends in light; when the hour of his inspiration and the joy of his genius is on him, 'tis then that this child of Heaven feels a godlike delight. 'Tis sympathy with Truth.

"There is a higher and more tranquil bliss when heart communes with heart; when two souls unite in one, like mingling dew-drops on a rose, that scarcely touch the flower, but mirror the heavens in their little orbs; when perfect love transforms two souls, either man's or woman's, each to the other's image; when one heart beats in two bosoms; one spirit speaks with a divided tongue; when the same soul is eloquent in mutual eyes—there is a rapture deep, serene, heart-felt, and abiding in this mysterious fellow-feeling with a congenial soul, which puts to shame the cold sympathy of Nature, and

the ecstatic but short-lived bliss of Genius in his high and burning hour.

"But the welfare of Religion is more than each or all of these. The glad reliance that comes upon the man; the sense of trust; a rest with God; the soul's exceeding peace; the universal harmony; the infinite within; sympathy with the Soul of All—is bliss that words cannot portray. He only knows, who feels. The speech of a prophet cannot tell the tale. No: not if a seraph touched his lips with fire. In the high hour of religious visitation from the living God, there seems to be no separate thought; the tide of universal life sets through the soul. The thought of self is gone. It is a little accident to be a king or a clown, a parent or a child. Man is at one with God, and He is All in All. Neither the loveliness of Nature, neither the joy of Genius, nor the sweet breathing of congenial hearts, that make delicious music as they beat,—neither one nor all of these can equal the joy of the religious soul that is at one with God, so full of peace that prayer is needless. This deeper joy gives an added charm to the former blessings. Nature undergoes a new transformation. A story tells that when the rising sun fell on Memnon's statue it wakened music in that breast of stone. Religion does the same with Nature. From the shining snake to the waterfall, it is all eloquent of God. As to John in the Apocalypse, there stands an angel in the sun; the seraphim hang over every flower: God speaks in each little grass that fringes a mountain rock. Then even Genius is wedded to a greater bliss. His thoughts shine more brilliant, when set in the light of Religion. Friendship and Love it renders infinite. The man loves God when he but loves his friend. This is the joy Religion gives; its perennial rest; its everlasting life. It comes not by chance. It is the possession of such as ask and toil and toil and ask. It is withheld from none, as other gifts. Nature tells little to the deaf, the blind, the rude. Every man is not a genius, and has not his joy. Few men can find a friend that is the world to them. That triune sympathy is not for every one. But this welfare of Religion, the deepest, truest, the everlasting, the sympathy with God, lies within the reach of all his sons." *

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* "Collected Works," vol. i. pp. 98—100.

III.

THE TRUE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"FOR nearly a year we have assembled within these walls from week to week,—I think not idly; I know you have not come for any trivial end. You have recently made a formal organization of yourselves for religious action. To-day, at your request, I enter regularly on a ministry in the midst of you. What are we doing? what do we design to do? We are here to establish a Christian church; and a Christian church, as I understand it, is a body of men and women united together in a common desire of religious excellence, and with a common regard for Jesus of Nazareth, regarding him as the noblest example of morality and religion,—as the model, therefore, in this respect for us. Such a church may have many rites, as our Catholic brothers, or but few rites, as our Protestant brothers, or no rites at all, as our brothers the Friends. It may be, nevertheless, a Christian church; for the essential of substance, which makes it a religious body, is the union for the purpose of cultivating love to God and man; and the essential of form, which makes it a Christian body, is the common regard for Jesus, considered as the highest representative of God that we know. It is not the form, either of ritual or of doctrine, but the spirit which constitutes a Christian church. A staff may sustain an old man, or a young man may bear it in his hands as a toy, but walking is walking, though the man have no staff for ornament or support. A Christian spirit may exist under rituals and doctrines the most diverse. It were hard to say a man is not a Christian, because he believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Pope, while Jesus taught no such doctrine; foolish to say one is no Christian because he denies the existence of a Devil, though Jesus believed it. To make a man's Christian name depend on a belief of all that is related by the numerous writers in the Bible, is as absurd as to make that depend on a belief in all the words of Luther or Calvin, or St Augustine. It is not for me to say a man is not theoretically a Christian because he believes that Slavery is a Divine and Christian institution; that War is grateful to God—saying, with the Old Testament, that God himself 'is a man of war,' who teaches men to fight, and curses such as

refuse;—or because he believes that all men are born totally depraved, and the greater part of them are to be damned everlastingly by 'a jealous God,' who is 'angry with the wicked every day,' and that the few are to be 'saved,' only because God unjustly punished an innocent man for their sake. I will not say a man is not a Christian though he believe all the melancholy things related of God in some parts of the Old Testament, yet I know few doctrines so hostile to real religion as these have proved themselves. In our day it has strangely come to pass that a little sect, themselves hooted at and called 'Infidels' by the rest of Christendom, deny the name of Christian to such as publicly reject the miracles of the Bible. Time will doubtless correct this error. Fire is fire, and ashes ashes, say what we may; each will work after its kind. Now if Christianity be the absolute religion, it must allow all beliefs that are true, and it may exist and be developed in connection with all forms consistent with the absolute religion, and the degree thereof represented by Jesus.

"The action of a Christian church seems to be twofold: first on its own members, and then, through their means, on others out of its pale. Let a word be said of each in its order. If I were to ask you why you came here to-day? why you have often come to this house hitherto?—the serious amongst you would say: That we might become better; more manly; upright before God and downright before men; that we might be Christians, men good and pious after the fashion Jesus spoke of. The first design of such a church then is to help ourselves become Christians. Now the substance of Christianity is Piety—Love to God, and Goodness—Love to men. It is a religion, the germs whereof are born in your heart, appearing in your earliest childhood; which are developed just in proportion as you become a man, and are indeed the standard measure of your life. As the primeval rock lies at the bottom of the sea and appears at the top of the loftiest mountains, so in a finished character religion underlies all and crowns all. Christianity, to be perfect and entire, demands a complete manliness; the development of the whole man, mind, conscience, heart, and soul. It aims not to destroy the sacred peculiarities of individual character. It cherishes and developes them in their perfection, leaving Paul to be Paul, not Peter, and John to be John, not Jude nor James. We are born different, into a world where unlike things are gathered together, that there may be a special work for each. Christianity respects this diversity in men, aiming not to undo but further God's will; not fashioning all men after one pattern, to think alike, act alike, be alike, even look alike. It is something far other than Christianity which demands that. A Christian church then should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass in church or state,

church or state becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend. The greater the variety of individualities in church or state, the better is it, so long as all are really manly, humane, and accordant. A church must needs be partial, not catholic, where all men think alike, narrow and little. Your church-organ, to have compass and volume, must have pipes of various sound, and the skilful artist destroys none, but tunes them all to harmony; if otherwise, he does not understand his work. In becoming Christians let us not cease to be men; nay, we cannot be Christians unless we are men first. It were unchristian to love Christianity better than the truth, or Christ better than man."

After having shown in what sense Jesus ought to be the model of the man who wishes to become a Christian, the preacher reverts to the question of liberty of action in the unity of an object.

"The great problem of church and state is this: To produce unity of action and yet leave individual freedom not disturbed; to balance into harmonious proportions the mass and the man, the centripetal and centrifugal powers, as, by God's wondrous, living mechanism, they are balanced in the worlds above. In the state we have done this more wisely than any nation heretofore. In the churches it remains yet to do. But man is equal to all which God appoints for him. His desires are ever proportionate to his duty and his destinies. The strong cry of the nations for liberty, a craving as of hungry men for bread and water, shows what liberty is worth and what it is destined to do. Allow freedom to think, and there will be truth; freedom to act, and we shall have heroic works; freedom to live and be, and we shall have love to men and love to God. The world's history proves that, and our own history. Jesus, our model man, was the freest the world ever saw!"

It follows that a true church will aid its members to develope themselves religiously and morally by searching after truth, by progress in the piety of the heart, by active beneficence. They ought to communicate inspirations from one to another, furnish all with instruction, good counsel, and the special aid each may need.

But the church has also an outdoor commission to accomplish.

"A Christian church should be a means of reforming the world, of forming it after the pattern of Christian ideas. It should there-

fore bring up the sentiments of the times, the ideas of the times, and the actions of the times, to judge them by the universal standard. In this way it will learn much and be a living church, that grows with the advance of men's sentiments, ideas, and actions, and while it keeps the good of the past will lose no brave spirit of the present day. It can teach much; now moderating the fury of men, then quickening their sluggish steps. We expect the sins of commerce to be winked at in the street; the sins of the state to be applauded on election days and in a Congress, or on the fourth of July; we are used to hear them called the righteousness of the nation. There they are often measured by the avarice or the ambition of greedy men. You expect them to be tried by passion, which looks only to immediate results and partial ends. Here they are to be measured by Conscience and Reason, which look to permanent results and universal ends; to be looked at with reference to the Laws of God, the everlasting ideas on which alone is based the welfare of the world. Here they are to be examined in the light of Christianity itself. If the church be true, many things which seem gainful in the street and expedient in the senate-house, will here be set down as wrong, and all gain which comes therefrom seen to be but a loss. If there be a public sin in the land, if a lie invade the state, it is for the church to give the alarm; it is here that it may war on lies and sins; the more widely they are believed in and practised, the more are they deadly, the more to be opposed. Here let no false idea or false action of the public go without exposure or rebuke. But let no noble heroism of the times, no noble man, pass by without due honour. If it is a good thing to honour dead saints and the heroism of our fathers; it is a better thing to honour the saints of to-day, the live heroism of men who do the battle, when that battle is all around us. I know a few such saints, here and there a hero of that stamp, and I will not wait till they are dead and classic before I call them so and honour them as such."

If a church is to rise to the height of its mission, it must radiate around it an enlightened beneficence. It must promote popular education, combat pauperism, inebriety, and care for those who are criminal and abandoned. In particular it has a national duty to perform in the bosom of the Union.

"Did not Christ say, Whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them; and are there not three million brothers of yours and mine in bondage here, the hopeless sufferers of a savage doom; debarred from the civilisation of our age, the barbarians of the 19th century; shut out from the pretended religion

of Christendom, the heathens of a Christian land; chained down from the liberty unalienable in man, the slaves of a Christian republic? Does not a cry of indignation ring out from every legislature in the North; does not the press war with its million throats, and a voice of indignation go up from East and West, out from the hearts of freemen? Oh, no. There is none of that cry against the mightiest sin of this age. The rock of Plymouth, sanctified by the feet which led a nation's way to freedom's large estate, provokes no more voice than the rottenest stone in all the mountains of the West. The few that speak a manly word for truth and everlasting right, are called fanatics; bid be still, lest they spoil the market! Great God! and has it come to this, that men are silent over such a sin? 'Tis even so. Then it must be that every church which dares assume the name of Christ, that dearest name to men, thunders and lightens on this hideous wrong! That is not so. The church is dumb, while the state is only silent; while the servants of the people are only asleep, 'God's ministers' are dead!

"In the midst of all these wrongs and sins, the crimes of men, society, and the state, amid popular ignorance, pauperism, crime, and war, and slavery too—is the church to say nothing, do nothing; nothing for the good of such as feel the wrong, nothing to save them who do the wrong? Men tell us so in word and deed; that way alone is 'safe!' If I thought so, I would never enter the church but once again, and then to bow my shoulders to their manliest work, to heave down its strong pillars, arch and dome, and roof and wall, steeple and tower, though like Samson I buried myself under the ruins of that temple which profaned the worship of God most high, of God most loved. I would do this in the name of man; in the name of Christ I would do it; yes, in the dear and blessed name of God."

This is what a church ought to be and to do, if it wishes to be not merely a school of theology but a focus of religion. You do not become members of churches in order to remain idle. Persecution has changed its enticements and methods. No longer are the fires of Smithfield kindled, no longer are confessors sent to the galleys; but the martyrdom of valiant souls which brave calumny, desertion, contempt, that they may accomplish the good which our age requires, is not less real. The future will still see the mass seek all over the world marble white enough to build tombs for the prophets which its fathers

slew. A true church of the 19th century must be that of its generous precursors, else it is dead. "A true church will always be the church of martyrs. The ancients commenced every great work with a victim! We do not call it so; but the sacrifice is demanded, got ready, and offered by unconscious priests long ere the enterprise succeeds. Did not Christianity begin with a martyrdom?"

Thus the Christian church will again become the leader of modern ages: a post which it has lost since, by a senile attachment to the past, it has refused to go forwards with the future. The great movements of modern society are at this moment effected on the outside of the church. The church distrusts the age. If Christ is in advance of us all we cannot say the same of the churches that bear his name. His spirit they no longer have. They possess neither that tenderness which wept over Jerusalem, nor that manliness which brought down from heaven fire enough to burn for now nearly 2000 years.

"The church that is to lead this century will not be a church creeping on all fours; mewling and whining, its face turned down, its eyes turned back. It must be full of the brave, manly spirit of the day, keeping also the good of times past. There is a terrific energy in this age, for man was never so much developed, so much the master of himself before. Great truths, moral and political, have come to light. They fly quickly. The iron prophet of types publishes his visions, of weal or woe, to the near and far. This marvellous age has invented steam, and the magnetic telegraph, apt symbols of itself, before which the miracles of fable are but an idle tale. It demands, as never before, freedom for itself, usefulness in its institutions, truth in its teachings, and beauty in its deeds. Let a church have that freedom, that usefulness, truth, and beauty, and the energy of this age will soon be on its side. But the church which did for the 5th century, or the 15th, will not do for this. What is well enough at Rome, Oxford, or Berlin, is not well enough for Boston. It must have our ideas, the smell of our ground, and have grown out of the religion in our soul. The freedom of America must be there before this energy will come; the wisdom of the 19th century, before its science will be on the churches' side, else that science will go over to the 'infidels.'

"Let us have a church that dares imitate the heroism of Jesus; seek inspiration as he sought it; judge the past as he; act on the present like him; pray as he prayed; work as he wrought; live as he lived. Let our doctrines and our forms fit the soul, as the limbs fit the body, growing out of it, growing with it. Let us have a church for the whole man; truth for the mind; good works for the hands; love for the heart; and for the soul, that aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering faith in God, which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest when elsewhere it is most dark. Let our church fit man, as the heavens fit the earth!"

In other terms, a parallel religious progress ought to correspond to the scientific, commercial, and industrial transformation of our age. Either the church will find a way to transform itself in this manner, or it will lose all influence.

"In the middle ages, men had erroneous conceptions of religion, no doubt; yet the church led the world. When she wrestled with the state, the state came undermost to the ground. See the results of that supremacy—all over Europe there arose the cloister, halls of learning for the chosen few, minster, dome, cathedral, miracles of art, each costing the wealth of a province. Such was the embodiment of their ideas of religion, the prayers of a pious age done in stone, a psalm petrified as it rose from the world's mouth: a poor sacrifice, no doubt, but the best they knew how to offer. Now if men were to engage in religion as in politics, commerce, arts; if the absolute religion, the Christianity of Christ, were applied to life with all the might of this age, as the Christianity of the church was then applied, what a result should we not behold! We should build up a great state with unity in the nation, and freedom in the people; a state where there was honourable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for every mind, and love and faith in every heart. Truth would be our sermon, drawn from the oldest of Scriptures, God's writing there in nature, here in man; works of daily duty would be our sacrament; prophets inspired of God would minister the word, and piety send up her psalm of prayer, sweet in its notes, and joyfully prolonged. The noblest monument to Christ, the fairest trophy of religion, is a noble people, where all are well fed and clad, industrious, free, educated, manly, pious, wise, and good." *

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* "Collected Works," vol. iii.

IV.

THE AGED.

A SERMON OF OLD AGE.

"As the clear light is upon the holy candlestick; so is the beauty of the face in ripe age."—ECCLESIASTICUS xxvi. 17.

"I HAVE often been asked to preach a sermon of Old Age; and hitherto have declined, on the ground that I could not speak exactly from internal experience, but only from outward observation; and I hope to be able at some future time to speak on the theme; certainly, if I live, I may correct this present infirmity. To-day, I will try,—only asking all old persons to forgive the imperfections of this discourse; for they know what I only see. But as I was born into the arms of a father then one-and-fifty years old, who lived to add yet another quarter of a century thereunto; and as my cradle was rocked by a grandmother who had more than fourscore years at my birth, and nearly a hundred when she ceased to be mortal; and as my first 'Christian ministry' was attending upon old age,—I think I know something about the character of men and women whom time makes venerable.

"There is a period when the apple-tree blossoms with its fellows of the wood and field. How fair a time it is! All nature is woosome and winning; the material world celebrates its vegetable loves; and the flower-bells, touched by the winds of Spring, usher in the universal marriage of Nature. Beast, bird, insect, reptile, fish, plant, lichen, with their prophetic colours spread, all float forward on the tide of new life. Then comes the Summer. Many a blossom falls fruitless to the ground, littering the earth with beauty, never to be used. Thick leaves hide the process of creation, which first blushed public in the flowers, and now unseen goes on. For so life's most deep and fruitful hours are hid in mystery. Apples are growing on every tree; all Summer long they grow, and in early Autumn. At length the fruit is fully formed; the leaves begin to fall, letting the sun approach more near. The apple hangs there yet; not to grow, only to ripen. Weeks long it clings to the tree: it gains nothing in size and weight. Externally, there is increase of beauty. Having finished the form from within, Nature brings out the added grace of colour. It is not a tricksy fashion painted on; but an expression which of itself comes out;—a fragrance and a loveliness of the apple's innermost. Within, at the same time, the component elements are changing. The apple grows mild and pleasant. It softens, sweetens; in one word, it mellows. Some night, the vital forces of the tree get drowsy, and the Autumn, with gentle breath, just shakes the bough; the expectant fruit lets go its hold, full-grown, full-ripe, full-coloured too, and with plump and happy sound the apple falls into the Autumn's lap; and the Spring's marriage promise is complete.

"Such is the natural process which each fruit goes through, blooming, growing, ripening.

"The same divine law is appropriate for every kind of animal, from the lowest reptile up to imperial man. It is very beautiful. The parts of the process are perfect; the whole is complete. Birth is human blossom; youth, manhood, they are our summer growth; old age is ripeness. The hands let go the mortal bough; that is natural death. It is a dear, good God who orders all for the apple-tree, and for mankind. Yea, his ark shelters the spider and the toad, the wolf, and the lizard, and the snake;—for He is Father and Mother to all the world."

Then follows a description of the physical facts, tastes, inclinations, and habits which characterize old age. In particular it loves to revert both in theology and literature to that which charmed its youth. Like maturity and youth, it has its own dangers and faults. It runs the risk of being querulous, fretful, given to routine, retrograde. Those faults are not necessarily inherent in advanced life. "It has been my fortune to know men and women who in their old age had a long Indian summer, in which the grass grew fresh again, and the landscape had a richness, a mellowness of outline and of tint; yea! and a beauty, too, which it had lacked in earlier years."

All depends on the fidelity with which care has been taken of what is best in our nature. Morally the old man is stronger than the young one. He is more mild, more religious, he expects less from this world and more from the next. Such, at least, is the old man who has used

life wisely. But alas for the man who has belied the promises of his spring! Is anything more melancholy than the age of an old sensualist, of an old miser, of an old place-hunter, of an old coquette? After drawing vigorous portraits of these deplorable moral ruins, the preacher passes on to characters which have crowned a devoted Christian life with a serene beauty of age.

"Miss Kindly is aunt to everybody, and has been so long that none remember to the contrary. The little children love her; she helped their grandmothers to bridal ornaments, threescore years ago. Nay, this boy's grandfather found the way to college lay through her pocket. Generations not her own rise up and call her blessed. To this man's father her patient toil gave the first start in life. That great fortune—when it was a seed, she carried it in her hand. That wide river of reputation ran out of the cup her bounty filled. Now she is old; very old: that little children, who cling about her, with open mouth, and great round eyes, wonder that anybody should ever be so old; or that Aunt Kindly ever had a mother to kiss her mouth. To them she is coeval with the sun, and like that, an institution of the country. At Christmas, they think she is the wife of Saint Nicholas* himself, such an advent is there of blessings from her hand. She has helped lay a Messiah in many a poor man's crib.

"Her hands are thin; her voice feeble; her back is bent; she walks with a staff—the best limb of the three. She wears a cap of antique pattern, yet of her own nice make. She has great round spectacles, and holds her book away off the other side of the candle when she reads. For more than sixty years she has been a special providence to the family. How she used to go forth—the very charity of God—to soothe, and heal, and bless! How industrious are her hands! how thoughtful and witty that fertile mind! Her heart has gathered power to love in all the eighty-six years of her toilsome life. When the birth-angel came to a related house, she was there to be the mother's mother; ay, mother also to the new-born baby's soul. And when the wings of death flapped in the street, and shook a neighbour's door, she smoothed down the pillow for the fainting head; she soothed and cheered the spirit of the waiting man, opening the curtains of heaven that he might look through and see the welcoming face of the dear Infinite Mother: nay, she put the wings of her own strong, experienced piety under him, and sought to bear him up.

* St Nicholas is in the North the distributor of presents to deserving children.

"Now these things are passed by. No, they are not passed by, they are recollected in the memory of the dear God, and every good deed she has done is treasured in her own heart. The bulb shuts up the summer in its breast which in winter will come out a fragrant hyacinth. Stratum after stratum, her good works are laid up, imperishable, in the geology of her character.

"It is near noon now. She is alone. She has been thoughtful all day, talking inwardly to herself. The family notice it, and say nothing. In her chamber, from a private drawer, she takes a little casket; and from thence a book, gilt-edged and clasped; but the clasp is worn, the gilding is old, the binding faded by long use. Her hands tremble as she opens it. First she reads her own name on the fly leaf; only her Christian name, 'Agnes,' and the date. Sixty-eight years ago this day it was written there, in a clear, youthful, clerkly hand—with a little tremble in it, as if the heart beat over-quick. It is very well worn, the dear old Bible. It opens of its own accord at the 14th chapter of St John. There is a little folded piece of paper there: it touches the 1st verse and 27th. She sees neither: she reads both out of her soul:—'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me:' 'Peace I leave with you. My peace give I unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' She opens the paper. There is a little brown dust in it; perhaps the remnant of a flower. She takes the precious relic in her hand, made cold by emotion. She drops a tear on it and the dust is transfigured before her eyes: it is a red rose of the spring, not quite half blown, dewy fresh. She is old no longer. It is not Aunt Kindly now; it is sweet Agnes, as the maiden of 18 was, eight-and-sixty years ago, one day in May, when all nature was woosome and winning, and every flower-bell rung in the marriage of the year. Her lover had just put that red rose of the spring into her hand, and the good God another in her cheek, not quite half-blown, dewy fresh. The young man's arm is round her; her brown curls fall on his shoulder; she feels his breath on her face, his cheek on hers: their lips join, and like two morning dew-drops in that rose, their two loves rush into one. But the youth must wander to a far land. They will think of each other as they look at the North Star. She bids him take her Bible. He saw the North Star hang over the turrets of many a foreign town. His soul went to God—there is as straight a road from India as from any other spot—and his Bible came back to her—the Divine love in it, without the human lover, the leaf turned down at the blessed words of St John, 1st and 27th of the 14th chapter. She put the rose there to note the spot; what marks the thought holds now the symbol of their youthful love. To-day her soul is with him, her maiden soul with his angel soul; and one day the two, like two dew-drops, will rush into one immortal wedlock, and the old age of earth shall become eternal youth in the Kingdom of Heaven.

"GRANDFATHER is old. His back also is bent. In the street he sees crowds of men looking dreadfully young, and walking fearfully swift. He wonders where all the old folks are. Once, when a boy, he could not find people young enough for him, and sidled up to any young stranger he met on Sundays, wondering why God made the world so old. Now he goes to Commencement to see his grandsons take their degree, and is astonished at the youth of the audience. 'This is new,' he says; 'it did not use to be so fifty years before.' At meeting, the minister seems surprisingly young, the audience young; and he looks round and is astonished that there are so few venerable heads. The audience seems not decorous; they come in late, and hurry off early, clapping the doors to after them with irreverent bang. But Grandfather is decorous, well-mannered, early in his seat; jostled, he jostles not again; elbowed, he returns it not; crowded, he thinks no evil. He is gentlemanly to the rude, obliging to the insolent and vulgar;—for Grandfather is a gentleman, not puffed up with mere money, but edified with well-grown manliness. Time has dignified his good-manners.

"Now it is night. Grandfather sits by his old-fashioned fire. The family are all a-bed. He draws his old-fashioned chair nearer to the hearth. On the stand which his mother gave him are the candlesticks, also of old time. The candles are three-quarters burnt down; the fire on the hearth also is low. He has been thoughtful all day, talking half to himself, chanting a bit of verse, humming a snatch of an old tune. He kissed more tenderly than common his youngest grand-daughter,—the family pet,—before she went to bed. He takes out of his bosom a little locket; nobody ever sees it. Therein are two little twists of hair; common hair: it might be yours or mine. But as Grandfather looks at them, the outer twist of hair becomes a whole head of most ambrosial curls. He remembers the stolen interviews, the meetings by moonlight, and how sweet the evening star looked, and how he laid his hand on another's shoulder: 'You are my evening star,' quoth he. He remembers

> 'The fountain-heads, and pathless groves,
> Places that pale Passion loves.'

"He thinks of his bridal hour.

"In the stillness of the great slumbering town, while life breaks only in a quiet ripple on all those hundred thousand lips, he hears no noise; but with wintry hands solemnly the church clock strikes the midnight hour. In his locket he looks again. This other twist is the hair of his firstborn son. At this same hour of midnight, once,—it is now many years ago—when the long agony was over he knelt and prayed—'My God, I thank thee that I, though father, am still a husband too! Oh, what have I done! what am I, that unto me thus a life should be given, and another spared!' Now he has

children, and children's children—the joy of his old age. But for many a year his wife has looked to him from beyond the Evening Star; yea, still she is herself the Evening Star, yet more beautiful; a star that never sets; not mortal wife now, but angel; and he says, 'How long, O Lord? when lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, that mine eyes may see thy salvation?'

"The last stick on his andirons snaps asunder, and falls outward. Two faintly smoking brands stand there. Grandfather lays them together, and they flame up; the two smokes are one united flame. 'Even so let it be in heaven,' says Grandfather.

"Dr Priestly, when he was young, preached that old age was the happiest time of life; and when he was himself 80 he wrote, 'I have found it so.' But the old age of the glutton, the fop, the miser, the hunter after place, the bigot, the shrew, what would that be? Think of the old age of a Boston Kidnapper! It is only a noble, manly life, full of piety, which makes old age beautiful. Then we ripen for Eternity, and the dear God looks down from heaven, and lays his hand on the venerable head: Come, thou beloved, inherit the Kingdom prepared for thee.'"*

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* "Collected Works," vol. iii.

V.

THE DUTY OF OBEYING THE LAW TOUCHING FUGITIVE SLAVES.

THE following extract is taken from a sermon entitled "The State of the Nation," preached in Boston the 28th of November, 1850, on the text, *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people* (Prov. xiv. 34). The argument of those who like Daniel Webster hold that the North ought to submit to the Fugitive Slave Law, comes at last to this, viz., that after all *it is the law;* that the safety of the Union depended on its acceptance; that if it was hard to the Northerners to observe the law, there was no merit in performing agreeable duties, and that it would be a noble thing "to overcome their prejudices," and thus to uphold the laws and the Union by earnestly fulfilling their constitutional obligations. "The law of God," said Webster, "never commands us to disobey the law of man." In reply to this, Parker cites from the Bible several instances in which conscience and the law of the land were in formal conflict. He asks ironically if it was a duty for Daniel to obey King Darius by whom he was forbidden to worship God; for the apostles to cease from proclaiming the Gospel out of deference to the prohibition of the Sanhedrim; for the parents of Moses to cast their infant into the Nile agreeably to Pharaoh's decree.

"However there is another ancient case, mentioned in the Bible, in which the laws commanded one thing, and conscience just the opposite. Here is the record of the law:—'Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any one knew where he [Jesus] were, he should show it, that they might take him.' Of course, it became the official and legal business of each disciple who knew where Christ was, to make it known to the authorities. No doubt James and John could leave all and follow him, with others of the people who knew not the law of Moses, and were accursed; nay, the women, Martha and Mary, could minister unto him of their substance, could wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of their head. They did it gladly, of their own free will, and took pleasure therein, I make no doubt. There was no merit in that—'Any man can perform an agreeable duty.' But there was found one disciple who could 'perform a disagreeable duty.' He went, perhaps 'with alacrity,' and betrayed his Saviour to the marshal of the district of Jerusalem, who was called a centurion. Had he no affection for Jesus? No doubt; but he could conquer his prejudices, while Mary and John could not.

"Judas Iscariot has rather a bad name in the Christian world: he is called 'the son of perdition,' in the New Testament, and his conduct is reckoned a 'transgression;' nay, it is said the devil 'entered into him,' to cause this hideous sin. But all this it seems was a mistake; certainly, if we are to believe our 'republican' lawyers and statesmen, Iscariot only fulfilled his 'constitutional obligations.' It was only 'on that point,' of betraying his Saviour, that the constitutional law required him to have anything to do with Jesus. He took his 'thirty pieces of silver'—about fifteen dollars; a Yankee is to do it for ten, having fewer prejudices to conquer—it was his legal fee, for value received. True, the Christians thought it was 'the wages of iniquity,' and even the Pharisees—who commonly made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions—dared not defile the temple with this 'price of blood;' but it was honest money. It was as honest a fee as any American commissioner or deputy will ever get for a similar service. How mistaken we are! Judas Iscariot is not a traitor; he was a great patriot; he conquered his 'prejudices,' performed 'a disagreeable duty' as an office of 'high morals and high principle;' he kept the 'law' and the 'Constitution,' and did all he could to 'save the Union;' nay, he was a saint, 'not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.' 'The law of God never commands us to disobey the law of man.' *Sancte Iscariote, ora pro nobis.*" *

* "Collected Works," vol. iv. p. 254.

VI.

THE CHIEF SINS OF THE PEOPLE.

THIS is the title which Theodore Parker gave to a sermon delivered on the 10th of April, 1851, the day appointed, according to an old custom, for the annual fast, by the authorities of Massachusetts. Parker availed himself of the opportunity to deliver a vigorous discourse in which he stigmatized the public vices which dishonoured the Union, especially those which were contrary to the fundamental idea of the American Constitution. After showing the excellent fruits which fidelity thereto had borne, he proceeds to the contradiction it has undergone in practice and in the national policy. The liberal conscience of America suffers eclipse, the primary cause of which is thirst for money. In consequence, a new aristocracy is formed, sustained by a veritable superstition for "the almighty dollar," and the authorities of the country shut their eyes to a crowd of illegalities, because they bring money, while infamous and truly criminal laws are passed because such enactments will prevent the loss of gain or serve for its augmentation. If a proof is required, take the execrable Fugitive Slave Law, which transmutes the magistrates of the Union into devastators of that individual freedom which their duty required them to shield, a law which too makes it the duty of every free man in the United States to lend a hand toward the perpetration of that murder which is called the enslavement of another man. It is impossible

to conceive the demoralization which this law, shamelessly proposed, passed, and applied, inflicts on the whole nation, whose conscience is odiously wounded, but who knows not how to get out of the difficulty in which it has allowed itself to be involved. However, duty is appealed to, law demands obedience in the court of conscience, and must have its claim allowed. Yet religious and political history is full of examples which demonstrate that we must obey God rather than man. The city of Boston suffers under a painful impression caused by the capture and extradition of Thomas Sims. Here is seen how they were duped who were led to think that the Fugitive Slave Law would bring concord and peace into the Union. Since the mournful days which preceded the triumph of American freedom Boston never knew hours so wretched: —its streets occupied by armed forces, chains hung around the court-house, the menacing explosion of the popular indignation, a disgraced magistracy, forced to condemn an innocent man to what is worse than death —never was the like seen, never could the like have been thought possible. Such is the actual and visible result of that accursed passion for money which makes the Union forget itself and stand dishonoured before the eyes of God and man. We subjoin the termination of this powerful discourse.

"Shall I ask you to despair of human liberty and rights? I believe that money is to triumph for the present. We see it does in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington: see this in the defence of bribery; in the chains of the court-house; in the judges' pliant necks; in the swords of the police to-day; see it in the threats of the press to withdraw the trade of Boston from towns that favour the unalienable rights of man!

"Will the Union hold out? I know not that. But, if men continue to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, I do not know how soon it will end; I do not care how soon the Union goes to pieces. I believe in justice and the law of God; that ultimately the right will prevail. Wrong will prevail for a time, and attract admiration. I

have seen in a haberdasher's shop-window the figure of a wooden woman showily arrayed, turning round on a pivot, and attracting the gaze of all the passers-by; but ere long it is forgotten. So it will be with this transient love of Slavery in Boston; but the love of right will last as long as the granite in New Hampshire hills. I will not tell you to despair of freedom because politicians are false; they are often so. Despair of freedom for the black man! No, never. Not till heaven shakes down its stars; nay, not till the heart of man ceases to yearn for liberty; not till the eternal God is hurled from His throne, and a devil takes His place! All the arts of wicked men shall not prevail against the Father! nay, at last, not against the Son.

"The very scenes we have witnessed here,—the court-house in chains,—the laws of Massachusetts despised,—the commonwealth disgraced,—these speak to the people with an eloquence beyond all power of human speech. Here is great argument for our cause. This work begets new foes to every form of wrong. There is a day after to-day,—an eternity after to-morrow. Let us be courageous and active, but cool and tranquil, and full of hope.

"These are the beginning of sorrows; we shall have others, and trials. Continued material prosperity is commonly bad for a man, always for a nation. I think the time is coming when there will be a terrible contest between Liberty and Slavery. Now is the time to spread ideas, not to bear arms. I know which will triumph: the present love of thraldom is only an eddy in the great river of the nation's life; by and by it will pass down the stream and be forgot. Liberty will spread with us, as the spring over the New England hills. One spot will blossom, and then another, until at last the spring has covered the whole land, and every mountain rejoices in its verdant splendour.

"O Boston! thou wert once the prayer and pride of all New England men, and holy hands were laid in baptism on thy baby brow! Thou art dishonoured now; thou hast taken to thy arms the enemies of men. Thou hast betrayed the slave; thy brother's blood cries out against thee from the ground. Thou art a stealer of mankind. In thy borders, for long years, the cradle of liberty has been placed. The golden serpent of commerce has twined its snaky folds about it all, and fascinated into sleep the child. Tread lightly, soldiers: he yet may wake. Yes, in his time this child shall wake, and Boston shall scourge out the memory of the men who have trodden her laws under foot, violated the dearest instincts of her heart, and profaned her religion. I appeal from Boston, swollen with wealth, drunk with passion, and mad against freedom—to Boston in her calm and sober hour.

"O Massachusetts, noble State! the mother that bore us all; parent of goodly institutions and of noble men, whose great ideas

have blessed the land!—how art thou defiled, dishonoured, and brought low! One of thine own hired servants has wrought this deed of shame, and rent the bosom which took him as an adopted son. Shall it be always thus? I conjure thee by all thy battle-fields,—by the remembrance of the great men born of thee, who battled for the right, thy Franklin, Hancock, the Adamses—three in a single name,—by thine ideas and thy love of God,—to forbid for ever all such deeds as this, and wipe away thy deep disgrace.

"America, thou youngest born of all God's family of States! thou art a giant in thy youth, laying thine either hand upon thine either sea; the lakes behind thee, and the Mexique bay before. Hast thou too forgot thy mission here, proud only of thy wide-spread soil, thy cattle, corn, thy cotton, and thy cloth? Wilt thou welcome the Hungarian hero, and yet hold slaves, and hunt poor negroes through thy land? Thou art the ally of the despot, thyself out-heathening the heathen Turk. Yea, every Christian king may taunt thee with thy slaves. Dost thou forget thine own great men,—thy Washington, thy Jefferson? forget thine own proud words prayed forth to God in thy great act of prayer? Is it to protect thy wealth alone that thou hast formed a State? and shall thy wealth be slaves? No, thou art mad. It shall not be. One day thou wilt heed the lessons of the past, practise thy prayer, wilt turn to God, and rend out of thy book the hated page where Slavery is writ. Thy sons who led thee astray in thy madness, where shall they appear?

"And thou our God, the Father of us all, Father and Mother too, Parent of freemen, Parent also of the slave, look down upon us in our sad estate. Look down upon thy saints, and bless them; yea, bless thy sinners too; save from the wicked heart. Bless this town by Thy chastisement; this State by Thine afflictions; this nation by Thy rod. Teach us to resist evil, and with good, till we break the fetters from every foot, the chains from every hand, and let the oppressed go free. So let Thy kingdom come; so may Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *

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* "Collected Works," vol. vii. pp. 292—295.

VII.

A LESSON FOR THE DAY.

THIS discourse took the place of the Lesson from the Scripture on Sunday, the 29th of May, 1854, when all Boston was labouring under the excitement caused by the recent apprehension of Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave, and by the sanguinary scenes which ensued.

"I see by your faces, as well as by your number, what is expected of me to-day. A person has just sent me a request, asking me, 'Cannot you extemporize a sermon for this day?' It is easier to do it than not. But I shall not extemporize a sermon for to-day —I shall extemporize the Scripture. I therefore pass over the Bible words, which I designed to read from the Old Testament and the New, and will take the Morning Lesson from the circumstances of the past week. The time has not come for me to preach a sermon on the great wrong now enacting in this city. The deed is not yet fully done! any counsel that I have to offer is better given elsewhere than here, at another time than now. Neither you nor I are quite calm enough to-day to look the matter fairly in the face and see entirely what it means. Before the events of the past week took place, I had proposed to preach this morning on the subject of war, taking my theme from the present commotions in Europe, which also will reach us, and have already. That will presently be the theme of my morning's sermon. Next Sunday I shall preach on THE PERILS INTO WHICH AMERICA IS BROUGHT AT THIS DAY BY THE NEW CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY. That is the theme for next Sunday! the other is for to-day. But before I proceed to that, I have some words to say in place of the Scripture lesson, and instead of a selection from the Old Testament prophets.

"Since last we came together, there has been a man stolen in this city of our fathers. It is not the first; it may not be the last. He is now in the great slave pen in the city of Boston. He is there against the law of the Commonwealth, which, if I am rightly informed, in such cases prohibits the use of State edifices as United States gaols. I may be mistaken. Any forcible attempt to take him from that barracoon of Boston would be wholly without use. For besides the holiday soldiers who belong to the city of Boston, and are ready to shoot down their brothers in a just or an unjust cause, any day when the city government gives them its command and its liquor. I understand that there are 184 United States marines lodged in the Court House, every man of them furnished with a musket and a bayonet, with his side arms, and 24 ball cartridges. They are stationed also in a very strong building, and where five men, in a passage-way, about the width of this pulpit, can defend it against five-and-twenty, or a hundred. To 'keep the peace,' the Mayor, who the other day 'regretted the arrest' of our brother, Anthony Burns, and declared that his sympathies were wholly with the alleged fugitive—and of course wholly against the claimant and the Marshal—in order to keep the peace of the city, the Mayor must become corporal of the guard for kidnappers from Virginia. He must keep the peace of our city, and defend these guests of Boston over the graves, the unmonumented graves, of John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

"A man has been killed by violence. Some say he was killed by his own coadjutors: I can easily believe it; there is evidence enough that they were greatly frightened. They were not United States soldiers, but volunteers from the streets of Boston, who, for their pay, went into the Court House to assist in kidnapping a brother man. They were so cowardly that they could not use the simple cutlasses they had in their hands, but smote right and left, like ignorant and frightened ruffians as they are. They may have slain their brother or not—I cannot tell. It is said by some that they killed him. Another story is, that he was killed by a hostile hand from without. Some say by a bullet, some by an axe, and others still by a knife. As yet nobody knows the facts. But a man has been killed. He was a volunteer in this service. He liked the business of enslaving a man, and has gone to render an account to God for his gratuitous wickedness. Twelve men have been arrested, and are now in gaol to await their examination for wilful murder!

"Here, then, is one man butchered, and twelve men brought in peril of their lives. Why is this? Whose fault is it?

"Some eight years ago, a Boston merchant, by his mercenaries, kidnapped a man 'between Faneuil Hall and old Quincy,' and carried him off to eternal slavery. Boston mechanics, the next day, held up the half-eagles which they received as pay for stealing a man. The matter was brought before the grand jury for the county of Suffolk, and abundant evidence was presented, as I understand, but they found 'no bill.' A wealthy merchant, in the name of trade, had stolen a black man, who, on board a ship, had come to this city, had been seized by the mercenaries of this merchant, kept by them for

awhile, and then, when he escaped, kidnapped a second time in the city of Boston. Boston did not punish the deed!

"The Fugitive Slave Bill was presented to us, and Boston rose up to welcome it! The greatest man in all the North came here, and in this city told Massachusetts she must obey the Fugitive Slave Bill with alacrity—that we must all conquer our prejudices in favour of justice and the unalienable rights of man. Boston did conquer her prejudices in favour of justice and the unalienable rights of man.

"Do you not remember the 'Union Meeting' which was held in Faneuil Hall, when a 'political soldier of fortune,' sometimes called the 'Democratic Prince of the Devils,' howled at the idea that there was a law of God higher than the Fugitive Slave Bill? He sneered, and asked, 'Will you have the "Higher Law of God" to rule over you?' and the multitude which occupied the floor, and the multitude that crowded the galleries, howled down the Higher Law of God! They treated the Higher Law to a laugh and a howl! That was Tuesday night. It was the Tuesday before Thanksgiving-day. On that Thanksgiving-day, I told the congregation that the men who howled down the Higher Law of Almighty God, had got Almighty God to settle with; that they had sown the wind, and would reap the whirlwind. At that meeting Mr Choate told the people—'REMEMBER! REMEMBER! *Remember!*' Then nobody knew what to 'remember.' Now you know. That is the state of that case.

"Then you 'remember' the kidnappers came here to seize Thomas Sims. Thomas Sims was seized. Nine days he was on trial for more than his life; and never saw a judge—never saw a jury. He was sent back into bondage from the city of Boston. You remember the chains that were put around the Court House; you remember the judges of Massachussetts stooping, crouching, creeping, crawling under the chain of Slavery, in order to get in their own courts. All these things you 'remember.' Boston was non-resistant. She gave her 'back to the smiters'—from the South; she 'withheld not her cheek'—from the scorn of South Carolina, and welcomed the 'spitting' of kidnappers from Georgia and Virginia. To-day we have our pay for such conduct. You have not forgotten the '1500 gentlemen of property and standing,' who volunteered to conduct Mr Sims to slavery—Marshal Sukey's 'gentlemen.' They 'remember' it. They are sorry enough now. Let us forgive—we need not forget. 'REMEMBER! REMEMBER! *Remember!*'

"The Nebraska Bill has just now been passed. Who passed it? The '1500 gentlemen of property and standing' in Boston, who, in 1851, volunteered to carry Thomas Sims into slavery by force of arms. They passed the Nebraska Bill. If Boston had punished the kidnapping of 1845, there would have been no Fugitive Slave Bill in 1850. If Massachusetts, in 1850, had declared the Bill should not

be executed, the kidnapper would never have shown his face in the streets of Boston. If, failing in this, Boston had said, in 1851, 'Thomas Sims shall not be carried off,' and forcibly or peacefully, by the majesty of the great mass of men, had resisted it, no kidnapper would have come here again. There would have been no Nebraska Bill. But to every demand of the slave power, Massachusetts has said, 'Yes, yes!—we grant it all!' 'Agitation must cease!' 'Save the Union!'

"Southern Slavery is an institution which is in earnest. Northern Freedom is an institution that is not in earnest. It was in earnest in '76 and '83. It has not been much in earnest since. The compromises are but provisional! Slavery is the only finality! Now, since the Nebraska Bill is passed, an attempt is made to add insult to insult, injury to injury. Last week, at New York, a brother of the Rev. Dr Pennington, an established clergyman, of large reputation, great character, acknowledged learning, who has his diploma from the University of Heidelberg, in Germany—a more honourable source than that from which any clergyman in Massachusetts has received one—his brother and two nephews were kidnapped in New York, and without any trial, without any defence, were hurried off into bondage. Then, at Boston, you know what was done in the last four days. Behold the consequences of the doctrine that there is no higher law. Look at Boston to-day. There are no chains round your Court House—there are only ropes round it this time. A hundred and eighty-four United States soldiers are there. They are, I am told, mostly foreigners—the scum of the earth—none but such enter into armies as common soldiers, in a country like ours. I say it with pity—they are not to blame for having been born where they were and what they are. I pity the scum as well as I pity the mass of men. The soldiers are there, I say, and their trade is to kill. Why is this so?

"You remember the meeting at Faneuil Hall last Friday, when even the words of my friend, Wendell Phillips, the most eloquent words that get spoken in America in this century, hardly restrained the multitude from going, and by violence storming the Court House. What stirred them up? It was the spirit of our fathers—the spirit of justice and liberty in your heart, and in my heart, and in the heart of us all. Sometimes it gets the better of a man's prudence, especially on occasions like this; and so excited was that assembly of four or five thousand men, that even the words of eloquent Wendell Phillips could hardly restrain them from going at once rashly to the Court House, and tearing it to the ground.

"Boston is the most peaceful of cities. Why? Because we have commonly had a peace which was worth keeping. No city respects laws so much. Because the laws have been made by the people, for the people, and are laws which respect justice. Here is a law which

the people will not keep. It is a law of our Southern masters; a law not fit to keep.

"Why is Boston in this confusion to-day? The Fugitive Slave Bill Commissioner has just now been sowing the wind, that we may reap the whirlwind. The old Fugitive Slave Bill Commissioner stands back; he has gone to look after his 'personal popularity.' But, when Commissioner Curtis does not dare appear in this matter, another man comes forward, and for the first time seeks to kidnap his man also in the city of Boston. Judge Loring is a man whom I have respected and honoured. His private life is mainly blameless, so far as I know. He has been, I think, uniformly beloved. His character has entitled him to the esteem of his fellow-citizens. I have known him somewhat. I never heard a mean word from him —many good words. He was once the law-partner of Horace Mann, and learned humanity of a great teacher. I have respected him a good deal. He is a respectable man—in the Boston sense of that word, and in a much higher sense; at least, I have thought so. He is a kind-hearted, charitable man; a good neighbour; a fast friend —when politics do not interfere; charitable with his purse; an excellent husband; a kind father; a good relative. And I should as soon have expected that venerable man who sits before me, born before your Revolution [SAMUEL MAY],—I should as soon have expected him to go and kidnap Robert Morris, or any of the other coloured men I see around me, as I should have expected Judge Loring to do this thing. But he has sown the wind, and we are reaping the whirlwind. I need not say what I now think of him. He is to act to-morrow, and may yet act like a man. Let us wait and see. Perhaps there is manhood in him yet. But, my friends, all this confusion is his work. He knew he was stealing a man born with the same unalienable right to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' as himself. He knew the slave-holders had no more right to Anthony Burns than to his own daughter. He knew the consequences of stealing a man. He knew that there are men in Boston who have not yet conquered their prejudices—men who respect the higher law of God. He knew there would be a meeting at Faneuil Hall—gatherings in the streets. He knew there would be violence.

"EDWARD GREELEY LORING, Judge of Probate for the county of Suffolk, in the State of Massachusetts, Fugitive Slave Bill Commissioner of the United States, before these citizens of Boston, on Ascension Sunday, assembled to worship God, I charge you with the death of that man who was killed on last Friday night. He was your fellow-servant in kidnapping. He dies at your hand. You fired the shot which makes his wife a widow, his child an orphan. I charge you with the peril of twelve men, arrested for murder, and on trial for their lives. I charge you with filling the Court House with 184 hired ruffians of the United States, and alarming not only this city for her liberties that are in peril, but stirring up the whole Commonwealth of Massachusetts with indignation, which no man knows how to stop—which no man can stop. You have done it all!

"This is my Lesson for the Day." *

* "Collected Works," vol. vi. pp. 44—50.

VIII.

TRUTH IN CONFLICT WITH THE WORLD.

A PARABLE.

THIS piece is one of Parker's earliest productions, and portrays him exactly. It appeared in the *Dial* of October, 1840. The parable was also a prediction.

"One day Abdiel paid a visit to Paul, who had returned to Tarsus after his journey to Damascus. He found him seated and thoughtful on the threshold of his house: his tools and his favourite books lay negligently on the floor behind him. 'I hear strange things of thee,' said the Rabbi coldly; 'thou art become a follower of the Nazarene. What course art thou about to pursue after this fine conversion?' 'I shall go and preach the gospel to all nations,' quietly answered the new convert. 'I set out to-morrow.'

"The Rabbi, who had a secret grudge against Paul, looked at him with affected incredulity and said: 'Dost thou know the sacrifice thou art making? Thou must renounce father, mother, and friends, the society of the great and the wise. Thou wilt meet with severe trials and serious dangers. Thou wilt be poor, branded with offensive names, persecuted, flogged, perhaps put to death.' 'None of those things move me,' replied he; 'I have weighed them all. I value not my life, compared with the observance of God's law and the proclamation of the truth, notwithstanding what men may do. I shall walk in God's light without fear. No longer am I a slave to the old law of sin and death. I am God's freedman, made free by the law of the Spirit of life which is in Jesus Christ.' 'Here,' interposed the Rabbi, 'thou mayest acquire wealth and renown; in thy new work thou wilt have only pain, infamy, and death.' 'God's voice bids me go,' cried the apostle firmly, 'and I am ready to spend and be spent for the truth.' 'Die then,' growled the Rabbi; 'die, mad Nazarene, atheist, as thou art. He who gives himself to novelties, preferring silly convictions and the whims of conscience to solid

wealth and his friends' advice, deserves the gibbet. Die in thy folly. Henceforward I disown thee; call me friend no longer.' Years passed away. The divine word grew and prevailed. One day a rumour spread over the public squares of Tarsus and soon passed from mouth to mouth:

"'Paul the apostle is a prisoner in Rome, and every day expects the order which will consign him to the lions. His approaching trial will be his last.' Then Abdiel said to the old women in the synagogues: 'I well knew it would come to this. How much more wisely would he have acted had he remained here in his trade and in the old paths of our fathers and the prophets, without losing his senses about whims of conscience! He might have lived respectably in Tarsus till advanced age, he might have been father of sons and daughters, he might have been saluted as *Rabbi* in our streets.'

"Such was the talk in Tarsus. At the same moment Paul sat in his prison at Rome, full of consolation. The Lord appeared to him in vision and said, 'Paul, fear not; thou hast fought the good fight. I am with thee to the end of the world.' The calm old man replied, 'I know whom I have served, and I am fully persuaded that God will keep what I have entrusted to him. I have not received the spirit of fear, but of love and of a sound mind. I shall finish my course with joy, for already I behold the crown of righteousness descending on my head; and now my salvation is more perfect and my hope more ardent than when I first believed.'

"And in his heart reverberated the same voice which of old spake on the mount of transfiguration, 'Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

THE END.

Woodfall and Kinder, Printers, Milford Lane, Strand, London, W.C.