

**FROTHINGHAM
OCTAVIUS
BROOKS**

RECOLLECTIONS AND
IMPRESSIONS, 1822-1890

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Octavius Brooks Frothingham

Recollections and

Impressions, 1822-1890

I.

PARENTAGE

My father was, as I have said elsewhere, a clergyman in Boston, Massachusetts, a Unitarian minister to the First Church, standing in a long line of men, of whom the earliest was severely orthodox, while he abhorred orthodoxy. Yet he was ordained without hesitation, was more than acceptable to the best minds through a service of thirty-five years, and continued more and more unorthodox to the end; so gradually and insensibly did the Puritan tenets disappear one by one until the shadow of them only remained. We are assured that by 1780 nearly all the congregational pulpits were filled by Arminians. In 1815, the year of my father's ordination, they were well domesticated in New England, Calvinism having lost its hold on the minds of thinking people, and none but keen-eyed watchers on the tower seeing what course opinion was taking. How far the tendency towards the moral and practical view of religion as distinct from

the speculative view had gone, is well illustrated in my father's case. He was a man of excellent education, one of the best scholars in a distinguished class at Harvard, an enthusiast for intellectual cultivation, singularly refined in perception, an acute critic, a careful, precise, elegant writer. His tastes were pre-eminently literary. This is said in full view of the fact that he was a learned theologian, a pungent disputant, a zealous student of biblical researches, a faithful pastor.

He was essentially a man of letters. His passion was for the Latin classics. The best edition of Cicero was on his shelves; the finest copy of Horace graced his book-case. His knowledge of the Greek literature and language was fair. He was fond of poetry of a stately and romantic description; was, himself, a poet of a gentle, meditative, spiritual cast, especially eminent as a composer of hymns written for church occasions, the dedication of meeting-houses, the consecration of ministers, many of them of permanent and general value, as both "liberal" and "orthodox" collections attest; while he has done as much as any man in his generation to elevate, purify, and console delicate and serious natures.

His library of about three thousand volumes was exceedingly miscellaneous, illustrating the breadth of his interests and the activity of his mind. There were Bibles of choice editions and in every tongue. There were biblical commentaries, dictionaries, grammars. The Church Fathers were well represented. Church history was presented by its best narrators. But the bulk of the

collection was secular. It contained copies of Addison, Johnson, Bayle, Carlyle, Milton, Bacon, Dante, Dickens, Emerson, Grote, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, Heeren, Hume, Iriarte, Michelet, Lessing, Kingsley, Macaulay, Longfellow, Plutarch, Pindar, Pope, Scott, Rousseau, Racine, Rückert, Rabelais, Tasso, George Sand, Thucydides, Theocritus, Virgil, Voltaire, Wieland, Pliny, Wordsworth, Wilkinson, Zschokke, Walt Whitman. They were very various. They commanded all extremes: Augustine and Anacreon; Aratus and *Annual Register*; Æschylus and Molière; Aristotle and Herrick; Seneca and Horace; Antoninus and Almanacs; Burton and Boccaccio. There was no pure metaphysics – a compendium or two of philosophy, a bit of Spinoza, of Kant, of Cousin, of Jouffroy, of Malebranche, the "Dialogues" of Plato – nothing of Schelling or Hegel. I find Proclus, and Jamblicus, and Böhme, and dramatic literature in Greek, Latin, French, German. Here is Burlamaqui on Law, and Erasmus Darwin, and Godwin's "Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft," and the Hitopadesa, and the "Hymns" of Orpheus, and Palæphatus, together with many a forgotten book.

The favorite language next to English was German, then came French, then Latin, which was pretty well represented in its literature. Dr. Frothingham was a wide reader, but his finest gift was a power of penetrating to the heart of an author, a power that was akin to genius. He called himself a *taster*. But every taster must take into his mouth some things that are unpleasant, and he did. He nibbled at Heine, but Heine's philosophy disgusted him.

He nibbled at Browning, but Browning's lack of sensuous music did not satisfy his idea of poetry. His mind, trained in the old school, could not adapt itself to the new style of expression.

He gladly turned his back on doctrines he did not like. He was spiritually minded, but soberly so, as if to be spiritually minded belonged to a special temperament; a Christian theist in all respects, though indifferent to many details of Christian doctrine; an optimist on principle as well as from instinct, inclined to put the most cheerful construction on the ways of divine Providence, and to look patiently on the moral conditions of human life; an unquestioning believer in Christ, immortality, the need of revelation, the supremacy of the religious and moral nature, the demand for the steady influence of the spiritual world to enlighten mankind on the truths of conscience no less than on the mysteries of faith. He was no seer, gazing on things unseen with the penetrating, inward eye; no prophet possessed by an overwhelming conviction of the absolute law; no regenerator believing that men must be lifted up from the earth by an interior renewal of soul; no reformer bent on changing the circumstances of society. He was an apostle of air, sunshine, and the mild, enticing summer shower which covered the wintry ground with the smiling grass and the sweet-smelling flowers. Reformers, of whatever school, were not to his taste, partly because their methods seemed to him violent, but partly also because their primary assumption that the world was out of joint did not command his sympathy. He could not think that the established

institutions of the age ought to be subverted, even though they might be improved under enlightened teaching. Socially he was conservative, although by no means reactionary; disposed to see the soul of good in things evil, though not always as studious as one must needs be to "search it out." Rather he took it for granted, and was often impatient with those who felt keenly the evil but could not discover the good.

High-minded he was rather than deep-souled; devout in sentiment, chivalrously moral in principle and in practice; ideal, poetic, delicate of sensibility, but not soaring of spirit; certainly not a spiritual enthusiast, as little a prosaic plodder; no mystic but no disciple of "common-sense." For the dignity, decency, purity, propriety of the clerical profession he had great regard, but as much on account of its social position as on account of its sanctity. It indicated the highest type of gentlemanliness, the finest style of personal character, a kind of exquisite courtliness of manhood, humanity of a finished stamp of elegance; and he resented everything like an admixture of ordinary philanthropy. It was in his view a descent to enter the arena of strife even for the purpose of removing an evil. Thence his dislike of Channing; his disapproval of Pierpont, otherwise a particular favorite of his; his disagreement with Parker, of whom he was fond. When the "Miscellanies" were published the writer sent a copy to his friend, who acknowledged the volume by a letter in which expressions of personal affection were curiously blended with antipathy towards the class of speculations with which Mr. Parker was identified.

George Ripley and R. W. Emerson won and held his attachment to the end, but he never visited Brook Farm, and was deaf to solicitations to join the Transcendental Club.

His friends were many and various – Emerson, Ripley, Francis, Hedge, Bartol, Stetson, Parkman, Longfellow, Felton, Hillard, – the list is long, for the sunny temper of the man drew all hearts to him and his warm affectionateness of disposition made him tenacious of good-will. He was interested in men as individuals not as members of a clique or party, and was not repelled by differences of opinion where his heart was engaged. On the whole, his sympathies were with conservatives like George Ticknor and W. H. Prescott, and the literary spirit mainly kept him in association with those. Where this spirit was wanting and there was divergence of sentiment there was no attempt at intimacy.

Of interest in the denomination, the sect, the party name, he was absolutely devoid. He never attended the conventions or conferences of the Unitarian body or spoke in their deliberations. On anniversary week it was for many years his custom to visit New York, where no professional responsibility rested upon him, and where he could find recreations of a purely social kind. But at the "Boston Association" where he met friends one by one, and could talk half confidentially, with perfect freedom, in a conversational tone, he delighted to be present.

For the rest, he was a man universally respected, admired, and beloved, mirthful and sportive, more than tolerant of gaiety, as

a rule in excellent spirits, though subject, as such temperaments usually are, to moods of depression. Without private ambition and utterly destitute of vanity, his uneventful days were spent among his friends and his books. The round of clerical duties was even and monotonous; his calling had few excitements, even poverty had limits, and social iniquity was manageable in those times when relations were simple. The routine of parochial service was such as a friendly man of quick sympathies and ready speech could easily discharge in a few hours of each week, nor was the transition violent from it to the quiet library, the companionship of Cicero, Shakespeare, Milton, Walter Scott, Herder, Rückert. The love of art, society, literature, was not inconsistent with a love of the Saviour; and though as a matter of taste he would not have spoken of a sonata of Beethoven in a sermon, there was nothing in his philosophy to render secular allusions improper.

His literary predilections were somewhat at the mercy of his sense of beauty, as if he had an eye to artistic effect quite as much as to intellectual justice, as if the firm lines of logical discernment were blurred by the passion for poetic or scenic grace. Of the two famous German writers about whom opinions were divided, he greatly preferred Schiller to Goethe, probably because the former was glorious, ardent, declamatory. Of the two eminent English novelists whom all the world was reading, Dickens was his choice far above Thackeray, perhaps for the reason that Dickens had color and warmth of sentiment, while

Thackeray seemed to him cold, skeptical, and cynical. The flow of eloquence, the charm of dramatic style made him relish authors as radically unlike as Carlyle, Ruskin, and Macaulay, rendering him unmindful of qualities in their cast of thought which he might have disapproved of if less seductively presented. When a lady objected to Macaulay on the score of his material ethics, Dr. Frothingham was too much captivated by Macaulay's manner to criticise his philosophy, and he let the philosophy go. It sometimes looked as if the way in which things were said was of more importance in his view than the things themselves; but it was not so, for he could respond to ideal sentiments when they offered themselves fairly to his mind, and his moral indignation against an act of flagrant turpitude was quick and hot.

With politics, whether speculative or practical, he gave himself small concern, for in his day politics were hardly an honorable calling. He belonged to the Whig party, as it was then called, because it comprised the greater number of educated men – scholars, divines, lawyers, physicians, judges, and people of consideration from their position in society. The Republican party in Massachusetts was not formed till his public life was nearly ended, and we may doubt whether he would in any case have connected himself with it, for its aims and purposes were hardly such as he could have gone along with. The well-known sentiment, ascribed to Wendell Phillips, "Peace if possible, Truth at any rate," he would in all probability have reversed so as to read, "Truth if possible, Peace at any rate"; not because

the search for truth was difficult, and peace furnished the most promising conditions for finding it, but because peace was preferable in itself as being stable and quiet. He was not a fighter; he disliked the noise of battle; his horror of anti-slavery agitation, as of all other, was constitutional; and even if he had been convinced of the slave's degradation, no mode of redress that was proposed commended itself to his gentle, apprehensive mind. To him the chief interest of society was enlightenment associated with refinement; the needed influence was that of education. He was a delicately organized, sensitive man, fond of repose, happy in his temperament, in his tastes, in his occupation, in his social position, in his relationships, in his home. He had his disappointments and sorrows like other men, but he did not repine. His latter years were afflicted with total blindness, accompanied by constant distress and steadily increasing pain; but his friends never failed to find him cheerful; the companion who ministered to his daily necessities and culled from books and periodicals the materials for his entertainment, seldom had reason to complain of his petulance; the visitor could with difficulty be brought to believe that the man was living in the presence of death, and was exposed to frightful phantoms due to a slowly decomposing brain.

His æsthetic tastes were active, as may be supposed, and would have been keen if there had been opportunity for cultivating them, and leisure to pursue them. The pictures that adorned his parlor walls were not distinguished as works of art, but they were

pure in sentiment, they showed a love of color, and of the highest truth. There was not much fine painting at that time in America, and what there was required for its fair appreciation more training and experience than was possessed by one immersed in the cares of an exacting profession and interested also in literary pursuits. Mr. Frothingham's artistic taste was, besides, so much controlled by moral feeling that he could not be critical of form. Of art for its own sake he had no conception, and could have none, for that cry which voices the demands of technical execution had not been raised; but even if it had been he would have felt no sympathy with any kind of excellence that was not directly associated with the moral sentiment.

His taste in music was much like his taste in painting, – that is to say, it was uneducated and unscientific. To the great music, – that of the intellect and the soul, – the compositions of the masters, of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, he was indifferent; but the music of the heart, of feeling, emotion, elevated passion, – the Scotch songs, the Irish melodies, the English lays, madrigals, glees, was his delight. He was especially fond of religious airs. The oratorios of "The Creation" and "The Messiah" he was never tired of hearing. His voice was melodious, and he was fond of using it. His organist taught him the principles of his own art, and hours were spent at a parlor-organ in playing favorite hymn-tunes, the melody of which he sang as he played. He amused his children by trilling nursery ditties, and joined his boys as they performed glees from the "Orphean Lyre,"

sometimes singing with the heart quite as much as with the understanding. His joyous nature expressed itself instinctively in song. His whole nervous system responded to it. He was transported out of himself by sweet strains, and fairly trembled under the influence of divine harmonies.

Mr. Frothingham's love of dramatic art amounted to a passion, but the art must be high as well as pure. Tragedy he did not like. All of the Shakespearian plays he was critically familiar with, but he loved "The Tempest" best, as uniting poetry with cheerfulness in fullest measure. The lines he wrote on the restoration of the Federal Street Theatre expressed the depth of his interest. A religious society, afterwards the "Central Church" in Winter Street, was gathered here. Of this kind of enterprise the poet says:

More reverence than befits us here to tell,
We yield to courts where sacred honors dwell.
But have not they their places? Have not we?
Has not each liberal province leave to be?

The "Lecture-Room" he had little respect for, none at all for the "Variety Show." To every device he wishes a cordial farewell, exclaiming:

Restored! Restored! Well known so long a time,
These buried glories rise as in their prime.
Our tastes may change as fickle fashions-fly,

But art is safe: the Drama cannot die.
More than restored! Whate'er the pen since wrought
Of loftiest, sprightliest, here that wealth has brought.
Whate'er the progress of the age has lent
Of purer taste and comelier ornament, —
To this our temple it transfers its store,
And makes each point shine lovelier than before.

But the drama must be clean:

But more yet, – and how much! We claim a praise
The Playhouse knew not in the ancient days.
Own us, ye hearts with moral purpose warm!
Our word Renewal adds the word Reform.

Come, friends of Virtue! Share the feast we spread.
It loads no spirits, and it heats no head.
But rouses forth each power of mind and soul
With food ambrosial and its fairy bowl.

Hearts are improved by Feeling's play and strife;
Refined amusement humanizes life.
So wrote the Sages, whom the world admired;
So sang the Poets, who the world inspired;
Why in New England's Athens is decried
What old Athenian culture thought its pride?

Thus Righteousness and Peace are made to kiss each other.
Art and Virtue walk hand in hand. The sole condition is that

art shall be virtuous and that virtue shall be artistic. There was a singular blending in his mind of the sacred and the secular. Perhaps Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched with emotion" comes as near expressing Dr. Frothingham's conception as any. There must be morality; that is cardinal; that lies at the foundation of all systems; that must be strict and high. But emotion is indispensable also. This runs into praise, the love of goodness, the worship of the highest. This imparts warmth, glow, passion, the upward lift that inspires. Morality alone is cold, emotion alone is apt to be visionary. But the two united propel the ship, one serving as ballast to keep it steady, and one as sails to catch the winds of heaven.

My mother was an example of pure character. She laid no claim whatever to literary talent. Indeed she had none. I cannot associate her with books of any special description, but I can always associate her with goodness, with humility, sincerity, duty, kindness, pity, and simplicity. Truthfulness was her great virtue, and was saved from bluntness only by her delicate feeling for others and her inborn politeness. The severest rebuke I ever received from her was on account of a sharp arraignment of merchants in a youthful sermon, which to her seemed presumptuous. Her household cares, the nurture of her children (she had seven, five sons and two daughters, all of whom she trained most carefully like a devoted mother), the family visitings, the parish calls, missions among the poor, occupied the day. She would sit for hours knitting or sewing, or in an

armchair before the coal fire silently musing. She was quiet, reserved, old-fashioned in her sentiments, but with a great fund of inward strength, which came out on emergencies. I shall always remember her ceaseless solicitude for an unfortunate elder brother of mine who had for years been an anxiety and a trouble. When he died in early manhood, after nursing him tenderly, she softly closed his eyes, and preserved the memory of him in her heart. Her chamber window in the country looked upon his distant grave, the little white stone over which kept him before her eye who was always in her thoughts.

She accepted the existing order of things because it was established, disliking experiments, however humane, for the reason that they had not been tested; and if she had misgivings, she kept them to herself not daring to set up her private feelings in opposition to the will of the Supreme, the question whether the existing order expressed the will of the Supreme never being raised by her.

She was Unitarian, having so been taught, but speculative matters were out of her reach as well as uncongenial with her sphere. Her faith was of the heart, and all the reason for it she had to give was an uplifted life, "unspotted from the world." Of creeds she knew nothing, not that she was deficient in mind, but because they seemed to her to be affairs of criticism, with which she had nothing to do. Her concern was with practical things, and conduct was, with her, more than seven eighths of life. Even the very mild decoction of theology that was administered from

Sunday to Sunday in Chauncy Place was sometimes too much for her. She was a practical Christian, if there ever was one.

Her love of nature was genuine. As a young woman she could distinguish the colors of a flying bird. When she had a house of her own in the country, she preferred a spot remote from the world of society; went there as early as possible in the spring, and stayed as late in the autumn as she could. She delighted in the place; loved the air, the trees, the smell of the ground. She enjoyed her garden; liked to see plants grow. Every morning after breakfast she went out to inspect the grounds, and came back laden with modest flowers; in the fall with pine cones, the flame of which she enjoyed. On her last evening, quite unaware of her coming end, she sat on the piazza, and looked at the sunset, wrapped in shawls, though it was midsummer, for she was weak and emaciated but patiently tranquil.

Her habits were simple, not from parsimony but from taste. She cared nothing for decoration or display. She spent no more than was necessary on dress or furniture. She was fond of old-fashioned, solid things. In the midst of abundance, her appetite was for plain food, yet she was no ascetic or prude, but a largehearted, sensible woman, sober and serious but genial too.

Browning makes Paracelsus say:

'T is only when they spring to heaven that angels
Reveal themselves to you; they sit all day
Beside you, and lie down at night by you, —
Who care not for their presence, — muse or sleep,

And all at once they leave you and you know them.

This is in a measure true. Death is a great revealer. Unfortunately it is a great deceiver also, putting wings on very earthly bodies. But in this instance, the qualities were all there in the living form, and all clearly visible to those who sat all day beside my mother. Death did but brush away a little film that hung before distant eyes.

Until near middle life I had the example and advice of these dear spirits. It is my privilege to have their blood in my veins. That was my best endowment, and kept me always hopeful of a better future in the time to come. The dream of a nobler age for literature, art, science, humanity, came directly from my father. The desire to do something to make the dream an actual fact, to prove myself as of some service in the world, came from my mother. His was the love of intellectual liberty. Hers was the passion for practical accomplishments. He was a scholar. She was a worker.

Both had thoughts deeper than they could express. Both were utterly sincere in their calling, and the limitations of their age alone confined their advance. The times were quiet then; the world was small and disconnected; Boston was a little place and shut off even from American cities by difficulties of travel and by exorbitant rates of postage. Thus responsibility was mainly confined to individuals. There were no wearing duties; no perplexing cares; even railroad disturbances did not

worry, for there was no railroad speculation, and no railroad system. Hours were early, dinner was at two or half-past, tea at six or seven, the evening ended at ten, and was spent with books, melodious music, or playful games of amusement, not of instruction. There were few social gatherings; balls were very rare, seldom lasting later than eleven o'clock. There was an occasional concert, and here and there a theatre, but there were no great dinner parties. Social problems were exceedingly simple; the classes were divided by lines that nobody attempted to pass over. Socialism was unborn, and labor agitations were unknown. In a word, there was such a thing as leisure, and this was used chiefly for the cultivation of the mind.

My father was greatly interested in the education of his boys; watched all their attainments; taught them French; encouraged their learning how to box, and fence, and swim; while my mother shed an atmosphere of peace over the whole household. She made one joke only, as far as my memory serves me, – and I mention it here lest any one should suppose there was a lack of sunshine in her nature. My father was very fond of "vöslauer," an Austrian red wine. When the last bottle was produced my mother, said archly, "your *face* will *lower* when it is all drunk up." It was not much of a joke, but a small jest will show the spirit of fun quite as well as a large one.

There was a singular combination of aspiration with peace at that time. Probably there is as much aspiration now as there was then, perhaps more; but it is associated with social reform rather

than with personal perfection; there is peace, too, at the present day, but it is harder to get at and needs to be sought most often in private homes; the inward peace is found in all periods.

How the principles then formed would bear the strain of a later age or a larger sphere remained to be proved. Fifty years ago the modern era with its complications and perplexities could not even be suspected. The foundations alone could then be laid.

II.

EDUCATION

Of the primary schools it is unnecessary to speak. They were of the same kind that were established in Boston at that period. Indeed I can recollect but two, one, a child's school of boys and girls, kept by a Miss Scott, at the corner of Mt. Vernon Street and Hancock; the other a boys' school kept by a Mr. Capen, a poor hump-backed cripple who could not get out of his chair, but wheeled himself about the room, and kept on his table a cowhide, which was pretty generously exercised. The school was on Bedford Street behind the "Church of Church Green." A little alley-way ran along in the rear of the church through which I used to go to the school-house.

The Latin School was an old institution brought hither by Rev. John Cotton, who remembered the Free Grammar School founded in Lincolnshire, England, by Queen Mary, in which Latin and Greek were taught. It was established here, in 1635, five years after the landing of Winthrop, two or three years before Harvard College. When I was there, it stood on School Street, opposite the Franklin statue. It had a granite front and a cupola. The head-master was Charles K. Dillaway, an excellent scholar, a faithful teacher, an agreeable man. He had to resign in consequence of ill-health. The tutors were Henry W. Torrey

and Francis Gardner, who afterwards became head-master. Both were pupils of the school. Mr. Frederick P. Leverett, author of the Latin Lexicon, was chosen to succeed Mr. Dillaway, but died before assuming the office. The next head-master, during my course, was Epes Sargent Dixwell, a most accomplished man, an elegant scholar, a gentleman of the world, very much interested, as I remember, in the plastic art of Greece. He is still living, and amuses himself by writing Greek. Mr. Dixwell held office till 1851, when he established a private school. The discipline of the Latin School was strict but mild. Corporal punishment was the unquestioned rule, but it was never harshly administered, though the knowledge that it might be undoubtedly did a good deal toward stimulating the ambition of the scholars. Here and there no doubt a boy exasperated the teacher by idleness or disorder; possibly at moments the teacher was nervous and irritable. I recollect a single instance in which he was over-sensitive, too prone to take offence, which fastened suspiciously upon some individual scholar; but injustice was a very rare occurrence. We learned Greek and Latin, the rudiments of algebra, writing and declamation; but the best part of the education I received in those days was an atmosphere of elegant literature, derived from friends of my father. I used to see William H. Prescott taking his walk on Beacon Street, in the sun, and have often sat in his study in his tranquil hours, and heard him talk. The beautiful library of George Ticknor, at the head of Park Street, was open to me, and I can see his form now as he walked on the Common. George

S. Hillard, the elegant man of letters, was a familiar figure on the street. Charles Sumner, then a young law student, strode vigorously along, his manner even then suggesting the advent of a new era.

In 1846, I listened to his oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard University on the Scholar [Pickering]; the Jurist [Story]; the Artist [Allston]; the Philanthropist [Channing]; and his bold declamation was strangely in contrast with the academical gown that he wore. Daniel Webster used to stalk by our house, the embodiment of the Constitution, the incarnation of law, the black locomotive of the train of civilization. Ralph Waldo Emerson often sat at my father's table diffusing the radiance of serene ideas, and heralding the diviner age that was to come.

From the Latin School to Harvard College was an easy transition. There existed an impression that Latin-School boys might take their ease for the first year at Cambridge, because they were so well prepared, but I found enough to do; there was the great library, there were the advanced studies, there was the more perfect training. The President was Josiah Quincy, the elder. Henry W. Longfellow was professor of modern languages; Cornelius C. Felton, the ardent philhellene, taught Greek; Charles Beck, a German, taught Latin; Benjamin Peirce was professor of mathematics; James Walker was an instructor in intellectual and moral philosophy; Joseph Lovering, teacher in chemistry. Among the tutors were Bernard Roelker, in German;

Pietro Bachi, in Italian; Francisco Sales, in Spanish.

The new buildings now in the college yard were not erected; Holworthy (1812), Stoughton (1804-1805), Hollis (1763), Harvard (1766), Holden (1734), Massachusetts Hall (1720), University Hall (1812-1813) were in existence. There were no athletics; there was no gymnasium; there was no boating; there was little base-ball. There were few literary societies; so that we were driven back mainly upon intellectual labor. The professors' houses were always open, and there was choice society in the town. I recollect particularly well going to the house of John White Webster, who was executed later for the murder of Dr. Parkman. He was very fond of music and had a daughter who sang finely, besides being handsome. She afterwards married Mr. Dabney, of Fayal. The Doctor was a nervous man, high strung, but good-natured and polite. His fatal encounter with Dr. Parkman I always attributed to a sudden outbreak of passion.

Within the grounds of the college we were quite studious, companionable among ourselves. There was no rioting, no excess of any kind. Walking and swimming in the river Charles were our chief recreations. Connection with Boston was infrequent and difficult, as there was no railroad. The Sundays could be passed in the city if the student brought a certificate that he went regularly to church; otherwise it was expected that the First Church, or one of the others, should be frequented. The instruction was of a cordial, friendly, courteous, and humane kind; the professors were enthusiastic students

in their departments. I well recollect Professor Longfellow's kindness; Professor Felton's ardor (I visited Pompeii with him in 1853). Charles Beck was a burning patriot in the war. Pietro Bachi's great eyes lighted up and glowed as he talked about Dante. Bernard Roelker afterwards became a lawyer in New York. Charles Wheeler and Robert Bartlett, tutors, both rare spirits, died young. On the whole, life at Harvard College was exceedingly pleasant, and a real love of learning was implanted in young men's bosoms.

The corner-stone of Gore Hall was laid in 1813. The books were moved into the library in the summer vacation of 1814. There were forty-one thousand volumes at that time.

In the early part of my career, I took my meals in Commons, at an expense of two dollars and a quarter a week, the highest price then paid. Commons was abolished for a time in 1849, it being found difficult to satisfy the students, who for some years had boarded in the houses in the neighborhood.

There were excitements too. Though there was no gymnasium, or boating, and little foot-ball, base-ball, or cricket (these games were all very simple and rudimentary), there were the clubs, the "ΑΔΦ," still a secret society, and occupying a back upper room, to which we mounted by stealth, – the same room serving for initiations and sociables, – was exceedingly interesting in a literary point of view. There were papers on Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, delightful conversations, anecdotes, songs.

The "Institute of 1770" taught us elocution, and readiness in

debate; the "ΦBK," no longer a secret society, and no longer actively literary, hung over us like a star, stimulating ambition and inciting us to excellence in scholarship.

Altogether it was a delightful life; a life between boyhood and manhood; of purely literary ambition, of natural friendship. There was no distinction of persons, no affected pride. We found our own level, and kept our own place. Money did not distinguish or family, only brains. There was no care but for intellectual work; there was no excess save in study. Expenses were small, indulgences were few and simple. The education was more suited to those times than to these, when culture must be so much broader, and social expectations demand such varied accomplishments.

III.

DIVINITY SCHOOL

To enter at once the Divinity School was to start on a predestined career. From childhood I was marked out for a clergyman. This was taken for granted in all places and conversations, and my own thoughts fell habitually into that groove. There was nothing unattractive in the professional career as illustrated by my father. I was the only one of a large family of brothers who pursued the full course of studies at Cambridge, or who showed a taste for the scholastic life. An appetite for books rather than for affairs pointed first of all to a literary calling, while a fondness for speculative questions, a leaning towards ideal subjects, and a serious turn of mind naturally suggested at that time the pulpit. An inward "experience of religion," which in some other communions was regarded as essential to the character of a minister of the gospel, was not demanded. Religion was rather moral and intellectual than spiritual, a matter of mental conviction more than of emotional feeling. The clerical profession stood very high, higher than any of the three "learned professions," by reason of its requiring in larger measure a tendency towards abstract thought, an interest in theological discussions, and a steady belief in doctrines that concerned the soul. Literature was not at that period a profession;

there was no Art to speak of except for genius of the first order like that of Allston or Greenough. Men of the highest intellectual rank, whatever they may have become afterwards, tried the ministry at the start. The traditions of New England favored the ministerial calling. The great names, with here and there an exception, were names of divines. The great books were on subjects of religion; the popular interest centred in theological controversy; the general enthusiasm was aroused by preachers; the current talk was about sermons. The clergy was a privileged class, aristocratic, exalted.

Divinity Hall had been dedicated in August, 1826. It was situated on an avenue about a quarter of a mile from the college yard. It contained, besides thirty-seven chambers for the accommodation of students, a chapel, a library, a lecture-room, and a reading-room; it stood opposite the Zoölogical Museum. Before it was a vacant space used for games. Behind it was meadow land reaching all the way to Mr. Norton's. Just beyond it was Dr. Palfrey's residence. George Rapall Noyes, D.D., was elected in May, 1840, with the title of "Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, and Dexter Lecturer on Biblical Literature." He had already translated the poetical books of the Old Testament, and it was his eminence as a translator which had won him fame while a minister at Petersham. It was his duty also to explain the New Testament, and in addition to give lectures in systematic theology. Besides all this he was to preach in the college chapel a fourth of the year. He steadily grew

in the respect and attachment of the young men; his authority in the lecture-room was very great; his opinions were carefully formed and precisely delivered; and his shrewd, practical wisdom was long remembered by his pupils. Convers Francis, D.D., appointed to the "Parkman Professorship," after the resignation of Henry Ware, Jr., was his associate. The branches assigned to him were ecclesiastical history, natural theology, ethics, the composition of sermons, and instruction in the duties of a pastor; besides all this he was to preach half of the time in the college chapel. Dr. Francis was an accomplished scholar and a faithful teacher. The best man, too, for his position, at a time when in an unsectarian school it was exceedingly desirable that the professors should harmonize all tendencies; for with a strong sympathy with "transcendentalism," as it was then called, he had been a most successful parish minister, a very acceptable preacher, and a man in whom all the churches had confidence.

At Cambridge, owing to the influence of Buckminster, Ware, and Norton, Unitarian opinion prevailed, though the controversial period had passed by when I was there. The clouds of warfare no longer discharged lightning; there was no roll of thunder; only a faint muttering betrayed the former excitement; and the memory of old conflicts hovered round the spots where the fights had been hottest. Marks of strife were still visible on texts, and chapters were scarred with wounds. Comment still lingered near the passages where polemics had raged, and the blood burned as we read the tracts or studied the essays of the

champions we admired.

It was impossible to forget the interpretations that had been given to words or phrases. A strictly scientific study, either of the Bible or the creed, was therefore out of the question. But the course of exercises was broad, generous, inclusive, as far as this was feasible. The bias was decidedly unorthodox, yet without the bitter temper of opposition. The old system was rather set aside than attacked. It was assumed to have been vanquished in the fair field. The professors were liberal in their views. A small but serviceable library furnished the students with a certain amount of needed material, the college library was freely opened to them, and the collections of the professors were gladly placed at their disposal. The days were fully occupied with lectures, recitations, discussions, exercises in writing out and taking of notes. Once a week there was a debate on some general theme not connected with the topics of the class-room; and at the latter part of the course there was special training in the composition and delivery of sermons, accompanied by a brief experience of extemporaneous speaking. The Unitarian ministry was alone contemplated; no wide divergence from it was encouraged, and the conservative methods of interpretation were the ones recommended. Some knowledge of Greek and Latin being presupposed, the study of Hebrew was made the one study of language, and this was pursued with the best available helps. Biblical criticism naturally took a prominent place in the current curriculum, under the guidance of the most distinguished

authorities; books of every school were recommended, whether old or new, Catholic or Protestant, "conservative" or "liberal," Horne, Tholuck, De Wette being consulted in turn. The New Testament and "Historical Christianity" were taken for granted; and these meant belief in miracles, which were defended against rising objections of the Strauss and Paulus schools, the former holding by the "mythical" theory, the latter favoring the notion of a natural explanation of some sort. The hostility towards rationalism was decided. This was forty years ago, before the "historical method," as it was called, instituted by Baur, Schwegler, Zeller, Sneckenburger, and the *Theologische Jahrbücher*, had any expositor in this country, long before the Dutch school, the later French school – Kuenen, Reville, Reuss, Nicolas, Renan, – came out. The great issue was the credibility of the miracles of the Old and New Testaments. The half-monastic life we led at Divinity Hall cut us off a good deal from social amenities, reform agitations, attempts to change institutions, and even from the deeper currents of religious sentiment. None but the very observant took note of Brook Farm, or heeded the movements in behalf of Association that were going on in other communities. Whatever was outside of the "Christian" ministry concerned us but little. The professors did not direct our eyes to the mountain tops or call attention to the bringers of good tidings from other quarters than the Christian Revelation, as explained by its scholars and writers. Even such a phenomenon as Emerson did not make a profound impression on the average mind.

A tone of old-fashioned piety pervaded the establishment. A weekly prayer-meeting, always attended by one of the professors, though officially rather than as a stimulator, was much in the manner and spirit of similar exercises at Andover. The students were cautioned against excessive intellectualism. Several of them spent their Sundays in teaching classes of the young in the neighboring towns, in ministering to the sick in hospitals, or in carrying the monitions of conscience to the criminals in the prison at Charlestown. The aims of a practical ministry were thus kept in view as well as the circumstances of the time permitted. Of course the school could not be a philanthropic institution any more than it could be independent or scientific. It was committed to a special purpose, which was the supply of Christian pulpits with instructed, earnest, devoted men. That they should be Unitarians was expected; that they should be Christians in belief was demanded. There were two ever-present spectres, "orthodoxy" and "rationalism," the one represented by Andover, the other by Germany. Audacity of speculation when unaccompanied by practical piety was discountenanced, and in flagrant instances rebuked.

The literal form of the orthodox creed, it need hardly be said, was made more prominent than its imaginative aspect. This was inevitable, for the object was to assail it rather than to understand it. To be perfectly fair to all sides was, under the circumstances, not to be expected at a period so near the era of controversy. An earnest, ingenuous youth could find at Cambridge all the

courage and impulse he needed, for the atmosphere of the place was neither chilling nor depressing. The less emotional, more intellectual scholar was left to pursue his studies undisturbed, the wind of spiritual feeling not being strong enough to carry him away.

In a word, the institution was all that could have been looked for in a time when ecclesiastical and doctrinal traditions were fatally though not confessedly broken, and naked individualism was not avowedly adopted. The task of the professors, conscientious, hard working, utterly faithful men, was laborious, difficult, and thankless. The Unitarian public, fearing a tendency to unbelief, gave them a grudging confidence; the students, I am afraid, were not considerate of them, – the zealous finding them lukewarm, the cold-blooded blaming them for stopping short of the last consequences of their own theory. It is wonderful that the school went on at all. The single-minded devotion of the teachers alone preserved it. Looking thoughtfully back across a wide gulf of years, the writer of these pages feels that he owes this tribute to Convers Francis and George R. Noyes. How often he has wished he could take them by the hand and ask their forgiveness for his frequent misjudgment of them, misjudgment the remembrance of which makes his heart bleed the more as he can only think of their generous forbearance. Their influence was emancipating and stimulating. They were friendly to thought. Under their ministration the mind took a leap forward towards the confines of the Christian system of faith. What the divinity

school of the future may be able to accomplish it would be hazardous to conjecture. It could hardly then have done more than it did.

The study of comparative religions, so zealously prosecuted within a few years, together with a desire to do perfect justice to orthodox doctrines, may render practical a scientific review of theological systems, but in this event a predilection in favor of a separate "Christian" ministry can be no longer characteristic of a divinity school which proposes to prepare young men for the clerical calling.

The three years of secluded life passed quickly away. The trial sermon in the village church was delivered and criticised. The President of the college then was Edward Everett, my uncle. The next morning I went to his office; he spoke warmly of my sermon, but advised me henceforth to commit sermons to memory as he did. This I tried two or three times, but the effort to write the sermons so fatigued me that the task of committing them to memory was too great, and for years I wrote my discourses, until for convenience' sake I learned to preach without notes. The diploma was bestowed, the actual ministry was begun. The term of preaching as a candidate did not last long. By the advice of friends an invitation was accepted to an old established conservative parish in Salem, Mass. Ordination and marriage soon followed, and public life was inaugurated under the most promising conditions. I had the best wishes of the conservative portion of the community to which I was, properly, supposed to

belong, and the hopes of the radical portion who anticipated a change of view as time went on, and I was brought into sharper collision with prevailing habits of thought than was possible at Cambridge, where the student was in a great measure cut off from intercourse with the world.

At the "Divinity School" I was known as a young man with conservative ideas. I remember now discussions, essays, criticisms, in which the opinions in vogue among old-fashioned Unitarians were defended somewhat passionately against the more daring convictions of my companions. In especial my faith was in direct opposition to the spiritual philosophy; Strauss was a horror; Parker was a bugbear; Furness seemed an innovator; Emerson was a "Transcendentalist," a term of immeasurable reproach. All this was soon to pass away, and I was to go a great deal beyond even Parker. The word "Transcendentalist" ceased to be a synonym for "enthusiast." The philosophy of intuition was first literally adopted, then dismissed, and I came out where I least expected. But I well remember, one evening as I was walking out from Boston, presenting to myself distinctly the alternative between the adoption of the old and the new. I am afraid that the old commended itself by its venerableness, the solidity of its traditions, and the authority of its great names, while the new was still vague and formless. I then and there decided to follow in the footsteps of my fathers, a course more in sympathy with the prevailing temper of the age and with the current of thought at Divinity Hall, though Emerson had

delivered his address some years before, and the New Jerusalem was even then coming down from heaven.

IV. SALEM

Old Salem was a city of the imagination. History does it no justice. The "Essex Institute," founded in 1848, by the union of the "Essex County Historical Society" and the "Essex County Natural History Society," has a very fine collection of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, an invaluable museum, relics, pictures, so that in no locality in the country has so much been accomplished in exhuming the treasures of municipal and civil history, and in bringing to light antiquities. Hurd's "History of Essex County," published in 1888, with its monographs on commerce, religion, literature, newspapers, etc., written by thoroughly competent men, throws a flood of light on the past of the place. Mr. Upham's "Memoir of Francis Peabody," published in 1868, gives an admirable account of the literary eminence of the old town. Colonel Higginson's article in *Harper's Monthly* on "Old Salem's Sea Captains," published in September, 1886, gives something of its romantic character. But best of all as illustrating this feature are the articles written by "Eleanor Putnam" (Mrs. Arlo Bates), and republished after her death under the title of "Old Salem," in 1887. She was about thirty years old when she died; but if she had lived she would have presented the old city in its quaintest aspect. Her love of antiquarian research, her taste,

her devotion to Salem qualified her in an eminent degree for her self-appointed task.

There can hardly be a doubt that the origins of the town were religious; that a religious purpose, deep though undefined and undeclared, animated the emigrants before Winthrop. The very name, Salem, the Hebrew for peacefulness, instead of "Naumkeag" (the old Indian name), adopted in 1628, to commemorate the reconciliation between the company of Roger Conant and that of John Endicott, was already suggestive of spiritual qualities. Eminent forms loom up in the distance: Francis Higginson, the first minister of Massachusetts Bay; Roger Williams, whose name is identified with "soul freedom"; Hugh Peters, his opponent. John Endicott was a most imposing figure; hasty, rash, choleric (as was shown by his striking a man in early life), imperious, but brave and bold. He was a stern Puritan, hating popery so much that he cut out the image of the king from the English banner, because it was an image, while at the same time he persecuted the Quakers, because they advocated obedience to the "inner light" and were disturbers of the established peace. But he had sweeter qualities – gentleness, generosity, and kindness. An old scripture (Ecclesiasticus xi., 28) says: "Judge none blessed before his death; for a man shall be known in his children." The descendants of John Endicott are graceful, elegant, refined people, lovely in manners, gentle in disposition. The root of these qualities must have been in the forefather two centuries and a half ago. The

intellectual history of the city is very illustrious and began early. A strong intellectual bent characterized the early settlers, who were persons of inquisitive minds, addicted to experiments and enterprises, exceedingly ingenious. Near the middle of the last century there was in existence in Salem a social evening club, composed of eminent cultivated and accomplished citizens. On the evening of Monday, March 31, 1760, a meeting was held at the Tavern House of a Mrs. Pratt for the purpose of "founding in the town of Salem a handsome library of valuable books, apprehending the same may be of considerable use and benefit under proper regulations." The books imported, given, or bought, amounted to four hundred and fifteen volumes. This society, which may be regarded as the foundation of all the institutions and agencies established in this place to promote intellectual culture, was incorporated in 1797. In 1766, the famous Count Rumford was an apprentice here. In 1781, Richard Kirwan, LL.D., of Dublin, an eminent philosopher of the period, had a valuable library in a vessel which was captured by an American private armed ship and brought into Beverly as a prize. The books were given by Dr. Kirwan, who would accept no gratuity and was delighted that his volumes were put to so good a use. The books were sold to an association of gentlemen in Salem and its neighborhood, and formed the "Philosophical Library." This and the "Social Library" were afterwards consolidated into the "Salem Athenæum," which was incorporated in March, 1810.

Among the distinguished men were William H. Prescott,

Benjamin Peirce, Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Lewis Russell, Charles Grafton Page, and Jones Very. Here lived Edward Augustus Holyoke, president of the Massachusetts Medical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Timothy Pickering, Rev. John Prince, Rev. William Bentley, Nathaniel Bowditch, author of the "Practical Navigator" and translator of the "Mecanique Celeste"; John Pickering, Joseph Story, of the Supreme Bench; Daniel Appleton White, Leverett Saltonstall, Benjamin Merrill, and many another man of accomplishments and learning. Even the uneducated, and those engaged in the common occupations of everyday life, gratified their love of knowledge, and followed up, for their private enjoyment, researches in intellectual and philosophical spheres; apothecaries and retail shopkeepers distinguished themselves as writers; one of them – Isaac Newhall by name – was reputed the author of the famous "Junius Letters," thus enjoying companionship with Burke, Gibbon, Grattan, Camden, Chatham, Chesterfield, and other distinguished writers.

Its commercial history was exceedingly brilliant. In its palmy days it had more trade with the East Indies than all the other American ports put together. Its situation by the sea encouraged maritime adventure. From its very infancy its inhabitants sent vessels across the Atlantic of forty to sixty tons, and followed up the trade with Spain, France, Italy, and the West India Islands. In the war of the Revolution it sent out one hundred and fifty-eight armed ships, mounting at least two thousand guns, and

carrying not less than six thousand men. In 1785, Salem sent out the first vessel to the Isle of France, Calcutta, and China; she began also the trade to the other ports of the East Indies and Japan; to Madagascar and Zanzibar, Brazil and Africa. In the south seas, Salem ships first visited the Fiji Islands; they first opened up to our commerce New Holland and New Zealand. In the war of 1812 she had two hundred and fifty privateers. When the war was over, these vessels were engaged in the merchant service. Mr. E. H. Derby, one of the great merchants, said to be the richest man in America, sent out thirty-seven vessels in fourteen years, making a hundred and twenty voyages. The names of the great merchants, E. H. Derby, N. Silsbee, William Gray, Peabody, Crowningshield, Pickman, Cleveland, Cabot, Higginson, are of universal celebrity. Then Derby Street was alive with sea-captains, the custom-house was active, the tall warehouses were full of treasures, the great East Indiamen fairly made the air fragrant as they unloaded their merchandise. To quote the language of "Eleanor Putnam": "There was poetry in the names of the vessels – the ship *Lotus*, the *Black Warrior*, the brig *Persia*, the *Light Horse*, the *Three Friends*, and the great *Grand Turk*. There was, too, a charm about the cargoes. They were no common-place bales of merchandise, but were suggestive in their very names of the sweet, strange odors of the East, from which they came. There was food for the imagination in the mention of those ship-loads of gum copal from Madagascar and Zanzibar; of hemp and iron from Russia;

of Bombay cotton; of ginger, pepper, coffee, and sugar from India; of teas, silks, and nankeens from China; salt from Cadiz; and fruits from the ports of the Mediterranean."

Miss Putnam speaks of the gorgeous fans, the carved ivory, the blue Canton china, the generous tea-cups, the tureens, the heavy tankards, the Delft jars, the ancient candle-sticks, the heavy punch bowls, the strange beads, suggestive of the Hindoo rites, Nautch dances, and women with dusky throats. Then the very air was weighty with romantic adventures. We read with awe of cashmere shawls hanging on clothes lines, of jars full of silver coin, of the gilded fishes on the side of each stair, of the grand staircase in the front hall of Mr. Pickman's house on Essex Street, of logs of sandal-wood. The museum of the East India Marine Society contains sceptres from the Fiji Islands; a musical instrument from New South Wales, another from Borneo; a carved statue of a rich Persian merchant of Bombay; an alabaster figure of a Chinese Jos; a copper idol from Java; a mirror from Japan; fans from Maraba, the Marquesas Islands, Calcutta; cloth from Otaheite; an earthen patera from Herculaneum; two dresses of women from the Pelew Islands; sandal-wood from the Sandwich Islands; a parasol from Calcutta; nutmegs from Cayenne; thirty-six specimens of Italian marble; cement from the palace of the Cæsars at Rome; white marble from Carthage; porphyry from Italy; beads worn by the Pundits and Fakirs in India; a glass cup from Owyhee; Verde Antico from Sicily; sandal-wood tapers from China; wood images of mummies from

Thebes; a silver box from Soo-Soo; porphyry from Madagascar; a piece of mosaic from ancient Carthage; silk cocoons from India; marble from the temple of Minerva at Athens; piece of pavement from the site of ancient Troy; and polished jasper from Siberia.

When I was in Salem, from 1847 to 1855, this splendor had departed. Derby Street was deserted, the great warehouses were tenements for laborers. Hawthorne has described the custom-house in his famous preface to the "Scarlet Letter." The sailors had disappeared; the commerce, owing mainly to the shallowness of the water in the harbor, had gone to Boston and New York. But traces of the old glory still lingered. Here and there a great merchant was seen on the streets. Some of the old houses remained: the Pickering House on Broad Street, built in 1651; the Turner House; Roger Williams' house, at the corner of Essex and North Streets, built before 1634; and Mr. Forrester's house.

As the chairman of the Salem Lyceum, it was my privilege to entertain such men as R. W. Emerson, George W. Curtis and others. Thomas Starr King, when he lectured in Danvers, drove over to my house, and spent the rest of the evening. Nathaniel Hawthorne I used to meet frequently on the street. I often saw Mrs. Hawthorne leading her children by the hand. Mr. Hawthorne, who was in Salem from 1846 to 1849, was remarkable for his shyness. His favorite companions were some Democratic politicians, who met weekly at the office of one of them, where he occupied himself in listening to their talk, but

he avoided cultivated people. On one occasion a friend of mine asked us to meet him at dinner; twice he went to remind his guest of the engagement. The hour arrived, the dinner was kept waiting half an hour for Mr. Hawthorne to come. He said but little during the dinner, and immediately afterward got up and went away; his reluctance to meet people overcoming his sense of propriety.

My church, the "North Church," as it was called, was a handsome building on the main street, a stone structure with a tower, and a green before it. It was founded in 1772 by people who had left the First Parish by reason of great dissatisfaction. The first minister, called in 1773, was Thomas Barnard. He was a broad-minded, liberal man, and left the church substantially Unitarian. His successor was J. E. Abbot, called in 1815, whose ministry, from ill-health, was very short. My predecessor, John Brazer, a cultivated, scholarly, sensitive man, a good preacher, an excellent pastor, was settled in 1820. My ministry there was exceedingly pleasant and tranquil for several years. There were long hours for studying; the parish work was not hard; the people were honest, quiet, sober, some of them exceedingly refined and gentle; it was as if the old Puritan spirit, modified by time, still lingered about the old town. Family life was beautiful to see; the homes were charming; there was luxury enough; there was great intelligence, singular activity of mind; and I remember well the bright conversations, the entertainments, the teas, the dinners, the receptions, the social meetings. The women, especially, were distinguished for interest in literary matters. Many interesting

people still lived in the town, Daniel Appleton White, for instance, Dr. Treadwell, Benjamin Merrill, Thomas Cole; some of these were my parishioners and all were my friends. But the life was almost too quiet for me, as circumstances presently proved.

At the same time, as if to render impossible my further ministration in this first place of service, the anti-slavery agitation was at its height, dividing churches, breaking up sects, setting the members of families against each other, detaching ministers from their congregations, and arraying society in hostile camps. The noise of the conflict filled the air. It was impossible to evade the issue. Those who had fixed positions in the community, were of a tranquil temperament, or of an easy conscience, might survey the battle calmly, or be vexed only by the confusion in the social world; but they who had the future still before them could not but feel the necessity of taking sides in the quarrel. When Garrison, the incarnate conscience, was enunciating the moral law and illustrating it by flaming texts from the Old Testament; when the intrepid Phillips was throwing the light of history on politics, and putting statesmanship in the face of humanity, judging all men by the maxims of ethical philosophy; when Parker was proclaiming the absolute justice, and Clarke was applying the truths of the eternal love; and many others, men and women, were thundering forth the divine vengeance on iniquity; when facts were set out for everybody's reading, and tongues were unloosed, and fiery

messages proceeded from all mouths, and conviction was deep, and eloquence was stirring, it was impossible to be still.

Now the situation is changed; the evil is removed; the wound has healed; the surgeon's knife has been put up in its case. A new philosophy is disposed to blame the action of the anti-slavery champions. Some critics have doubted whether the conduct of the abolitionists was wise; whether their primary assumption of the political equality of all men was correct; whether a race that had never founded a government or contributed to the advance of civilization could add any weight to the cause of liberty. But then such misgivings could not be raised. The abolitionists seemed to have on their side the precepts of the New Testament, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, the character and example of Jesus, the burning language of prophecy, the inspiring traditions of primitive Christianity, the humane instincts of the heart, the moral sentiments of equity, pity, compassion, all reinforced by the growing democratic opinion of the age, and by the tenets of the intuitive philosophy then coming to the front. The glowing passages from Isaiah and from Matthew: "Let the oppressed go free; break every yoke"; "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me," shone in our eyes. To the anti-slavery people belonged the heroic virtues, courage, faithfulness, and sacrifice. Theirs was the martyr spirit; the readiness to surrender ease, position, and success for an idea. It would have been strange if, at such a time, a young man, a clergyman, too, had been a champion of vested

interests. The doctrine of a higher law than that of the State commended itself to his idealism, and pledged him to oppose what he regarded as legalized wrong. The doctrine of legal rights for all men made him a firm enemy of organized inhumanity. It was a period of passionate war. In every department of the Church and State the irrepressible conflict went on. It was no time for the calm voice of the loving spirit of wisdom to be heard. It was no time to propose that the local laws respecting slavery should be remodelled, and the relation between whites and blacks readjusted on more equitable principles. The science of anthropology had no weight in America or anywhere else. No exhaustive study of race peculiarities could be entered on. The combatants had the whole field, and between the combatants there seemed to be no room for choice by a minister of the Gospel, an enthusiastic friend of humanity, a democrat, and a transcendentalist.

On one occasion, after a brutal scene in Boston attending the return of a slave to his master, feeling that the larger part of his congregation were in sympathy with the government, and approved of the act of surrender, the excited minister declined to give the ordinance of communion, thinking it would be a mockery. This action brought the growing disaffection to a head. The feeling of the parish was divided. Bitter words were exchanged. The situation on both sides became uncomfortable, and he accepted an invitation to another city, where he could exercise his independence without check or limit.

The position in regard to slavery which was taken thirty years ago there is no room to regret. It was taken with perfect sincerity, and under an uncontrollable pressure of conviction. The part performed by the abolitionists was predestined. The conduct of their opponents looks now as irrational as it did then. American slavery was so atrocious a system, so hideous a blot, that no terms were to be kept with it. Probably nothing but the surgeon's knife would have availed in dealing with such a cancerous mass. The cord had become so fatally twisted that the knot, too closely drawn to be untied, must be cut with the sword. The abolition of slavery was inevitable; it came about through a great elemental upheaval. The situation had become intolerable and was past reforming. Long before the war, it had become impossible to get along with the slaveholders, except on the most ignoble principles of trade or fashion. All manly acquiescence was out of the question. The Unitarians, as such, were indifferent or lukewarm; the leading classes were opposed to the agitation. Dr. Channing stood almost alone in lending countenance to the reform, though his hesitation between the dictates of natural feeling and Christian charity towards the masters hampered his action, and rendered him obnoxious to both parties, – the radicals finding fault with him for not going further, the conservatives blaming him because he went so far. The transcendentalists were quite universally abolitionists, for their philosophy pointed directly towards the exaltation of every natural power. Wherever they touched the earth – as they did not

always, some of them soaring away beyond terrestrial things – flowers of hope sprang up in their path. In France, Germany, and England, they were friends of intellectual and social progress, of the ideal democracy. The spiritual philosophy was in the air; its ideas were unconsciously absorbed by the enthusiastic spirits. They constituted the life of the period; they were a light to such as dwelt in darkness or sat under the shadow of death.

In this country Mr. Emerson led the dance of the hours. He was our poet, our philosopher, our sage, our priest. He was the eternal man. If we could not go where he went, it was because we were weak and unworthy to follow the steps of such an emancipator. His singular genius, his wonderful serenity of disposition inherited from an exceptional ancestry and seldom ruffled by the ordinary passions of men, his curious felicity of speech, his wit, his practical wisdom, raised him above all his contemporaries. His infrequent contact with the world of affairs, his seclusion in the country, his apparitions from time to time on lecture platforms or in convention halls, gave a far-off sound to his voice as if it fell from the clouds. Some among his friends found fault with him for being bloodless and ethereal, but this added to the effect of his presence and his word. The mixture of Theism and Pantheism in his thoughts, of the personal and the impersonal, of the mystical and the practical, fascinated the sentiment of the generation, while the lofty moral strain of his teaching awakened to increased energy the wills of men. His speech and example stimulated every desire for reform, turning

all eyes that were opened to the land of promise that seemed fully in sight. How much the anti-slavery conviction of the time, along with every other movement for the purification of society, owed to him we have always been fond of saying with that indefiniteness of specification which communicates so much more than it tells. This must be said, that, in the exhilaration of the period, they that worked hardest felt no exhaustion, and they that sacrificed most were conscious of no self-abnegation, and they that threw their lives into this cause had no sentiment but one of overflowing gratitude and joy. The anti-slavery agitation was felt to be something more than an attempt to apply the Beatitudes and the Parables to a flagrant case of inhumanity – it was regarded as a new interpreter of religion, a fresh declaration of the meaning of the Gospel, a living sign of the purely human character of a divine faith, an education in brotherly love and sacrifice; it was a common saying that now, for the first time in many generations, the essence of belief was made visible and palpable to all men; that Providence was teaching us in a most convincing way, and none but deaf ears could fail to understand the message.

It was, indeed, a most suggestive and inspiring time. Never shall I forget, never shall I cease to be grateful for, the communion with noble minds that was brought about, the moral earnestness that was engendered, the moral insight that was quickened. Then, if ever, we ascended the Mount of Vision. I was brought into close communion with living men, the most living

of the time, the most under the influence of stimulating thoughts; and if they were intemperate in their speech, extravagant in their opinions, absolute in their moral judgments, that must be taken as proof of the depth of their conviction. They loved much, and therefore could be forgiven, if forgiveness was necessary. They sacrificed a good deal, too, some of them everything in the shape of worldly honor, and this brought them apparently into line with the confessors and saints. They made real the precepts of the New Testament. Their clients were the poor, the lowly, the disfranchised, the unprivileged, against whom the grandeurs of the world lifted a heavy hand. They were champions of those who sorrowed and prayed, and this was enough to win sympathy and disarm criticism. It was a great experience; not only was religion brought face to face with ethics, but it was identified with ethics. It became a religion of the heart: pity, sympathy, humanity, and brotherhood were its essential principles. At the anti-slavery fairs all sorts and conditions of men met together, without distinction of color or race or sex. There was really an education in the broadest faith, in which dogma, creed, form, and rite were secondary to love; and love was not only universal, but was warm.

Salem was the home of story and legend. There Puritanism showed its best and worst sides, for there Roger Williams preached, and there the witches were persecuted. The house where they were tried and the hill where they were executed were objects of curiosity. There were the wild pastures and the

romantic shores, and broad streets shaded by elm trees, and gardens and greenhouses. There were spacious mansions and beautiful country-seats and pleasant walks. There was beauty and grace and accomplishment and wit. There were quaint old buildings, and ways once trodden by pious and heroic feet. On the whole, this was the most idyllic period in my ministry. Thither came Emanuel Vitalis Scherb, the native of Basel, an exile for opinion's sake, a man full of genius, learning, enthusiasm. Young, handsome, hopeful, his lectures on German literature and poetry attracted notice in Boston, whence he came to Salem to talk and be entertained. The best houses were open to him; the best people went to hear him. Alas, poor Scherb! His day of popularity was short. He sank from one stage of poverty to another; he was indebted to friends for aid, among the rest to H. W. Longfellow, who clung to him till the last, and finally died from disease in a military hospital early in our Civil War.

I remember, in connection with Samuel Johnson, collecting an audience for Mr. A. B. Alcott, the most adroit soliloquizer I ever listened to, who delivered in a vestry-room a series of those remarkable "conversations" – versations with the *con* left out – for which he was celebrated. It was, in many respects, a happy time.

V.

THE CRISIS IN BELIEF

I was in Salem when this came. It happened in the following way: A woman in my choir, a melancholy, tearful, forlorn woman, asked me one day if I knew Theodore Parker. I said I did not, but then, seeing her disappointment, I asked her why she put that question. She replied that her husband had abandoned her some months before and with another woman had gone to Maine. There he had left the woman and was living in Boston, and was a member of Mr. Parker's Society; and she thought that if I knew Mr. Parker I might find out something about him, and perhaps induce him to come back to Salem. I told her I was going to Boston in a day or two, and would see Mr. Parker.

My visit, again and again repeated, resulted in an intimacy with that extraordinary man which had a lasting effect on my career. His personal sympathy, his profound humanity, his quickness of feeling, his sincerity, his courage, his absolute fidelity of service, even more than his astonishing vigor of intellect and his earnestness in pursuit of truth, made a deep impression on my mind. To be in his society was to be impelled in the direction of all nobleness. He talked with me, lent me books, stimulated the thirst for knowledge, opened new visions of usefulness. As I recall it now, his influence was mainly

personal, the power that comes from a great character. He communicated a moral impetus. Faith in man, love of liberty in thought, institution, law, breathed in all his words and works. His theological ideas were somewhat mixed, as was inevitable then. His gift of spiritual vision, especially as shown in his interpretation of the Old-Testament narratives, may have been imperfect; his moral perspective may have been incomplete; his learning was copious, rather than discerning. But his single-mindedness was perfect, and his devotion to his fellow-men was almost superhuman. It was a privilege to know such a man, so simple-hearted and brave. The slight disposition to put himself on his omniscience, to strike an attitude, was not strange considering his enormous force, his consciousness of power, his singular influence over men, and his conviction (in large measure forced on him by his advocates) that he was a religious reformer, a second Luther, the inaugurator of a new Protestantism. His three doctrines, to which he constantly appealed, and in proof of which he adduced the testimony of the human soul, – the existence of a personal God, the immortality of the individual, and the absoluteness of the "moral law" might have been untenable in the presence of modern knowledge under the form in which he stated them. His vast collection of materials in attestation of Theism may have been valuable chiefly as a curiosity; but the man himself was all of one piece, genuine through and through. The mingling of fire and moderation in him was very remarkable, the blending of consuming radicalism

with saving conservatism puzzled his more vehement disciples; but his character interested everybody; his firmness was visible from afar, and his warmth of heart was felt through stone walls. There were no two ministers in Boston who did as much for the inmates of hospitals and prisons as he did. His ministry ceased a quarter of a century ago, but the effect is vital yet, and will last for years to come. At this distance the heart leaps up to meet him. His chief work was done, for it consisted mainly in the adoption of a type of character, and length of days is not needed for this, while it is apt to be impaired by the infirmities of age. His long, wearisome illness, full of weakness and pain, tested the strength of his fortitude, patience, hopefulness, and trust, and was interesting as showing the passive, acquiescent side of heroism, all the more impressive in view of his love of life, his desire to finish his course, his sense of accountability (stronger in him than in anybody I ever met), and his wish to serve his kind. It was my happiness, more than ten years after he went away from men, to dwell for months in his atmosphere, while writing his biography, and all my old impressions of him were confirmed. And five years later, reviewing his life in the *Index*, I was again struck by his greatness. I may be excused for quoting the closing passage from the *Index*, of July 5, 1877, in which I stated the claims of Theodore Parker to the honor of posterity. The paragraph sums up the qualities that have been ascribed to him – integrity, catholicity, outspokenness; to these might have been added warmth of heart, but this last attribute lay on the

surface, and could be easily appreciated by ordinary observers – in fact, was seen and acknowledged by his enemies, and by those who knew him least.

On the whole, then, I should say that *manliness* was Theodore Parker's crowning quality and supreme claim to distinction. That he had other most remarkable gifts is conceded as a matter of course. Everybody knows that he had. But this was his prime characteristic. The other gifts he had in spite of himself – his thirst for knowledge, his love of books, his all-devouring industry, his unfailing memory, his natural eloquence or power of affluent expression; but character men regard as less a gift than an acquisition, – the fruit of aspiration, resolve, fidelity, – the product of daily, nay, of hourly, endeavor. Hence it is that intellectual greatness does not impress the multitude; even genius has but a limited sway over the masses of mankind. But character goes to the roots of life. In fact, Theodore Parker's eminence as a man of thought and expression in words has concealed from the world at large the intrinsic quality of the person. His reputation as theologian, preacher, controversialist, has concealed the real greatness which comes to light as the dust of controversy subsides. The very causes in which the heroism of his manliness was displayed – as, for example, the anti-slavery cause, to which he devoted so much of his time and vitality – rendered inconspicuous the contribution he made to the treasury of humane feeling. Now that that great conflict is over, now that its agitations have ceased and its heats

have cooled, the character of which this conflict revealed but a portion, the career in which this long agony was but an episode, loom up into distinctness. The greatest of all human achievements is a manly character – guileless, sincere, and brave; that he by all admission possessed. He earned it; he prayed for it; meditated for it; worked for it; – how hard, his private journals show. And for this he will not be forgotten. For this he will be remembered as one of the benefactors, one of the emancipators, of his kind.

From a shelf in his library, I took Schwegler's "Nachapostolische Zeitalter," a work which threw a flood of light on the problems of New-Testament criticism. This led to a study of the writings of F. C. Baur, the founder of the so-called "Tübingen School." A complete set of the *Theologische Jahrbücher*, the organ of his ideas, was imported from Germany, and carefully perused. These volumes contained full and minute studies on all the books of the New Testament – Gospels, Epistles, the writing termed "The Acts of the Apostles," with incidental glances at the "Apocalypse." The calm, consistent strength of these expositions commended them to my mind. The author was a university professor, a man of practical piety, a Lutheran preacher of high repute, simple, affectionate, faithful to his duties, quite unconscious that he was undermining anybody's faith, so deeply rooted was the old Lutheran freedom of criticism in regard to the Bible. In the German mind, religion and literature, Christianity and the Scriptures, were entirely distinct things. The scholar could sit in his library in one mood and

could enter his pulpit in another, preserving in both the single-mindedness that became a Christian and a student.

Other theories have arisen since, but none that have taken hold of such eminent minds have appeared. Theodore Parker accepted it; James Martineau adopted its main proposition in several remarkable papers written at various times, last in the Unitarian magazine *Old and New*. In the brilliant lectures delivered in London, during the spring of 1880, on the Hibbert Foundation, Ernest Renan's striking account of early Christianity owed its force to the assumption of the fundamental postulate of the Tübingen School. In the latter years of his life, Baur summed up the results of his criticism in a pamphlet that was designed to meet objections; and in 1875-1877 his son-in-law, the learned Edward Zeller, one of his ablest disciples, an eminent professor of history at Berlin, published an earnest, carefully considered, masterly report of the writings of the now famous teacher, in the course of which he paid a merited tribute to his character, vindicated his views from the charge of haste and partisanship, and predicted for them a triumphant future.¹

The adoption of these opinions, so opposed to the views current in the community, compelled the adoption of a new basis for religious conviction. Christianity, in so far as it depended on the New Testament or the doctrines of the early Church, was discarded. The cardinal tenets of the Creed – the Deity of the Christ, the atonement, everlasting perdition – had been dismissed

¹ "Vorträge und Abhandlungen," von E. Zeller, 2 vols., Leipzig.

already, and I was virtually beyond the limits of the Confession. But Theism remained, and the spiritual nature of man with its craving for religious truth. Without going so far as Theodore Parker did, who maintained that the three primary beliefs of religion – the existence of God, the assurance of individual immortality, the reality of a moral law – were permanent, universal, and definite facts of human nature, found wherever man was found; without going so far as this, I contended that man had a spiritual nature; that this nature, on coming to consciousness of its powers and needs, gave expression to exalted beliefs, clothing them with authority, building them into temples, ordaining them in the form of ceremonies and priesthoods. In support of this opinion, appeal was made to the great religions of the world, to the substantial agreement of all sacred books, to the spontaneous homage paid, in all ages, to saints and prophets; to the essential accord of moral precepts all over the globe, to the example of Jesus, to the Beatitudes and Parables, to the respect given by rude people to the noblest persons, to the credences that inspire multitudes, to the teachings of Schleiermacher, Fichte, Constant, Cousin, Carlyle, Goethe, Emerson, in fact, to every leading writer of the last generation. All this was so beautiful, so consistent and convincing, so full of promise, so broad, plain, and inspiring that, with a fresh but miscalculated enthusiasm, oversanguine, thoughtless, the young minister undertook to carry his congregation with him, but without success; so he went elsewhere. This action proceeded from the faith that Parker

instilled. Parker was pre-eminently, to those who comprehended him, a believer.

In the words of D. A. Wasson, his successor in Music Hall:

Theodore Parker was one of the most energetic and religious believers these later centuries have known. This was the prime characteristic of the man. He did not agree in the details of his unbelieving with the majority of those around him, because it was part of his religion to think freely, part of their religion to forbear thinking freely on the highest matters. But he was not only a powerful believer in his own soul, but was the believing Hercules who went forth in the name of divine law to cleanse the Augean stables of the world... This, I repeat, and can not repeat with too much emphasis, was the characteristic of the man – sinewy, stalwart, prophetic, fervid, aggressive, believing... The Hercules rather than the Apollo of belief, it was not his to charm rocks and trees with immortal music, but to smite the hydra of publicity, iniquity, and consecrated falsehood with the club or mace of belief; if this might not suffice, then to burn out its foul life with the fire of his sarcasms.

To quote my own words, written in 1873 (see "Life." p. 566):

With him the religious sentiment was supreme. It had no roots in his being wholly distinct from its mental or sensible forms of expression. Never evaporating in mystical dreams nor entangled in the meshes of cunning speculation, it preserved its freshness and bloom and fragrance in every passage of his life. His sense of the reality of divine things was as strong as was ever felt by a man of such

clear intelligence. His feeling never lost its glow, never was damped by misgiving, dimmed by doubt, or clouded by sorrow. Far from dreading to submit his faith to test, he courted tests; was as eager to hear the arguments against his belief as for it; was as fair in weighing evidence on the opponent's side as on his own. "Oh, that mine enemy had written a book!" he was ready to cry, not that he might demolish it, but that he might read it. He knew the writings of Moleschott, and talked with him personally; the books of Carl Vogt were not strange to him. The philosophy of Ludwig Büchner, if philosophy it can be called, was as familiar to him as to any of Büchner's disciples. He was intimate with the thoughts of Feuerbach. He drew into discussion every atheist and materialist he met, talked with them closely and confidentially, and rose from the interview more confident in the strength of his own positions than ever. Science he counted his best friend; relied on it for confirmation of his faith, and was only impatient because it moved no faster. All the materialists in and out of Christendom had no power to shake his conviction of the Infinite God and the immortal existence, nor would have had had he lived till he was a century old, for, in his view, the convictions were planted deep in human nature, and were demanded by the exigencies of human life. Moleschott respected Parker; Dessor was his confidential friend; Feuerbach would have taken him by the hand as a brother.

There can be no greater mistake than to call Theodore Parker

a Deist; than to class Theodore Parker with the Deists. He was utterly unlike Chubb or Shaftesbury, Herbert of Cherbury or Bolingbroke. Even the most philosophical of them had nothing in common with him. Hume and Voltaire, for instance, were utterly unlike him. They, it is true, believed in *a* God, the "First Cause," the "Author of Nature," the "Supreme Being," and in a future life. But their belief was merely logical and mechanical, his was vital; he believed in the real, living, immanent Deity. They thought that religion was an imposition, a policy of the priests, who played upon the fears of mankind; he believed that religion was a working power in the world, the origin of the highest achievement, the soul of all aspiration. They had no faith in the direct communication of the "Supreme Mind" with the soul of man; he believed in the infinite genius of man, and in the direct communication of the absolute intelligence. They thought of justice as a contrivance for securing happiness; he thought of it as the law of life. One of Mr. Parker's friends ascribed to him a gorgeous imagination; if he had it, it is a surprise that it should have been so completely suppressed as it was, for his taste in pictures and in poetry was very questionable. His want of speculative talent probably helped him with the people. Whether he formulated his thoughts is uncertain. Such was not his genius. He was a constructive, not a destructive. It was his faith that he criticised the Bible in order that he might release its piety and righteousness; that he tore in pieces the creeds in order to emancipate the secrets of divinity.

It is useless to conjecture what Parker might have been had he lived. That he would have held to his primary convictions is almost certain; it is quite certain that he would have loved mental liberty. He would have been a great power in our Civil War; he would probably have been a leader in the free religious movement. Parker, when I first knew him, was in full life and vigor. He had gone to Boston a short time before my ordination in 1847, and had before him a long future of usefulness. All the exigencies in which he might have been conspicuous were distant. That the effect of such a man on me and my connections was exceedingly great is not strange. It would have been strange had it been otherwise. In sermon, prayer, private conversations my convictions came out. That the people were disappointed may be assumed, but they were kind, generous, and patient. The congregations did not fall off; there was little violence or even vehement expostulation. But the position was not comfortable, and when an invitation came from Jersey City to found a new Society, I accepted it at once. It had been a dream of Dr. Bellows to establish a Society at that place, and, learning that I was in search of another sphere of activity, he asked me to undertake the work. This was seconded by a cordial representation from Jersey City itself, on the part of some who were Dr. Bellows' own parishioners. The uprooting was not easy, for Salem had become endeared to me as the first scene of my ministry, a place where I could be useful in many ways, and which contained a delightful society; an established, well-furnished town, with

historic associations; a country centre, an agreeable situation. But the waters were getting still there, and the sentiment of the past was getting to over-weigh the promises of the future.

VI.

JERSEY CITY

Jersey City, to which I went directly from Salem, was a very different place from what it is now; smaller and perhaps pleasanter. Where now is a large city, a few years ago was but a village. Now it is a manufacturing place, with great establishments, foundries, machine-shops, banks, insurance companies, newspapers, more than forty schools, and more than sixty churches. Then it was a large town, though it was nominally a city (incorporated in 1820), with a population of about twenty thousand, the increase being chiefly due to the annexation of suburbs, not to its own vital growth. It was substantially rural in character, with extensive meadows, broad avenues; a place of residence largely, the gentlemen living there and doing business in New York. There were a few Unitarians, a few Universalists, but there was no organized Unitarian society before I went there. A great many cultivated people resided in this place. There was wealth, culture, and interest in social matters. A meeting-house was built for me and dedicated to a large, rational faith.

The chief peculiarity of my ministry there was the disuse of the communion service. This rite I had thought a great deal about in Salem. There had been, then, a well-meant proposal on the part of the pastor to make an alteration in the form of

administering the communion service. The custom had been (quite an incidental one, for the usage was by no means the same in all the churches of the denomination) to thrust the rite in once a month, between the morning worship and dinner time, and to offer it then to none but the church-members, who composed but a small part of the congregation. As a consequence of this arrangement, the observance became formal, dry, short, and tiresome. To the majority of the Society it seemed a mystical ceremony with which they had no concern, while those who stayed to take part in it, wearied already by the preceding exercises, and hungry for their mid-day meal, gave to it but half-hearted attention. The observance was thus worse than thrown away; for, in addition to the loss of an opportunity for spiritual impression, a dangerous kind of self-righteousness was encouraged in the few church-members, who regarded themselves as in some way set apart from their fellow-sinners, either as having made confession of faith or as being subjects of a peculiar experience. To impart freshness to the rite, and at the same time to extend its usefulness as a "means of grace," the minister proposed to celebrate it less frequently (once in two or three months), to substitute it in place of the usual afternoon meeting, to make special preparation for it by the co-operation of the choir, and to throw it open to as many as might choose to come, be they church members or not. The suggestion met with feeble response, and that chiefly from young people who had hitherto stayed away out of a laudable feeling of modesty,

not wishing to remain when their elders and betters went out, and not thinking themselves good enough to partake of a special privilege. The "communicants," as a rule, set their faces against the innovation, perhaps because they were secretly persuaded that the change portended the secularizing of Christianity by a removal of the barrier that divided the church from the world, possibly because they wished to retain an exclusive prerogative which had always marked the "elect."

The matter was not pressed; the routine went on as before; the minister did his best to render the service impressive and interesting. But his studies and meditations led him to the conclusion that the observance had no place in the Unitarian system; that it was a mere formality, without an excuse for being; that it contained no idea or sentiment that was not expressed in the ordinary worship; that it was a remnant of an otherwise discarded form of Christianity, where it had a peculiar significance; that it was the last attenuation of the Roman sacrament of transubstantiation; that it ought to be dropped from every scheme of liberal faith as an illogical adjunct, a harmful excrescence, a hindrance, in short. No whisper of these doubts was breathed at the time, but the pastor's silence allowed the scepticism to strike the deeper root in his mind. Mr. Emerson's departure from his parish, on the ground that he could no longer administer the communion rite according to the usage of the sect, had occurred many years before this, but was still remembered in discussion and talk. Theodore Parker had no communion; but

he was an established leader of heresy, and did not furnish an example. Many, agreeing with Emerson's reasoning, disapproved of his course in resigning his pulpit rather than continue to administer the bread and wine. He himself advised others to hold on to the observance, if they could, hoping for the time when it might be universally vivified by faith. Some might do it as it was. The congregations would, it is likely, without exception, have decided as his did, to lose their minister sooner than their "Supper." Some years later, on passing through Boston on my way to another scene of labor, I called on a distinguished clergyman who had taken a part in my ordination, and was asked by him what I intended to do in my new parish with regard to the communion. I replied that it was not my purpose to have it, "You cannot give it up," he said; "it is stronger than any of us. I should drop it if I dared, for there is nothing real in it that is not in the general service, but I am afraid to try. I shall watch your experiment with interest, but without expectation of its success." "Very well," I replied, "we shall see." The experiment was tried and succeeded. For four years I had no communion, and not a word was said about it. On leaving for New York, several of my friends, who had been accustomed to the ceremony all their lives, were asked if they did not think it would be wise to reinstate the rite. To my surprise, they with one voice said that there was no need of it, that the Society got along perfectly well without it. It is needless to say that in New York the observance was never celebrated.

The ceremony was justified among Unitarians by various reasons which, in the end, seemed apologies. With the old-fashioned, semi-orthodox members of the congregations it was a precious heirloom, prized for its antiquity; a link that still held them in the bond of fellowship with the universal church, a last relic of the supernaturalism to which they clung without knowing why; the pledge of a mystical union with their Christ. Any change in the administration of it was regarded as a desecration; the suggestion of its complete discontinuance could, they thought, arise in no mind that was not fatally poisoned by infidelity. It was not, in their opinion, a symbol of doctrine, but a channel of divine influence, which no intellectual doubts could touch, which spiritual deadness alone could dispense with. Tenets might be abandoned, forms of belief might be discredited, but this citadel of faith must not be assailed or approached by irreverent feet. Mr. Emerson's example was not followed by his contemporaries. His fellows did not so soon reach his point of conviction. Even radicals, like George Ripley, did not. In my own case it was the growth of time. At the moment there was no disposition to abandon the observance, simply a desire to reanimate it. It was not perceived till much later that the changes proposed implied a virtual abandonment of the rite itself; that the communion is regarded as a sacrament, that as a sacrament it might be presumed to be supernaturally instituted for the communication of the divine life; that, when faith in the supernatural declines, the sacrament no longer has a

function as a medium, and must be omitted; that no attempts to revive it as a sentimental practice could be justified to reason; that all endeavors to awaken interest in it by assuming some occult efficacy must be futile because groundless. The "memorial service" can in no proper sense be called a sacrament. It may be a pleasing expression of sentiment, somewhat over-strained and fanciful, but capable of being made attractive. The task of reproducing the emotions of the early disciples as they sat at supper with their Master, nearly two thousand years ago, is too severe for the ordinary imagination, and when persisted in from a sense of duty may become a dull, creaking performance, against which the sensitive rebel and the witty are tempted to launch the shafts of their sarcasm. The only way of saving it from gibes is to ascribe to it some mystical efficacy for which there is no logical excuse. The Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation had a foundation in the philosophy of the Church. The Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation, which recognized the presence of Christ on the occasion, but not the literal change of the substance of his flesh, was legitimate. But the Sabellian theory, which the Unitarians inherited, was in no respect justified, save as a tradition.

The sole alternative at that time for me, when the Communion service was made a test question between the "conservative" and the "radical," was to drop it. At present the situation is altered. It is no longer a ceremony or a tradition, but a means of spiritual cultivation. It stands for fellowship and aspiration,

not for a communion of saints, but of all those who desire to share the saintly mind, of all who aim at perfection. The rite is one in which all may unite who wish, however fitfully, for goodness; *all*, whether Romanist or Protestant, and Protestant of whatever name; *all*, in every religion under the sun, Eastern or Western, Northern or Southern, old or new, every dividing line being erased. I once attended the Communion service of a Broad Churchman. The invitation was large and inclusive, comprehending everybody who, though far off, looked towards the light, everybody who had the least glimmer of the divine radiance; and none but an absolute infidel was shut out. There was a recognition of a divine nature in men, —

Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.

The idea of spiritual communion is a grand one. It is universal too; it is human in the best sense. The symbols were ancient when Jesus used them, the Bread signifying Truth, the Wine signifying Life. Originally the symbols referred to the wealth of nature, as is evident from an ancient prayer. It was the custom for the master of the Jewish feast to repeat this form of words: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, our God, who givest us the fruits of the vine," and then he gave the cup to all.

Leaving out the personal application which is purely incidental, and discarding the sacramental idea which is a

corruption, throwing the service open to the whole congregation as an opportunity, a great deal may be accomplished in the way of spiritual advancement. True, the ceremony contains no thought or sentiment that is not expressed in the sermon or the prayer, but it puts these in poetic form, it addresses them directly to the imagination, it associates them with the holier souls in their holiest hours, and brings people face to face with their better selves in the tenderest and most touching manner, teaching charity, love, endeavor after the religious life. The rite is full of beauty when confined within the bounds of Christianity, but when extended to the principles of other faiths, it is rich in meaning, and may be used with effect by those who wish to educate the people in the highest form of idealism, who desire comprehensiveness. A symbol often goes further than an argument, and a symbol so ancient and so consecrated ought to be preserved. A friend of mine included all religious teachers in his commemoration. This was a step in the right direction, but if the people are not ready for this yet, they may welcome an extension of the reign of spiritual love among the disciples whom theological hatred has kept apart. But this was not suspected then.

It will be remarked that my reasons were not those of Emerson. His argument was solid and sound, but his real reason was personal. He said in his sermon: "If I believed it was enjoined by Jesus and his disciples that he even contemplated making permanent this mode of commemoration, every way agreeable to an Eastern mind, and yet on trial it was disagreeable to my

own feelings, I should not adopt it... It is my desire in the office of a Christian minister to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this I have said all... That is the end of my opposition, that I am not interested in it." My ground was different; I had no objection to the symbol, none to an Oriental symbol, and the mere fact that I was not interested in it seemed to me not pertinent to the case. My objection was that it divided those who ought to be united; that it encouraged a form of self-righteousness; that it implied a "grace" that did not exist. For the rest, my form of religion was of sentiment. It was scarcely Unitarian, not even Christian in a technical sense or in any other but a broad moral signification. It was Theism founded on the Transcendental philosophy, a substitute for the authority of Romanism and of Protestantism. This was an admirable counterfeit of Inspiration, having the fire, the glow, the beauty of it. It most successfully tided over the gulf between Protestantism and Rationalism. Parker used it with great effect. It was the life of Emerson's teaching. It animated Thomas Carlyle. It was the fundamental assumption of the Abolitionists, and of all social reformers.

I had perfect freedom of speech in Jersey City; there was no opposition to the doctrine announced. The Society there was large and flourishing, and its influence in the town was on the increase. But Jersey City was, after all, a suburb only of New York. Some of my most devoted hearers came from New York, and urged me to go there. Dr. Bellows was anxious to found

a third Society in the great city, and added his word to their solicitations, so that in the spring of 1859 I went thither. My church in Jersey City was continued for a short time, but I had no settled successor; the congregation did not grow; some of my most earnest supporters had either died or left the town. The war broke out and was fatal to institutions that had not a deep root. The building was sold soon after, for business purposes I think, and the society was never renewed. This may appear singular considering that there are Unitarian churches elsewhere in New Jersey, at Camden, Orange, Plainfield, Vineland, and Woodbury. The changed condition of the town may have had something to do with the failure to revive, after the war, the Unitarian Society. The Catholic, Presbyterian, Orthodox Congregationalist communions were more suited to the new population than the Unitarian was. Possibly, too, the "radical" complexion of the parish had something to do with the disrepute that fell upon it. However this may have been, the cause did not seem to prosper. Mr. Job Male, who died recently at Plainfield, was one of my most zealous supporters and exerted himself to keep the enterprise alive, but in vain. It is understood that the flourishing Unitarian church in Plainfield was largely due to his efforts.

VII.

NEW YORK

For the first year in New York I lived with Dr. Bellows at his parsonage. Mrs. Bellows and the children were at Eagleswood, New Jersey, the children being at school with Mr. Weld. And this is the place to say something about Henry Whitney Bellows. He was a very remarkable man, most extraordinary in his way; an original man, a peculiar individual; of mercurial temper, various, quick, sympathetic, brave, whole-hearted, generous, but all in his own fashion. More Celtic than Saxon, more French than English, prone to generalize, something of a *doctrinaire*, indifferent to personalities, but of warm affections where he was interested; loyal, as knights always are, where his honor was concerned, but impatient of dictation, restless, nervous, impetuous, dashing from side to side, always consistent with himself, yet rarely consistent with ordinary rules of conventional society. Such a man is best described in detail.

Dr. Bellows, as we called him, had a singular gift of *expression*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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