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Brooks Frothingham

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**Transcriber's Note :** This etext differs from the original in that it corrects three minor typographical errors that do not affect the meaning.

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# RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

## 1822-1890

### OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM

AUTHOR OF "BOSTON UNITARIANISM, 1820-1850, A STUDY OF THE LIFE  
AND WORK OF NATHANIEL LANGDON FROTHINGHAM,"  
"THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY," ETC., ETC.

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## RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS.

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### I.

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### 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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;

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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.

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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 "ΦΒΚ," 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.

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### III.

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## 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.

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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.

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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.

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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, Schweigler, 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.

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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.

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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

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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 ministrations 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 the 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.

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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.

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## IV.

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## 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.

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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.

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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.

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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."

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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,

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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,

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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.

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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.

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## V.

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### 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,

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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.

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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.

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From a shelf in his library, I took Schweigler'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.

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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.<sup>[A]</sup>

[A] "Vorträge und Abhandlungen," von E. Zeller, 2 vols., Leipzig.

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 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

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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, over-sanguine, 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.

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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):

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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.

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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 overweigh the promises of the future.

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## VI.

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### 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.

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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."

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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

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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.

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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 overstrained 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.

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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,—

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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

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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.

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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.

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## VII.

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### 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*. This was the soul of him, his most prominent feature, the trait that explains every other. His appearance indicated as much. He had a mobile mouth, flexible features, a ringing voice, a cordial manner. He was fond of talking, brilliant in conversation, attractive in social intercourse, a charming companion, full of wit, rapid in repartee, ready with anecdote, illustration, allusion. He was a great favorite at the dinner-table, at friendly gatherings, at the club, where a circle always collected round him and were delighted with the endless versatility of his discourse. In fact, he was a man of society rather than a clergyman, though he occupied a pulpit from the beginning, and was faithful to all the duties of his profession. Still they were not altogether to his taste, and he got away from them whenever he conscientiously could. His best deliverances were half-secular addresses on some theme of immediate popular interest, speeches, orations, ethical talks, ever on a high plane of sentiment, but looking towards the urgent preoccupations of the time. He was not a student in any direction; not a deep, patient, exhaustive thinker; not a scholar in any school, but an immense reader of current literature, of magazines, papers, memoirs, and an eloquent reproducer of thoughts as he found them lying on the surface of

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the intellectual world. His brain was exceedingly active, and reached forth in all directions; his pen was fluent, facile, and busy; language exuded from all his pores. As a preacher he was conventional, restrained, and, it must be confessed, not engaging as a rule, but as a talker he was delightful, copious, entertaining, kindling, attractive to old and young, and crowds thronged the house when he spoke about what he had seen or felt, while his pulpit discourses did not fill the pews. Like many men of remarkable talents, he imagined his strong points to be those in which he was most deficient, not being gifted with much power of self-knowledge, and perhaps aspiring after accomplishments he did not possess. He prided himself more than he should have done on his insight as a theologian, his depth as a philosopher, his skill as an administrator, his practical success as an organizer; whereas his consummate ability consisted in exposition, not in original discovery. He was not a theologian, not a philosopher, not a builder, but a most persuasive advocate, perhaps the most adroit I ever met with. His range was wide, his exuberance infinite, his sway over his listeners absolute. It is no marvel that such a man was persuaded that he could achieve all things.

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He was the only speaker I ever knew who could talk himself into ideas. Many, by dint of talking, can work themselves into an implicit faith in doctrines they were indifferent about at starting; but this man had the dangerous gift of being able, not merely to think on his feet, but to set his faculties in motion by the action of his tongue. Again and again he has gone to a public meeting, at which he was expected to speak, with no preparation at all, or none but a very general one, depending upon some impulse of the moment to set him a-going. A word dropped by a previous speaker, the mere presence of the audience, a suggestion awakened in his mind as he sat awaiting his turn, would excite him sufficiently; and when he stood up one idea started another, an illustration opened a new field of thought, till the torrent, growing deeper and more tumultuous as it flowed, carried the hearers away in ecstasy. One who did not know him found it hard to believe that he had not meditated his address beforehand. He has gone into the pulpit with a written sermon, and being struck by a sentence in the Scripture he was reading, has laid his manuscript aside and delivered an extemporaneous discourse on an entirely different theme.

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The reason why he did not preach habitually without notes was that this fatal facility of speech excited him too much, carried him too far, rendered him discursive, led him on to inordinate length, and wearied his congregation. He needed the restraint of the paper, the calm dignity of the closet meditation; he needed also to spread his thoughts over a larger expanse of time, and thus to secure quiet for his brain. At the risk, therefore, of being dull, he spared himself, as well as his parishioners, the stimulating fervor of the extemporaneous address. He may have felt, too, that his was not the quality of mind for this method. It required a less fluent talent, a less ready loquacity, a less mercurial temperament, a more reserved habit. There are those whose constitutional reticence preserves them from aberration; who can see the end from the beginning; can cling closely to the matter in hand; can walk a thin plank; and have too few ready ideas to be in any peril of going astray. Such are the most successful extemporaneous preachers. Dr. Bellows' genius was better adapted to an address, therefore, than to a sermon.

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The secular view of things was more attractive to him than the spiritual. His defence of the drama in 1857 (an oration delivered in the Academy of Music, and which was very bold for that time); his vigorous conduct of the *Christian Inquirer*, a Unitarian paper, which he managed and for which he wrote constantly for four years, advocating an unwonted liberality of sympathy, maintaining, for example, the substantial identity of the Unitarian and the Universalist confessions; his interest in questions of social and philanthropic concern; his lectures before the Lowell Institute in 1857,—all attest his desire to effect a reconciliation between science and religion, between this world and the next. His oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard, in 1853, is an admirable specimen of his treatment of similar themes. The subject of the oration was "The Ledger and the Lexicon, or Business and Literature in Account with American Education"; and its purpose was to assert the claims of popular life against those of scholarship,—to state the case of natural instincts and practical intelligence as the controlling force of our destiny. He says, most truly, at the outset, "Speaking purely as a scholar, I should unaffectedly feel that I had nothing to offer worthy this audience or occasion," and then he goes on with a full, earnest, eloquent plea for the intellectual character of our political and commercial activity. Here is an extract:

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What History asks from us is not Literature and Art. The world is full of what can never grow old in either. *American Literature, American Art!* Heaven save us from them! Let us freely use what is so much better than anything one nation can make, the Literature and Art of the whole past and the whole world. History implores us, first of all, to be true to humanity. She begs to see the education, the taste, the sensibility of this great people turned to the serious, vital, universal interest of thoroughly vindicating *Man* from the scorn of *men*; of establishing man on his throne as man,—free because man, happy because man, noble and religious because man! Literature and Art will take care of themselves; high education and scholarship will come in their own time; and so, thank God, will everything humanity needs. But for ourselves and the immediate generation, there is no work so worthy as confirming the faith of our people in their own principles; encouraging devotion to Liberty as the supreme interest of Man;—of man sacred in his own eyes, with duties, rights, aims, that are bounded neither by color, nationality, nor law. The love of the race, the liberation of humanity from complexional, material, political, and moral disfranchisements; the elevation of the individual and of every individual; the prostration of all partition-walls that separate our kind; the tumbling of the artificial pedestals that elevate the few, into the unnatural pits that bury the rest; the affiliation of the foreigner, and the emancipation of the slave; the subjugation of

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rebellious matter and reluctant wealth to the wants and desires of man; the establishment of beautiful and independent homes, of high and free and noble lives;— this is American scholarship, this American art. A country that sacrifices even its nationality, that proudest of all prejudices, to its humanity, will be the first to pay that tribute to man, which Christ waits to welcome as the final triumph of his kingdom. And, finally, here in America, where for the first time universal comfort and general abundance reign, the race looks to us to pronounce the banns between the spiritual and material interests and pursuits of man,—his worldly well-being, and his heavenly prosperity,—a union that shall not be a miserable compromise of which both shall be ashamed and which neither shall keep, but an honorable, hearty, and intelligible alliance, on the highest grounds.

This is very fine and brave, and similar in tone was all he said about American life and destiny. He tried to exalt common things, and in this way he more than made amends for his lack of scholastic equipment. His mission was to encourage and fortify and console actual men and women, not to solve deep problems of fate. A good but commonplace man spoke to me with tears in his eyes of his endless gratitude to Dr. Bellows because on one New Year's Day he preached a doctrine of promise, and said that men did their best, and that the world was as good as could be expected; not an extraordinary doctrine certainly, but one that is seldom announced with so much cordial, human sympathy. This same ardor he threw into his ordinary lectures, carrying audiences away with a flood of conviction. When our Civil War broke out and it became evident, as it soon did, that the conflict would be a long one, necessitating large armies in a region of country unused to military needs and ignorant of military exigencies, Dr. Bellows' attention was drawn to the questions involved in the maintenance of a vast number of men in the field, their protection, discipline, and comfort; the proper supply of food, clothing, medicine; the best kind of tent, the best kind of hospital, the duty of keeping up the home associations by means of correspondence and missives. He talked over the situation with a few friends; societies were formed, organizations instituted, the means of relief set in motion. Out of this grew the Sanitary Commission, of which he was the mouthpiece and the inspiring soul. The work was immense, but the task of awakening the country to the necessity of endeavor was, beyond all ordinary power of conception, arduous. Such was the blind faith in the government, —a government inexperienced in similar matters,—such was the indifference of multitudes who were far removed from actual danger, such the unconsciousness of the magnitude of the peril, such the insensibility to the demands of the hour, the serene confidence that all was going well, the jaunty sense of complacency in having raised the regiments, that nothing less than a trumpet call was required to rouse the country to a feeling of obligation. Afterwards when the magnitude of the strife was self-evident, when the dangers of camp-life were understood, and the temptations to infidelity of many kinds were painfully apparent, other forces came in to carry forward the work; but at first prescience was needed, and zeal, and faith in principles, and a sense of the gravity of the situation. It is hardly too much to say that but for the energy shown by the Sanitary Commission in the early part of the war, the issue might have been indefinitely postponed. That the Commission itself flourished to the end was due in the main to Henry Bellows. Of course he did not do everything, but he did his part. The labor of organization was discharged by other orders of genius. The duties of treasurer devolved upon men differently constituted still; there were many hands employed, many heads busy with planning. But his was the potent voice. He sounded the clarion; East, West, North, and as far South as he could go, he argued, remonstrated, pleaded, exhorted, interpreted, inspired, and wherever he was heard he filled veins with patriotic fire. He was never daunted, never disheartened, never depressed. His tones always rang out clear, strong, decisive. The bugle never gave an uncertain sound. In Washington he addressed the highest authorities and was so urgent, not to say so imperious, that President Lincoln asked him which of the two ran the machine of government. He possessed in a singular degree the power of making people work, and work gladly,—all sorts of people, men and women, the sensible and the enthusiastic, the practical and the sentimental, the low-toned and the high-strung; and they toiled day after day at scraping lint, packing garments, raising money, organizing fairs. In the meantime he travelled to and fro, lecturing, addressing crowds in the meeting-houses, halls, theatres; writing letters to committees, visiting men of influence, inspecting hospitals and camps, making himself acquainted with the newest methods of dealing with sanitary problems, and imparting ideas as fast as they came to him. His activity was prodigious. He was one of the most conspicuous figures in the country. He brought the Commission into universal repute. Under his spell it lost its local character and became a national concern. He was a Unitarian preacher; his immediate co-operators were Unitarians; yet so broad and mundane was he that no savor of sectarianism mingled with his zeal, nor could it be suspected, except for his aims, that he was a clergyman. As long as the war lasted this energy continued, the enthusiasm did not abate, the outpouring did not slacken. It was not till the struggle was over that the over-tasked brain craved repose. Then the reaction was purely nervous, not in the least moral or intellectual. He sprang up again and threw himself into new enterprises with the old fervor and the old brilliancy of speech, striving to awaken a desire for religious unity, as he had promoted national concord. The establishment of the National Conference of Liberal Churches, which was to supplement the more local Unitarian Associations, was his suggestion. The scheme did not entirely meet his expectations, but this shows how large his expectations were, and how comprehensive were his purposes of good. As has been intimated already, his desires were in advance of his practical ability. He was a man of wishes rather than of expedients. His plans often failed, but his aspirations were always pure and lofty, and it was characteristic of him to impute the failure of the special plan to some stubbornness in the materials he attempted to manipulate, rather than to any deficiency in his own faculty. Thus his confidence in himself was sustained, and he went on trying experiments and believing in his talent to set anything, even communities and States, on their feet.

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People used to say that his advocacy was very uncertain; that it was impossible to tell in advance whether he would take a liberal or a conservative view of a party or dogma; in short, he had the reputation of being somewhat of a chameleon, of catching his line from the last person he talked with. One of his parishioners remarked, jestingly, that the hearers of Dr. Bellows were taught in perfection one lesson,—that of self-reliance. This was probably true, as it was a general impression; and it illustrates the warmth of his sympathy, the impressionableness of his temperament, the readiness of his adaptation, the facility of his discourse, as well as the want of depth in his speculative intellect and his lack of hold on fundamental principles. He was an advocate by nature, not a theologian, a philosopher, or a critic; an adept in speech, not a subtle or profound thinker. He saw the effective points in either doctrine, and chose the one that was most captivating at the time. His eclecticism was simply ease of transference, not a keen perception of the grounds of identity. His logic was the skilful accommodation to circumstances, not absolute fidelity to the laws of reason. His affluence of diction and his profusion of thoughts covered up his essential poverty of insight, and persuaded some that he looked farther than he did; but still it remains true that he was not a sure guide in matters of opinion. He was a most adroit, subtle, engaging talker, and as such was of incalculable value; a fountain of entertainment, and a source of influence. A decided vein of Bohemianism ran through his character. He was light-hearted, gay, versatile, fond of fun, restless, addicted to society, abhorrent of solitude, darkness, confinement; a friend of artists, musicians, wits; a club-man; could smoke a cigar, and drink a glass of wine, and tell a merry story; a man of quick emotions, volatile some would call him, though of unquestioned and unquestionable loyalty when any principle was at stake, or any person he loved and trusted was in trouble. Otherwise he forgot unpleasant things and went to something else, dropping the individual, but holding fast to the elements of charity. This faculty of changing rapidly from one interest to another saved him from a vast deal of fatigue, and enabled him to pursue his almost incredible labors with less wear and tear than would have been possible under other circumstances. The formation of roots, and the necessity of pulling them up frequently with a feeling of loss and pain, is sadly weakening and disabling. This fosters a disposition to stay at home, to form few ties, to remain quietly where one is placed by destiny, to expose one's self to no more disruptions than are appointed, to hide one's self in a corner of existence, to avoid the wind. The scholar hugs his library, reads books, meditates, cultivates his mind, appears in public only when he is prepared. The man of society dashes out and deems the time wasted that is passed in the house. Dr. Bellows once expressed his wonder that a friend should have no desire to go abroad, but should be content in his study.

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He was a knight-errant, a Norman gentleman, ever ready to succor the oppressed, but satisfied when he had unhorsed the oppressor, though the victim lay helpless on the ground. He derived his name from "Belles Eaux." He was not a democrat as implying one that had affinities with the people. On the contrary, he was at bottom an aristocrat, looking down on the people; but he was humane in idea, holding it to be the part of a gentleman to relieve the unfortunate. The motto, "*Noblesse oblige*" applied to him exactly, with the understanding that he belonged to the *Noblesse*, and was privileged to patronize. This tendency was prominent in him. He would not allow a companion to pay his car fare, because he would not borrow so small a sum, but he confronted the man to whom he had lent fifty dollars, and who had forgotten the payment, as people often do. Meeting the defaulter in the street, he reminded him of the transaction, taxed him with infidelity to his engagements, and had the satisfaction of receiving his money and relieving his mind at the same time. Magnanimous he was by nature. I will give a single instance of it, out of several I could detail if personalities did not forbid. When I first came to New York to found a parish, there was a woman in my congregation,—an angular, brusque woman, not sunny or agreeable,—whose husband, being unfortunate, had, to repair his fortune, gone to San Francisco; she stayed in New York and kept school, for the purpose of educating her children, and of eking out the family expenses. One day, complaining to me of her lot and labor, she spoke of certain prejudices against her as interfering with her success, and accused Dr. Bellows of being one of her enemies. Having satisfied myself of the injustice of the impression about her, and of her worthy deserving, I took occasion at once to speak to Dr. Bellows on the subject. Reminding him of the circumstances in which the woman was placed, I asked him if he did not think she ought to be helped instead of being hindered. He acknowledged that he knew her, that he did not like her, that he had spoken harshly of her under the impression that she was not deserving of moral support. On my presentation of her case, and conviction that he was wrong, he, being persuaded of his heedlessness, offered to do everything in his power to repair any mischief he might have caused. In my excitement, I became audacious and suggested the drawing up and signing of a paper,—about the most disagreeable thing that could be proposed. But he assented, prepared the paper, affixed his signature, and from that hour did his utmost to befriend the woman whom he took no pleasure in thinking of. This was noble, even great. He could put his personal tastes aside when a principle was involved.

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It used to be urged against him that he dropped people when he had done with them, and felt no scruple in sacrificing them to his views of policy. But it cannot be proved that he was false to anybody, and his notion of the absolute unfitness of the individual for his place, or of the man's unreliability, was probably the real cause of his opposition. Probably, in each instance of his withdrawal of confidence, there were excellent reasons for his conduct, though it was natural that those who were suddenly neglected or displaced should feel indignant and aggrieved. Dr. Bellows was not one to act on a private prejudice or a personal pique. His affections were strong and would have led him to make any concession that was consistent with what he regarded as his public duty. No doubt he was somewhat imperious in judging what his duty was; he lacked the useful faculty of remaining in the background; he was impetuous and forward; but he never was or could be insincere, and he always had a sufficient explanation of the course he pursued,—an explanation perfectly satisfactory to one who bore his temperament in mind and considered what he could do and

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what he could not.

A most lovable, cordial, faithful man I always found him,—a man to be depended on in difficult and trying times, high-minded, courageous, daring, ready to enter the breach, happiest when leading a forlorn hope, straight-forward, inspiring, easily lifted beyond himself, and imparting nervous vigor to his followers. Followers he must have, for he was not content to obey any behest; but then his leadership was so hearty and wholesome, so free from superciliousness, so abundant in expressions of loyalty, that it was a joy to go with him. He was more than willing to do his share of hard work, and to indulge his servants. If one could forbear to cross him, he was friendliness itself; a warm advocate of liberty, only insisting that liberty and progress should march hand in hand; that private idiosyncrasies should not stand in the way of practical advance. He was a very different man from Dr. Dewey, yet he loved Dr. Dewey devotedly while life lasted. He was an entirely different man from me in temperament and in gifts,—quite opposite in fact,—yet he was one of the best of my friends as long as he lived, seldom resenting my radicalism, never impatient of my slowness, but warm, sunny, helpful to the end, the man to whom I instinctively resorted for sympathy in the most painful passages of my career.

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In a word, the foundation of his character was impulse. He was a man of fiery zeal, of moral passion, of vast enthusiasm, and when a storm of spiritual power came sweeping down from some unseen height, he was easily carried away. This impulsive character explains his chivalry of disposition, his magnanimity, his self-abnegation; for though he was self-asserting, he could at once forget himself, and sink his own individuality entirely when some cause he had at heart strongly appealed to him. This impulsiveness explains, too, his theological inconsistency, for when the popular feeling struck him, he was carried away in a different direction from what he had first proposed. For instance, once—I think it was at Buffalo—he gave a most eloquent plea for individualism, having determined to speak in favor of institutions; and in Boston when he had been expected to uphold a creed, he was so borne away by the opposite sentiment that, when he ended, a creed seemed absolutely impossible.

A very different person from the foregoing was Dr. Samuel Osgood, the successor of Dr. Dewey in the Church of the Messiah on Broadway, and the close associate of the pastor of "All Souls," which name he suggested when the new edifice on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Twentieth Street was christened. He was a lover of ecclesiasticism, of forms, usages, ceremonials, though he was not unmindful of the ideas that lay beneath them, and too good a New Englander, too good a Unitarian, too staunch a friend of free thought to be anything but a liberal Protestant; a man of names and dates, and instituted observances, not "electric," "magnetic," or a leader either of thought or action; not a man of deep emotions, or moving eloquence in or out of the pulpit; not a man of long reach or wide influence, but conspicuous in his way, unique, worth studying as a figure in his generation.

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He was devoted to books, of which he read and produced many, and might have been called learned, yet he was not a closet man, not a recluse; on the contrary, he knew about public affairs, talked about what was going on in the world, attended political, social, and literary meetings, was a member of the prominent clubs, like the "Century" and the "Union League," was for years the Corresponding Secretary of the "Historical Society," rather prided himself, in fact, on the number and intimacy of his outside relations. With all this, he was a diligent pastor, an excellent denominationalist, a dependence on all church occasions within his sect, a speaker at conventions, a worker of the ecclesiastical machinery, a man much relied on for denominational work.

His writings were numerous. In fact he always seemed to have the pen in his hand. Besides the books which are known,—"Studies in Christian Biography," "The Hearthstone," "God with Men," "Milestones in Our Life Journey," "Student Life,"—all popular once,—he contributed frequently to the *Christian Examiner*, the *North American Review*, the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and other important magazines; delivered orations, printed theological discourses, especially a famous one before the theological school at Meadville, Pennsylvania, on "The Coming Church and its Clergy," and for several months, during Mr. Curtis' illness, prepared the essays in the "Easy Chair" for *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. His interest in matters of education and literature was incessant, active, and useful. He made speeches, served on committees, prepared reports, in every way tried to serve the cause of rational knowledge. Yet with all his industry and all his ability—for he possessed ability of no mean order,—he had a mind singularly destitute of vitality. His ingenuity, his pleasantry, his sententiousness, his versatility, could not conceal this lack of organic power. His vivacity did not exhilarate, his happy expressions did not create the sense of life in the mind, but were like artificial flowers that had no perfume, and reminded one more of the perfection of art than of the involuntary sweetness of nature. He was destitute of genius to inspire. It is the more wonderful that he could persevere, as he did, without the popular recognition that his talents merited, or the applause his endeavors deserved. He had praise, to be sure, but it was not hearty or effusive, and they who rendered it probably wondered why they could not put more soul into their laudation. The address was brilliant, but not warming. One must come within arm's length of him to feel the beating of his heart, to be sensible of his force. He was unable to project himself far, and relied upon incidental advantages of occasion for effects which he could not produce by genius.

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He was a most affectionate man, dependent, clinging, always ready to serve, obliging, docile, patient, without hardness and without guile. He was devoted to his family, faithful to his friends, never allowing differences of opinion to interfere with his duty towards those who might expect support from him, but fulfilling disagreeable offices when he felt that loyalty made perfect truthfulness incumbent. There was something touching in his fidelity towards men who gave him nothing but outside recognition, and who were willing to abandon him when he could no longer be useful. There was something plaintive in his readiness to work for men who accepted his labor as a matter of course, and allowed him to throw away his love. He, for his part, asked no reward, but was quite

satisfied if his service was accepted kindly by those to whom he rendered it. Not that he did not like recognition; he did, and the more public it was the better he liked it. For he was fond of notoriety, had a craving for publicity, and was happiest when a multitude applauded. This may have grown out of his affectionateness, for he reached forth his arms as widely as possible, and wanted to hear the sound of many approving voices, needing sympathy and the assurance that he was conferring pleasure, the noise of plaudits reassuring his heart. Still he could do without this, if he was certain of the attachment of a single warm friend. Recognition of some sort was essential to his peace, for he did not possess independence enough to stand alone, and he cared too much for individuals to be easy if they were displeased. He gave himself a great deal of pain, worried, took infinite trouble about imaginary sorrows, not being able to feel or to affect indifference, and being destitute of the robustness of character necessary to throw off unpleasant things; for his ambition, not springing from vitality of mind, was no guard against griefs of the spirit. He that cannot lose himself in his studies fails to derive from them their best satisfaction,—that of consolation and refuge. He stands naked to the wind, and, if his skin is tender, suffers acutely.

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Dr. Osgood was intensely self-conscious, self-regarding, self-referring. Not vain in the ordinary sense, though he seemed so from his countenance, attitude, manner, for all of which, I am persuaded, nature was more responsible than disposition, his physical formation producing a certain carriage that suggested superciliousness and conceit. If he were forth-putting, it was, in most instances at least, because he lacked self-reliance, and wished to be *seen*, knowing that he could not be *felt*. In reality he was a modest, timid, shrinking man, with an inordinate desire for distinction, which impelled him continually to make a demonstration in public. Mere vanity—the love of appearances—he was destitute of, for he was too tender-hearted and too conscientious to make victims. One must be self-centred to be vain, as he was not. I recollect his coming one day into the office of the *Christian Inquirer*, with his head up as usual, and calling out in a loud voice: "Where do you think I went on my way down town?" Of course none of us knew or could guess. "Well," he went on to say, with an air of complacency, "I stopped at Fowler & Wells' and had my head examined." "Ah!" exclaimed one of the impudent, "did they find anything, Sam?" "What they did *not* find," he said, "will interest you more. They declared that I was deficient in self-respect, and it is true." And it was true. Samuel Osgood assumed a brave air, for the reason that he could not trust himself in the open field. He needed the protection of a rampart. He wore a showy uniform, because he was not valiant. He had too much self-esteem to forget himself, and too little courage to assert himself; the consequence was that he said and did numerous things that looked vainglorious and were absurd, but which were intended to conceal his impuissance. It was an innocent kind of bravado, like poor Oliver Proudfoote's, in Scott's romance, "The Fair Maid of Perth." Nobody was hurt by it, though to him the passion for notoriety was fatal. He liked to see his name in a newspaper, coveting the kind of reputation that came in that way, and comforting his heart with the thought of lying on the broad bosom of the community. His restless desire for public notice brought ridicule on him, for ordinary people ascribed it to his conceit, whereas it rather indicated an absence of self-confidence. It was a cloak to hide his depreciation at the same time that it made him look larger in the general eye. It was, therefore, more touching than despicable, and if it excited mirth there was nothing bitter in the smile which could not break into laughter. Selfish he could not be called, for he was always serving others, and disinterestedly too; but on a charge of complacency he could hardly be acquitted. This was the manner in which he took his reward, and, as I said, it cost nothing to anybody, while the public received a great deal of service very ungrudgingly bestowed.

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The change from Unitarianism to Episcopacy is very easily explained. His craving for sympathy was boundless. He was necessarily isolated in New York, nor had he the solace of a great popular success. In fact his following was small; his church was dwindling; his reputation was certainly not increasing; and he became persuaded, I think without sufficient reason, that he was the victim of adverse influences. In London, he was charmed with the blended freedom and sanctity of the "Broad Church" represented by Stanley, Kingsley, Jowett, and a host of cultivated men; by its unity amid diversity; its sympathy and fellowship and large scholarship. Here was a church indeed; wide, holy, liberal, devout, with articles admitting of various interpretations, sacraments tender and elastic, forms that did not constrain, and usages that did not bind, an unlimited range of speculation, and a spirit of reverence that kept the most widely separated together. Here was something very different from the sectarianism he had, all his life, been accustomed to, and, all his life, had loathed. He joined this Communion not so much on account of its *creed* as of its *creedlessness*; not as another form of denominationalism, but as an escape from denominationalism; a real, living, comprehensive church, where there was room for all Christian souls, whatever their special mode of belief; a Protestant church with a truly catholic temper, cordial, humane, courteous; with a respect for literature, and a love for knowledge; with no jealousy or ill-will, or fear of thought. His heart was warmed, his fancy fired. Shortly after his return, as he sat in my study, I asked him if he had materially changed his theology. He replied that he had not, he had simply altered the *emphasis*; as much as to say that in substance it remained what it was before, essentially Unitarian, as he understood that designation. In fact, his sermons were to all intents and purposes the same; they never abounded in doctrine, they did not now; they were always "sentimental," in the sense of dealing with sentiment, they were so still. He was not a prime favorite with Episcopalians in America. He was not narrow or strict enough for the orthodox; he was not "sensational" enough for the liberals; he was too ecclesiastical for the Low Churchmen; too rationalistic for the High Churchmen; and his failure to communicate warmth was not favorable to his attractiveness. There were not many Broad Church ministers in New York, so that his circle of fellowship was small; and on the whole the reception was a disappointment. He longed for recognition, which he found among many of his old associates, as he did not find it among his new friends. He was always a churchman when he was a Unitarian; he was no more of a churchman now, and the sympathy he sought he might have found in his former connection.

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Probably had he lived elsewhere than in New York, where the competition was sharp, and where individuality alone without distinguished power counted for nothing, he would have continued Unitarian, and been happy, but he was ambitious of eminence; he wanted to live in a great city, to be minister of a metropolitan parish, to be a Doctor of Divinity, and for all this he lacked the force. There was a perpetual conflict between his aspirations and his vigor. He joined the Episcopal fraternity, hoping for what none but those born into it attain without energy of an exalted kind. His ancient comrades fell away, as was natural; he could not win other comrades, and his later years became lonely. He cared more for Christian fellowship than for any other; and he had not the power to secure this. Thus his affectionateness was against him. He was a loyal man, true to his convictions, faithful to the bent of his mind. He could not be a deceiver or a renegade, and his heart was not strong enough or wide enough to push him forward.

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Some thought him deficient in common-sense, and this is, in a sense, true. He had not the force to carry projects through, nor had he the hearty accord with the people of his generation that would give him an instinctive insight into their wishes and enable him to strike into the current of their designs. His self-reference always stood in the way of his sympathy with other men; yet he often took practical views of speculative questions, and curbed a propensity to moral enthusiasm on the part of some of his associates. This, however, was due to his timidity, to his absence of vigor, to his want of vital conviction, rather than to any clearness of perception. He had no humor, no sense of the incongruous, the incompatible, or the absurd. He named rocks, groves, arbors, on his summer estate, after the famous poets, and used to sit in turn on the seats he had thus immortalized. He said things that no man of taste would have uttered, and did things that no man of judgment would have been guilty of. But all this was owing to the absence of sensible qualities rather than to the presence of visionary ones. He was not perverse, stubborn, or wrong-headed, did not outrage common opinion, or fly in the face of established prejudice. His want of good sense was negative, not positive; innocent, not harmful.

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Such men have their uses and their place, and neither is small or low. His love of learning, his devotion to duty, his friendliness, his fidelity, his kindness, were rare gifts, particularly rare in communities like ours. His child-like conceit, very different from the aggressive vanity that offends the sensitive soul, was not offensive or noxious, and was a source of harmless amusement. His guilelessness was more than touching; it was admirable as an example and as a lesson, in an age that honors knowledge of the world beyond its deserts; and his simplicity of nature, his trustingness, his ingenuousness, rendered him a confiding friend, dear to those whose hearts were sore. Few men living have so small a number of enemies. He did not provoke the hostility he received. It was possible to be sorry for him; it was impossible to bear him malice.

As I think of him, the vision arises of a complacent man, with a loud greeting, a metallic voice, an outstretched hand, a consequential manner. All this is dust and ashes, but his singleness of intention is not dead. When everything else is forgotten, his faithfulness will be remembered.

Both these men gave me a warm welcome; in fact, my relations were most friendly among the other Unitarian ministers in the neighborhood. It was anticipated, no doubt, that I would establish a third Unitarian Society "up town," of a liberal type; but a wide departure from the existing order was not suspected. The expectation was that the usual doctrines were to be proclaimed; that the sacraments were to be administered; that the regular order was to be observed. Perhaps my willingness to undertake such an enterprise was regarded as a sign of concession on my part; perhaps it was supposed that the conservative tone of the city, together with the attitude of the other churches, would repress the radical tendencies of the young clergyman; perhaps the trials incident to a new society and the confusions of the time concealed somewhat the real bearing of the undertaking. However this may be, there was no opposition, no criticism, no dictation, no proscription of radical leanings. My congregations were composed of all sorts of people. There were Unitarians, Universalists, "come-outers," spiritualists, unbelievers of all kinds, anti-slavery people, reformers generally. But this, as being incidental to the formation of every liberal society, was not objected to. It need not have been; for if there had been no interruption, no check, everything might have gone smoothly, as in similar societies since.

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## VIII.

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## WAR.

Hardly had I got warm in my place when the mutterings of war were in the air. During the autumn of 1859, on the 16th of October, John Brown planned his attack on Harper's Ferry. His was a portentous figure. His position in history—greater than his achievements would warrant—was due partly to his position as herald of the coming strife, but mainly to his personal qualities. These were colossal; however much one may criticise his particular deeds, or the details of his motive, these qualities can not be exalted too highly. His courage, heroism, patience, fortitude, were most extraordinary. Even Governor Wise, the man whose duty it was to see him tried and executed as a felon, said of him; "They are mistaken who take Brown to be a madman. He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw; cut and thrust and bleeding and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, indomitable; and it is but just to him to say

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that he was humane to his prisoners, and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth." Colonel Washington, another Virginia witness, testified to the extraordinary coolness with which Brown felt the pulse of his dying son, while he held his own rifle in the other hand, and cheered on his men. His character made his prison cell a shrine. On the day of his execution, December 2, 1859, he stood under the gallows with the noose round his neck for full ten minutes while military evolutions were performed; he never wavered a moment, and died with nerves still subject to his iron will. He was a Calvinistic believer in predestination; a real Covenanter, more like the Scotch Covenanters of two centuries ago than anything we know of to-day. He was an Old-Testament man, and like all fanatics was indifferent to death, either that of other men or his own. His anti-slavery zeal began in his youth. He early took an oath to make war against slavery, and, it is said, called his older sons together on one occasion and made them pledge themselves, kneeling in prayer, to the anti-slavery crusade. This purpose he always bore in mind, whatever else he was doing; he even chose the spot for his attempt—the mountains which Washington had selected as a final retreat should he be defeated by the English. Nearly nine years before his own death, he exhorted the members of the "League of Gileadites" to stand by one another and by their friends as long as a drop of blood remained and be hanged, if they must, but to tell no tales out of school.

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Then came the war. Though its physical aspect,—the loss of treasure and of blood—was most affecting, I cannot but think that its mental and moral aspect has been underrated. Its whole justification lay in its moral character, and I must believe that full justice has never been done to those who were obliged to stay at home and uphold this feature. The preacher of the Gospel of Peace had as much as he could do to overcome the horrors of war; and the preacher of Righteousness was engaged all the time in promoting the cause of justice. They who went to the front had the excitement of battle, the pleasures of camp-life, the assistance of comradeship, the comfort of sympathy. The preacher had none of these. Every day rumors were reaching his ears; "extras" were flying about in the silence; he had to comfort people under defeat, to humble them in hours of victory; to interpret the conflict in accordance with the principles of equity; to keep alive the moral issues of the struggle. This was an incessant weariness and anxiety; to fight foes one could not see, and to uphold a cause that was discredited, fell to his portion; it is no wonder that when the war was over he was spent and aged.

An illustration of a part of what he had to contend with is found in the riot of the summer of 1863. This was an anti-abolitionist riot, a fierce protest against the conscription, and at the same time an uprising against the government, which was supposed to maintain a war of the blacks against the whites. The riot was directed against the negroes and the abolitionists, and was pitiless and ferocious in the extreme. It was my lot to be in New York in that dreadful week in July. I was visiting friends in the upper part of the town when the uproar began. As I walked home down Madison Avenue a group of rough men met me; one of them snatched at my watch chain, and I should have been maltreated had not more attractive game in the shape of people in a buggy drawn away the attention of my assailants. I reached my home in safety. The next morning, as I walked about the city, there were groups of men standing idle, or armed with missiles, in almost every street. Had the mob been organized then it might have done more mischief than it did, for the inhabitants of the city were unprepared and unprotected. As I stood at night on my roof, I could see the fires in different parts of the town, and hear the shots. An arsenal stood on Seventh Avenue, near my house, full of arms and ammunition which the insurgents wanted. When the United States troops arrived, they defended this arsenal. Cannons were pointed up and down the street, guards were posted, officers with their clanking swords marched up and down before my door. The riot lasted three days,—from the 13th to the 16th. On the following Sunday a sermon was preached which gives expression to the better thoughts of the wisest people, and from which accordingly extracts are made:

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Of all the dreadful and melancholy passages in the history of human progress, none, to a thoughtful man, are more dreadful or melancholy than those which tell how men have resisted, pushed away, reviled, cursed, beaten, mobbed, crucified their benefactors. It does seem, as we read them, as if the most dreaded thing on earth had been the personal, the domestic, the social welfare; as if the deepest anxiety on the part of men of all sorts was an anxiety to escape from their health and salvation; as if the profoundest dread was a dread of mending their estates, and their utmost horror was a horror of heaven! It does seem, as we read, as if happiness, prosperity, success, were the pet aversion of mankind; as if the signs that were looked for with the most agonized apprehension were the signs that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.... We saw this conspicuously and dismally exemplified in the events of the past week. The one man who, before and above all others, was a mark for the rage of the populace, the one man whose name was loud in the rabble's mouth, and always coupled with a malediction, the one man who was hunted for his blood as by wolves, who would have been torn in pieces had the opportunity been afforded, and on whose account the dwelling of a friend was literally torn in pieces, was a man who had been the steadfast friend of these very people who hungered for his blood; their most constant, uncompromising, and public friend; thinking for them, speaking for them, writing for them; pleading their cause through the press, in the legislature, from the platform; excusing their mistakes and follies, asserting and reasserting their substantial worth and honesty and rectitude, advocating their claims as working people, vindicating their rights as men; proposing schemes for the safety of their persons, the healthfulness of their houses, the saving and increase of their earnings, the education of their children, the exemption of their homesteads from seizure in cases of debt, the enlargement of their sphere of labor, the transferring of their families from the crowded city, where they could do little more than keep themselves alive by arduous

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toil, to the fruitful lands of the West, where they could become noble and self-respecting men and women. This was the man whose blood was hungered for. I need not speak his name,—you know whom I mean, Horace Greeley,—a man whom some call visionary, but whose visions are all of the redemption of the people; whom some call "fool," but who, if he seem a fool, is foolish that the people may be wise; whom some call "radical," but whose radicalism is simply a determination that the popular existence shall have a sound, sure, and deep root in natural law and moral principle; at all events, a man who has lived for the people and suffered for the people, and been laughed at when he suffered and because he suffered. *This* was the man whose blood was hungered for. And yet the most moderate, kind, considerate of all the papers, the last week, was his paper. And I believe he, even had he fallen into the hands of his enemies, would have said, "Forgive them, they know not what they do."

Indulge me in one more personality. I said that the dwelling of a friend was pillaged by the mob, under the impression that Mr. Greeley lived there. What was this dwelling? Who was this friend? The dwelling was one the like of which is rare in any city, a dwelling of happiness and peace, a home of the tenderest domestic affections, a house of large friendliness and hospitality, a refuge and abiding-place for the unfortunate and the outcast. There was no display of wealth there—there was no wealth to display; yet the house was full of things which no wealth could buy. It was crowded with mementos. The pieces of furniture in the rooms had family histories connected with them; chairs and tables were precious from association with noble and rare people who had gone. Pictures on the walls, busts in the parlor, engravings, photographs, books, spoke of the gratitude or love of some dear giver. One room was sacred to the memory of a noble boy, an only son, who had died some years before. There was his bust in marble, there were his books, there were the prints he liked, the little bits of art he was fond of, and all the dear things that seemed to bring him back. The whole house was a shrine and a sanctuary.

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And who were the inmates? The master, a man whose sympathies were always and completely with the working-people, a man of steady and boundless humanity; the mistress, a woman whose name is familiar to all doers of good deeds in the city of New York, and dear to hundreds of the objects of good deeds. To the orphan and friendless and poor, a mother; to the unfortunate, a sister; to the wretched, the depraved, the sinful, more than a friend. In the city prison her presence was the presence of an angel of pitying love; at Blackwell's Island she was welcome as a spirit of peace and hope. The boys at Randall's Island looked into her face as the face of an angel. Again and again had she rescued from the life of shame the countrywoman, and possibly the kindred of these very people who plundered her house. For the better part of a year and more she has been in camp and city hospitals, nursing their brothers and sons, performing every menial office. At this moment she is at Point Lookout, doing that work, amid discomforts and discouragements that would daunt a less resolute humanity than hers, giving all she has and is to the *people*, to the wounded, crippled, bleeding, and broken people; giving it for the sake of the people—giving it that the people may be raised to a higher social level! And she, forsooth, must be selected to have her house pillaged! She must be stabbed to her heart of hearts, stabbed through and through, in every one of her affections, by these people for whom her life had been a perpetual process of dying! Why, if they had but known this that I have been telling you, or but a tenth part of it, those men would have defended with their bodies every thread of carpet she trod on. But so it was, and so it must be! Only the best names are ever taken in vain on human lips, and they are so taken because they are the best, and best is worst to those who cannot understand it. Theodore Winthrop was shot by a negro. Did he know what he did?... In thinking of it one's bosom is torn with distracting emotions, and between feeling for the persecuted and feeling for the persecutors, one almost loses the power of feeling. Could anything be more pitiful? Yes, one thing more pitiful there was—the savage hunting down and persecution of the negroes, as if they, too, were the enemies of these working-people. The poor, inoffensive negroes, most innocent part of the whole population! Most quiet, harmless, docile people, who could not stand in the way of the white people if they would, and who never thought of anything but of keeping out of their way! These the enemies of white labor! As if they had not, for these very white people, borne the burden and heat of the tropical day, raising the cotton by which we are clothed, and the rice by which we are fed! As if to these and the like of these, the white people did not owe a large share of the manufacturing towns where they get their bread! As if the lowest foundation stones of this very New York of ours were not cemented by their bloody sweat! As if there were too many of them in the country now for the country's needs, supposing the country ever to fall into a settled and civilized condition again! As if all there are might not by and by be *required* to do the work which white labor can not for a long time, if it can ever, safely undertake! Strange complications of things! Strange cross-purposes of human nature! The Southern people would revive the slave trade, because they have not black laborers enough, and their allies among ourselves would banish or kill all the black people, because they interfere with white labor! A mutual stabbing at each other's hearts! And on each side a stabbing to its own heart!... It is a very mysterious thing in history, this alliance between the most turbulent and the most tyrannical, the most depraved and

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the most despotic portions of society. The most undisciplined, barbarous, savage members of a community are ever in a league with the most overbearing, insolent, imperious, and domineering members of it. They who are under the least self-control bow most deferentially before those who rule others with the most cruel rod. The people who were proudest of having turned out to a man, in London, for the maintenance of law and order, on the day of the great Chartist demonstration there, were the most immoral class in the city—proved by the criminal returns to be nine times as dishonest, five times as drunken, and nine times as savage as the rest of the community. (See Spencer's "Social Statics," p. 424.)

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In Boston, on the occasion of the rendition of Anthony Burns, all the thieves, burglars, cut-throats, swarmed from their dens and volunteered with alacrity to enforce the fugitive-slave law. And now the leaders of the Southern Confederacy count, and count securely, on the Northern populace. The fiercest allies of the only absolutely despotic class in the country are the outlaws of society. The men who are fighting for the privileges of the extremest tyranny, the privileges not of ruling merely, but literally of owning the laboring class, these men have the implicit, unquestioning, fanatical loyalty of the people who are at the opposite end of the social scale—the people who own nothing either of fortune, position, influence, or character, and whose sole relation towards the despots they worship is that of mad, savage slaves.

In Europe this alliance between the despotic and the lawless may be fortunate for the peace of the community. In our Southern States it is eminently conducive to the tranquillity they desire. But when the lawless are here and the despotic are there, when the barbarism is in New York and the tyranny in Richmond, when the elements of discord and turbulence in our Northern cities fly to support their iron-handed rulers in the seceded States, there ensues a state of things, especially in time of war, that is calculated to shake society to its foundations, and fill every loyal heart with dread. The unruly, as if they felt instinctively their lack of self-control, seek a ruler—fly to the strongest to save them from themselves, worship the sternest, the most high-handed, the cruellest, and by that natural sympathy with brutality are maintained in subjection to law.

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Heaven speed the time when these heedless, reckless, licentious children of humanity may feel sensible of the weight of power without its brutality, may reverence authority when it is neither beastly nor cruel, may yield obedience to Order, whose symbol is not the sword, and to Law, whose badge is not the bayonet. But till that time comes, we, with thoughtful minds and sad hearts and sober consciences, and souls full as we can make them of human charity and good-will, must hold in our hands those terrible symbols, and in the Christian spirit do the ruler's part.

The insurrection did not last long. As soon as the United States troops appeared the trouble was over and order was restored. There was fighting; there was pillage; but how many lives were lost and how much property was destroyed was never exactly known. On the whole, the riot strengthened the hands of the government, increased pity for the victims of outrage, and excited sympathy for the negroes and the abolitionists. The priests, as I well remember, helped in the work of pacification. On the second day of the uprising, as I was visiting a friend in his studio on Fifth Avenue, the mob came along, shouting, yelling, brandishing clubs, on their way to the archbishop's palace, to hear an address by him. The prelate appeared on the balcony dressed in full canonicals, in order to impress the people, and delivered a most ingenious and persuasive address. Beginning "Men of New York," he flattered their self-esteem, paid a tribute to their sense of power and exalted influence, and advised them against cruelty and anarchy. The effect of this speech was surprising in soothing and quieting the crowd. They had come there in a mood of tumult—they separated peacefully and went to their own homes, satisfied. From that hour the soul of the riot was broken.

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The incidents of the war cannot be detailed here. The story has been told too often, and is altogether too long for my space. And after all the moral issues of the war were the most interesting though not the most pathetic. The sentiment of union, the establishment of the national supremacy, the authority of the reign of law, the emancipation of a degraded race, the new inspiration imparted to a great people, and the advent of a universal republicanism were most significant. It is quite likely that the modern uprising of labor and the urgent claims of women for recognition and civil power were aided, if not suggested, by this overwhelming triumph of order and enlightenment. It is more than likely that the position of the United States, as a power among the nations of the earth, was due mainly to the victory that was achieved by the powers of liberty.

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## IX.

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### THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION.

The happy ending of the war stimulated, as has been said, the sentiment of Unity. The success of the government in putting down the rebellion filled the air with the spirit of union. The restoration of political harmony suggested a deeper harmony, when divisions should cease. At this moment, in

April, 1865, the indefatigable Dr. Bellows, who had been the soul of the Sanitary Commission, summoned all Christian believers of the liberal persuasions to a convention in his church for a more complete organization. The invitation was most generously interpreted, and was hailed by some who could be called Christians only under the most elastic definition of the term. A prominent layman of the Unitarian body brought an elaborate creed which he wished the convention to adopt; and a distinguished minister of the West was of the opinion that the work of perfect organization could best be done by the adoption of stringent articles of faith. But the minimum of belief was imposed. The preamble of the constitution, the work of reconciling minds, reads thus: "Whereas the great opportunities and demands for Christian labor and consecration, at this time, increase our sense of the obligations of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to prove their faith by self-denial and by the devotion of their lives and possessions to the service of God, and the building up of the kingdom of his son, Therefore." Then follow the articles. It was this phrase, "Lord Jesus Christ," that provoked discussion. The struggle was renewed at Syracuse on October 8th of the next year, 1866, and an attempt was made to explain away the force of the declaration by announcing that while the preamble and articles of the constitution represented the opinions of the majority, yet they were not to be considered an authoritative test of Unitarianism, or to exclude from fellowship any who though differing in belief "are in general sympathy with our purpose and practical aims." But this was not considered by the radicals as satisfactory. For in the first place the title of "Lord" seemed to contain by implication a doctrine which could not be subscribed to, as the "Lordship" of Jesus was supposed to be supernatural. Here seemed to be a fundamental difference between those who held to the old world's idea of a spiritual kingdom, and those who proclaimed the new world's idea of a spiritual democracy. In fact, one of the leaders—Dr. Bellows—plainly said if there was to be any change it must be made in the other direction; "we are to consider not only the few on the one side, who may or may not care to unite with us, but the great body of Christians of all denominations, the Universal Church of Christ; I demand liberality to them, the liberality which acknowledges their Lord and Leader, and welcomes them to a household whose hearth glows with faith in and loyalty to the personal Saviour." It was plainly declared by him that Unitarians assumed the name of liberal Christians, because they allowed liberality of inquiry and opinion *within the pale of Christian discipleship*. This of itself was enough to create a palpable division, but it was felt besides that freedom of interpretation did not imply freedom of rejection. The phrase *Lordship of Jesus*, although as little of a creed as could be devised, was hostile to freedom, besides not being altogether true, as Jesus never claimed to be infallible. The radicals, under the lead of Francis E. Abbot, attempted to introduce a substitute for the original preamble, inculcating unity of spirit and of work as the basis of the "National Conference of Unitarian and Independent Churches." This substitute was not carried, and a final breach between the Independents and the Unitarians was thus established. This was inevitable twenty-five years ago; it could not happen to-day, when both wings are united in one body.

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For my part I did not go to Syracuse, having foreseen what eventually occurred, namely, the intended solidification of the Unitarian body by the strengthening of the bonds of organization. My own personal experience, which other radicals knew nothing of, led me to this conclusion. My church edifice on 40th Street was begun in the spring of 1863. The two ministers in New York were present at the informal service of laying the corner-stone. The walls were going up during the summer; on the week of the riot the mob called the workmen off, threatening to destroy what was built if the masons did not leave. The building was finished in the winter, and dedicated on Christmas Day. To the warm personal invitation which was sent to all the Unitarian clergy in New York and Brooklyn—there were but three then—no response was returned; and when my father and I went to the church there were no ministers on the platform. We went through the service, my father offering the prayer and I preaching the sermon. No remark was made at the time beyond an expression of surprise at the non-appearance of the "brethren." The next day my father, who had come from Boston on purpose to attend the dedication, and whose blindness was approaching fast, went to make a friendly visit on Dr. Bellows. On his return, when asked if any reason was assigned for the failure to participate in the proceedings of the day before, he said that the duties of Christmas were alleged as the cause. I was sure there was another explanation behind; and as soon as I had put my father in the train for home wrote to Dr. Bellows, taxing him among the rest with discourtesy. It was evident that such a charge was anticipated and prepared for; that the ministers had met and had agreed on a course to be pursued in my case. For at once there came a reply to my note, accusing me of studiously neglecting all the usual observances of the denomination. My invitation had not been official; there was no "church"; there had never been any sacrament; the allegiance to fundamental doctrines of the sect had been slack. All this was true, and no attempt at exculpation was made, but it was felt that a breach existed. The excitements of the war overshadowed everything else at this period, and nothing more was said. My Society was duly represented at the first conference; but as soon as our side was argued,—as it was by D. A. Wasson,—it was plain that the spirit of organization prevailed and was against us. A division was inevitable. The "Independents" must form a separate party.

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This virtual exclusion occasioned the formation of the Free Religious Association. A meeting was held on the 5th of February, 1867, at Dr. C. A. Bartol's, in Boston, to consider a plan for creating a new association on the basis of free thought. Very strong words were spoken on that occasion. One man, I recollect, spoke of all churches, all ministers, and all religion as being outgrown. But the majority were of the opinion that religion was an eternal necessity, and the administration of it an absolute demand. Dr. Bartol himself was always a warm friend of the Association, appearing on the platform, speaking always hopefully, one of the most welcome of its supporters. The Association was formed in the spring of that same year. In the plan of organization it was distinctly announced that the aim of the Association was to "promote the interest of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit; and to this end all persons interested in these

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objects are cordially invited to its membership." Thus the object of the Association was exceedingly broad. It proposed to remove all dividing lines and to unite all religious men in bonds of pure spirituality, each one being responsible for his own opinion alone, and in no degree affected in his relations with other associations. If the movement had been in the hands of orthodox and well-reputed people, it would have seemed not only large but noble and beneficent. Being, as it was, in the hands of a few radical clergymen and laymen, it was supposed to be "infidel" in its character; and was misrepresented and abused accordingly.

At first, the dissensions of the sects were rebuked. Afterwards, the scope of the idea was extended; all the religions of the world being put on an equality of origin and purpose. The spiritual nature of man was assumed; the universality of religious feeling; the inherent tendency to worship, aspiration, prayer, being taken for granted as an element in the best minds; all churches and confessions of faith being looked upon as achievements of the soul; Jesus being classed among the leaders of humanity; the Bible being accepted as a record of spiritual and moral truth; and the church being regarded as an organization to diffuse belief. The foundation, therefore, was a pure Theism, and the effort contemplated the elevation of all mankind to the dignity of children of the Highest. That this aim was always borne in mind is not pretended. The negative side was made too conspicuous. Now and then there was a lurch in the direction of denial. There was too much criticism, and it was not always just. There was too much speculation, and it was not always wise. The plan of letting each sect tell its own story was a little confusing at the start. Still, on the whole, the object was pretty faithfully kept in view. Lucretia Mott suggested that the word "religion" should be substituted for the word "theology," but the word "religion" was too vague to afford ground for discussion, and it was felt that the phrase "scientific" sufficiently explained, through the substitution of the scientific for the theological method, the purpose of the association. Moreover, the purpose was to remove *theological* differences, the only differences that existed.

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There were names of distinguished men and women on our list of officers, members, speakers, and friends—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Amos Bronson Alcott, Gerrit Smith, George William Curtis, Edward L. Youmans, Nathaniel Holmes, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Rowland G. Hazard, Lucretia Mott, Lydia Maria Child, Ednah D. Cheney. Thomas W. Higginson was one of our most effective speakers; John Weiss read on our platform his most brilliant paper on "Science and Religion"; David Atwood Wasson lent us the light of his countenance.

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Our greatest want was the want of a leader,—a man not only of competent learning and spiritual enthusiasm, but of natural impulse and vigor; a man of the people, a man of rugged speech, a man of vivacity and humor. If Theodore Parker had been alive he might have taken this position, and distinguished himself as a leader in this movement; as it was, there was no one who could take his place, and the enterprise flagged accordingly, lacking the popular zeal which would give it currency. The speculative character of the association was always against it and rendered it somewhat dry; but this under the circumstances was inevitable, because we were forced to deal with technicalities of credence, and had not power enough to get beyond them into the universalities of faith.

There was an expectation in many quarters that the association would devote itself to beneficent projects; and this was natural, because it seemed as if those who gave up the bond of belief must adopt the bond of work. Mr. Emerson seems to have had a similar desire. "I wish," he said, "that the various beneficent institutions which are springing up like joyful plants of wholesomeness all over this country, should all be remembered as within the sphere of this committee,—almost all of them are represented here,—and that within this little band that has gathered here to-day should grow friendship." But in the first place, ours was not a philanthropic institution; its aim was religious entirely, as it attempted to substitute the universality of religion for the one faith of Christendom. The chief workers in several forms of charity presented their schemes for our consideration, and at one time it looked as if we must be borne away into some philanthropic enterprise. The current, however, which carried us towards "religious" unity was too strong.

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And then, at that time there was little scientific philanthropy. The word *charity* was more or less associated with patronage and pity, the very things that we wanted to avoid; they who were bent on wiping out distinctions could not countenance these, and it was safer not to let our hearts get the better of our reason. But even if there had been a scientific treatment of humane questions, we were afraid of the danger of becoming too much absorbed in this kind of work, and so of losing sight of our chief end.

At present the idea of our Association is pretty well domesticated in Christendom. It was not, after all, entirely new. In 1845 and 1846 Frederick Denison Maurice, lecturing on the Boyle Foundation in London on "The Religions of the World and their Relations to Christianity," attempted to do justice to the ancient faiths of India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In 1882, in Edinburgh, eminent men discussed the same problems under the title of "The Faiths of the World." In 1871 James Freeman Clarke published his "Ten Great Religions." The study of comparative religion has been going on for many years. When Mozoomdar came to this country a few years ago, there was such a rush for him among American orthodox Christians that the Free Religious Association could not get at him at all, though it had tried in vain to get a real Brahmin on its platform. True, there were differences of opinion among the orthodox students of the old-world systems. Some regarded the ancient religions as effete; some denied that Christianity touched them at more than one or two points; some treated them simply as preparations for the crowning faith of Christ. Still, whatever their differences, all agreed that the religious instinct was universal; that there was a ground for revelation in the human heart; since Carlyle's famous lecture in "Heroes," delivered in 1840, it was impossible to regard Mahomet as an impostor, or to look upon religion as a fabrication of the priests, as an attempt to practise upon human ignorance and fear.

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Among the Unitarians our conception is familiar. At the convention that was held in Philadelphia, in October, 1889, both parties, the most conservative and the most radical, sat side by side. A manager of the Free Religious Association delivered one of the addresses, and said: "I never believed one tithe as much as I believe to-night. Never did I have such faith in God; never did I so believe in man; never did I see such a glorious outlook for the Church; never did I hold such a glad theory of human hope for the future." The secretary of the American Unitarian Association was full of joy. The secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference quoted the opinion of the Western churches, assembled at Chicago in May, 1887, and declared "our fellowship to be conditioned on no doctrinal tests, and welcomes all who wish to join us to help establish truth and righteousness and love in the world." A prominent leader of Unitarianism in Illinois uttered himself thus: "Whatever its traditions, whatever its present positions, or its prospects, this spiritual commonwealth is extra-Unitarian, extra-American, extra-Christian; it is human, and on that account it is universal, and it is divine." Another speaker at this convention declared that "the hand that shall hold this master key is Christ, as the modern mind conceives him,—Christ healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the leper, casting out devils from society and business, from politics and religion; Christ, the friend of Lazarus and of Mary Magdalen; Christ robed in absolute justice and also in transcendent love, and embracing the whole world."

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It is not claimed that this extraordinary change in ecclesiastical fellowship and sympathy is due to the Free Religious Association. That was one of the signs of the times, and is an effect rather than a cause; but it is a sign of the grander unity. When the portrait of Theodore Parker is hanging on the walls of Channing Hall; when a cordial welcome is extended to all seekers for the light; when the East and West are ready to embrace in a fellowship of aspiration; when the young men are all alight with fresh hope and fresh endeavor, we may with confidence anticipate the time when there shall be but one fold, and the aim of the Free Religious Association be met.

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The emancipation from denominational trammels was of great service to the young minister. It is true that he was still in a "church" which kept him within ecclesiastical associations; but these fetters were not heavy, and they were soon to be thrown off. For in the spring of 1869, the church was sold to another congregation. This was done partly because the acoustic properties of the building were not favorable, and partly because the place was not suited to the genius of the new society. "There was no room in the inn," was the subject of the last sermon preached in that building. Lyric Hall, to which we removed, is situated on Sixth Avenue, between 40th and 41st streets. It is a large room fifty by one hundred feet. During the week it was used as a dancing hall, but on Sundays it was arranged for a religious service. A small organ was placed there, a platform was built, and seats were brought up from the cellar below. The first sermon preached there was on "Secular Religion," and it indicated the whole character of the services. The most remarkable thing, as regards myself, that happened in Lyric Hall, was the adoption of the habit of speaking without notes. The light from the avenue was too far off for reading, and the speaker was therefore obliged to dispense with a manuscript altogether. A theme was first chosen that admitted of subdivisions, so that as fast as the speaker exhausted one he could fall back on another. The habit soon became so familiar that no difficulty was experienced in handling the most complicated subject. Here we remained until the spring of 1875, when we removed to Masonic Temple, on Sixth Avenue and 23d Street.

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This building, which was very large and handsome, had just been erected by the Masons, who designed it for their own accommodation. The structure having cost, however, more than was anticipated, the owners were obliged, reluctantly, to let the large hall, which they did for literary and religious purposes only. We were the first to occupy it. The hall was spacious and stately, with fixed seats for about a thousand people. A fine organ stood at one end of the platform; at the other end there was a large reception room. The first sermon there was on "Reasonable Religion." The audience was never large—never more than eight or nine hundred, usually six or seven hundred. The form of service much resembled the form common in Unitarian churches, with the exception that Mr. Conway's "Sacred Anthology" was substituted for the Bible, and the other exercises were more universal in their character. It had long ceased to be a Unitarian congregation. There were people of Catholic training, many of Protestant training, some of no religious training whatever, materialists, atheists, secularists, positivists—always thinking people, with their minds uppermost. It was a church of the unchurched. George Ripley, the journalist, was always there; E. C. Stedman, the man of letters; Calvert Vaux, the architect; Sanford R. Gifford, the painter; Henry Peters Gray, the artist, was there until he died; C. P. Cranch, the poet, was a member of the Society as long as he was in the city. In the Lyric-Hall days, Judge Geo. C. Barrett had a seat in the audience. The secular character was always prominent. When we had a church on 40th Street, the large basement was used for music, dramatic performances, readings, festivities, social gatherings. In Lyric Hall, these were continued as far as they could be.

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The "Fraternity Club" was organized in 1869 by a devoted member of the Society for the entertainment and improvement of its members; and drew together very brilliant minds both within and without the immediate fellowship. The meetings were held once in two weeks, when an essay was read, a debate carried on, and a paper presented; all the performers being nominated in advance by the President. The work was mainly done by a few young men, who have since become eminent in various fields—as teachers, lawyers, literary critics, publishers,—and by witty women not a few. There were about seventy members, each one standing for some peculiar accomplishment. The subjects of the essays were such as these, illustrating the breadth of the intellectual interest: On "Taste"; on "Expressions"; on "The Coming Man"; on "Wordsworth"; on "The Tree of Life"; on "Spencer's Britomart as the Type of Woman"; on "Light and Laughter"; on "Successful People"; on "Culture"; on "The Cultivation of the Masses." The subjects for debate were equally varied: "Ought the sexes to be educated apart?"; "Does a house burn up or burn down?"; "Is the highest musical

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culture compatible with the highest intellectual development?"; "Is there a distinctly American literature as contrasted with that of England?"; "Should matrimonial union be contracted early or late?"; "Ought we to cultivate most those faculties in which we naturally excel, or those in which we are naturally deficient?"; "Does increase of culture involve decrease of amusement?"; "Is the existence of a 'Mute inglorious Milton' possible?"; "Will giving the franchise to women exert a beneficial influence on society?"; "Had you rather be more stupid than you seem, or seem more stupid than you are?"

The "papers," of which there are some nine volumes existing, were receptacles for the fancy, imagination, sentiment, and humor of the editors or their co-editors; there were verses, stories, criticisms, jokes, illustrations, in them; each had its name: "The Bubble," "The Venture," "Bric-a-Brac," "Stuff," "The Rag-Bag." The club ceased soon after the Society disbanded, in 1880. [Pg 130]

The root idea of the Society, apart from its independence, was the mingling of the spiritual and the natural; the domestication of faith. With a view of making the idea more prevailing and complete, a children's service in the afternoon was substituted for the regular Sunday-school. A book was prepared, "The Child's Book of Religion," by the pastor, for this express purpose. There were responsive readings, recitations in unison, songs, and an address, simple and anecdotal, by the minister.

The Society was never fashionable, or even popular. At one period—that of the Richardson-McFarland matter—there was a vast deal of misrepresentation, criticism, and abuse, but all this had no effect on the constituency of the parish. There was the same loyalty, the same interest, the same determination to sustain a thoroughly liberal ministry, by which every form of conviction was made conducive to a purely spiritual faith.

It was never pretended that the Society was anything more than a beginning. A small and feeble beginning, but of something that was to grow and spread; the beginning of a faith that is as rational as it is wide. Its influence was more diffusive than concrete as an instituted thing. It is the pride and consolation of those who began it that they removed some of the barriers that divided the great brotherhood of believing men. [Pg 131]

My ministry in New York ended in the spring of 1879. Its close was due entirely to my ill-health. A year before the doctors had warned me not to continue longer than was necessary my rate of speed. They urged me to go slower, to "take in sail," and to withdraw as far as I could from all public demonstrations. Measures were taken against every emergency, and I sailed away in the French steamer, with the hope that in six months I might regain my nervous power, and return. There was first the exhilarating sea voyage; then the beautiful city hall of Rouen, the churches and famous buildings, the square where Joan of Arc suffered; then came Paris with its enchantments; after that Basel showed its great Holbeins, and its lovely promenade overlooking the river; this led to the celebrated baths at Ragatz in Switzerland, the placid waters of Pfeffers', the gorge, the hotel gardens, and the lovely walks; after this came the pass of the Splügen, the Via Mala, the hotel at the summit of the pass among the snows, the pastures, the wild goats; then came Lake Como in Italy, Bellagio, the charming Villa Serbeloni, looking down upon the two lakes, Como and Lecco, the vineyards ripening in the sun, the terraces, looking across upon the mountains; then Milan opened its great cathedral, the gallery of the Brera, the ancient church of Saint Ambrose. Afterwards came Florence and its heavenly environs, its pictures and statues and public buildings, its groves and stately drives and lovely villas; Florence was followed by Siena, and there I saw the great cathedral, walked on the esplanade, enjoyed the public square, the palaces, the pictures of Sodoma. From there I went to Rome, in December. [Pg 132]

It was all in vain; I became satisfied that the complaint was not of a temporary nature, not owing to overwork or over-excitement, not easily cured—if curable at all,—but nervous and hereditary. Thereupon, I wrote a letter to my trustees absolutely resigning my office and declining to be a clergyman any longer, as I could not attempt to renew the same kind of labor. An attempt was made to secure a successor; several names were mentioned, and among men greatly my superiors in learning and eloquence, but none, it was thought, represented the precise form of speculation, the exact view of religion which my friends desired. The Society therefore was disbanded, and no attempt has been made since to reorganize it. The members were scattered, some among other churches, some among other cities, while some never joined any religious society whatever. Thus a thriving and growing organization is now simply a memory.

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## X.

### THE PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN AMERICA.

An article in the *North American Review* for April, 1885, on "Free Thought in America," is chiefly significant as showing how gradual and tentative the progress of thought in religion was. The comments on individuals are often wide of the mark, but the general drift is quite correct. The course was shadowy, but the main point was unmistakable. At this day, the wholesale abuse of religion is harmless, and can exert no wide influence. The friends of liberal thought are against it; and those who seek the old grim conclusion do so in another way, striving to substitute a new faith in nature



for the old faith in divine inspiration, and to prove the latter to have been a growth rather than an imposition. The study of comparative religions has put a new face on the question, and the concern is now to discover the source of faith in the supernatural and not to make it appear a creation of priestcraft. No sooner had serious investigations into antiquity become known, than the method pursued by Voltaire and Dupuis was abandoned, and each generation since has confirmed the facts of historic development.

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That my own immediate predecessors were Emerson and Parker is most true. With the writings of the former I was familiar; the latter was my intimate friend. Perhaps my theological views are due to him more than to any other man, though the circumstances of his generation were peculiar, and determined, in a much greater degree than in my own case was possible, the cast of his thought. The Unitarian controversy, in which he played so prominent a part, and by stress whereof he was driven into some of his positions, is over. The anti-slavery struggle, into which he threw himself and as a result of which his religious antagonisms were sharpened, was ended many years ago.

Poe said in the preface to "Eureka," that perfect beauty was a guaranty of perfect truth; so I felt—felt rather than reasoned—that a great character was sufficient proof of the truth of doctrine, and I accepted the teaching on the strength of the nobleness which was before my eyes. Later researches confirmed my opinions, but while I was under Parker's influence, his theological views were accepted without much consideration; his unique style of personality laying my heart as it were under a spell.

Emerson was a man of colder temperament, thinner of blood, more spare in frame; of finer intellectual fibre, of more commanding intellectual supremacy; not a combatant on any field; a sweet, gracious, shadowy personality; calm, lucid, imperturbable; pursuing knowledge along the spiritual path of pure thought, although he was also a student of books; a regenerator of mind rather than a reformer of customs; a prophet, distinguished for penetration rather than for will. His ideas were substantially the same as Parker's, but he did not arrive at them in the same way, or hold them in the same spirit, or apply them with the same directness. He carried them out further, not being hindered, as his contemporary was, by the immediate necessities of the hour. In short, he was another sort of man entirely. Both were transcendentalists, but Parker shaped his philosophy to the working exigencies of his generation, while Emerson let his stream freely in the air. The writer of the article in question accuses Emerson of want of pathos, and declares that this was the lack of the transcendentalists, as a school. But he could hardly charge this on Parker, who was an ardent transcendentalist, but whose very language was vascular, who affected multitudes of men and women, and who held audiences by the heartstrings. Did Hopkins or Bellamy or Edwards melt people? Were the preachers of Calvinism priests of sorrow? This is a matter of temperament and not of creed. Extreme rationalists leave their congregations in tears, and extreme churchmen dismiss theirs unmoved, the humors of the men deciding the issues of their ministrations. The closer to the ground, the more abundant the sympathy. The question is whether one is more mundane or more ethereal by native gift and endowment.

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That transcendentalism was mainly speculative may be doubted, but if it was so this may be accounted an incidental circumstance to be explained by the prevailing theological temper of the age, and the duty imposed on it of transferring the body of doctrine to an ideal realm; a task which demands an intellectual effort of no common magnitude. And when with this task was joined the endeavor to sift out the purely spiritual ideas from the mass of dogmatical and ecclesiastical error, it is no wonder that it should have been speculative in its tendency. Certainly, Brook Farm was concrete enough, and the transcendentalists were, as a rule, interested in social reconstruction, though not in a way to touch popular emotion. One cannot, even at this distance, think of the quickening radiance shed by the transcendentalists over the whole region of religious belief and duty, without gratitude. The hymns, the sermons, the music, the Sunday-schools, the prayers, the charities, the social ministrations, breathed forth a fresh spirit. If there were fewer tears of woe, there was more weeping for joy. There was too much gladness for crying. Life was made sunny. Human nature was interpreted cheerfully. There was an unlimited future for misery, ignorance, turpitude. Sin was remanded to the position of crudity, and was banished from the heavenly courts. Violence was protested against in laws, customs, manners, speech. Harsh doctrines were criticised. Austere views were discarded. Intellectual barriers were removed. Spiritual channels were deepened and widened. Light was let into dark places. The brightest aspects of divinity were presented. Immortality was rendered native to the soul. The life below was regarded as the portal to the life above.

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In my own case, whatever of enthusiasm I may have had, whatever transports of feeling, whatever glow of hope for mankind, whatever ardor of anticipation for the future, whatever exhilaration of mind towards God, whatever elation in the presence of disbelief in the popular theology, may be fairly ascribed to this form of the ideal philosophy. It was like a revelation of glory. Every good thought was encouraged. Every noble impulse was heightened. It was balm and elixir to me. If transcendentalism did not appear as a sun illuminating the entire mental universe it was the fault of my exposition alone. Absolute faith in that form of philosophy grew weak and passed away many years since, and the assurance it gave was shaken; but the sunset flush continued a long time after the orb of day had disappeared and lighted up the earth. Gradually the splendor faded, to be succeeded by a softer and more tranquil gleam, less stimulating but not less beautiful or glorious. The world looks larger under the light of stars. I always loved Blanco White's magnificent sonnet to Night, but never appreciated its full significance until the scientific view had succeeded to the transcendental, and I began to walk by knowledge, steadily and surely, but not buoyantly any more. It would be a mistake to suppose that anything like pain, sadness, or sterility accompanies the departure of an old faith, when a new one takes its place and soon opens fresh prospects of good.

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The universe but grows larger: other methods are adopted, other hopes are entertained, other consolations are presented, and soon the mind adjusts itself to the altered conditions. The downcast mood of George Eliot, of the author of "Physicus," and of many another less distinguished unbeliever, may be due in part to temperament, in part to the first feeling of chill that ensues upon a transitional period, which brings in a different climate; but the allegation of lasting coldness, gloom, discontent, is wholly groundless. The old fable says that quails drop from the clouds, that even rocks quench the traveller's thirst. There is, in short, no wilderness.

That the creed was "filmy," the foothold "unsteady," is altogether likely, for the ancient supports were removed, the pillars that replaced them were shaking, and tradition alone remained to hold by. But religion was still the Poetry of Life, and kept its place among the interests singly represented by art, music, literature, philosophy, those fine intimations of a higher state, those splendid foreshadowings of the future, those noble efforts to solve problems that must be forever insoluble. My creed did not pretend to be final or even definite. It was simply a study, a preliminary sketch, an essay towards truth. A claim to completeness, to logical consistency, would have been fatal. Still less, if possible, did it pretend to meet popular wants. It resolutely turned in the opposite direction, and took up positions which, it was understood, the general public could not occupy without abandoning all its works and retiring to other ground. No effort was made to commend it to common opinion; on the contrary, everything like concession was shunned, and the slightest signal of agreement with current beliefs was regarded as a warning against a compromise of principle. Nothing was assumed except the validity of the human faculties, including, of course, the higher reason, the insight of genius, and such feelings as were parts of the rational constitution, together with perfect liberty in their exercise. Every theological system was repudiated; even the doctrines of a conscious Deity and the individual immortality of the soul were left open to discussion, the atheist and the materialist being listened to with as much deference as any. These doctrines were accepted, yet not on the ground of authority or tradition, but simply considered as faiths, hopes, sentiments of the spiritual being; the existence of living mind, coupled with the demand for unity, seeming to guarantee the first, the fact of individual persistency appearing to demonstrate the second. But all definition was carefully avoided, conviction being confined to the main idea, and being purely spiritual in its character, not in the least dogmatical, or exclusive of knowledge. Of doctrine in the usual sense there was none. There was merely thought. The very teaching was more of the nature of suggestion than of final conclusion. For this reason no account of the "credo" can be given, all fixed expressions of views being discountenanced as premature, and therefore irrational. This should be distinctly understood by those interested in coming at the truth on this subject. The object was to disintegrate, to pulverize, to enable mind to float freely in the air of intellect, to the end that it might crystallize about natural centres. All dogmatism, that of the infidel as well as that of the believer, of the man of science as well as of the theologian, of the sensualist as well as of the spiritualist, was obnoxious. There was no sympathy with those who regarded the case as closed, either as the anti-Christian assailant or as the apologist did; either with the school of Paine or with the school of Calvin. Hereafter there may be articles of belief, at present there can be none. This, it may be said, was a temporary, incidental position, quite indeterminate and unsatisfactory. No doubt it was. That was all it pretended to be. The sooner it disappeared and was succeeded by a more stable one, so it was reasonable, the better, for that would indicate an advance in rational judgment.

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This task—the complete emancipation of the human mind from every form of thralldom—will occupy liberal teachers for a long time to come. All that can be said in defence of instituted religion, and all that can be urged on the other side, had been put forward again and again, but in a sectarian—that is, in a partisan—spirit. Now an even temper is demanded. Unfortunately, impartiality is apt to degenerate into indifference. Breadth of view is, as a rule, inconsistent with rapidity of motion. The fact that the Free Religious Association had a small constituency as compared with many an orthodox society is no evidence whatever that the orthodox society is nearer the truth. The former was broad enough to admit all religions, the latter shut out all save the Christians, thus making them a special community saved by their belief. The problem is to preserve and, if possible, deepen intellectual enthusiasm while opposing fanatical adherence to dogmas; to associate breadth with force, to unite freedom with earnestness, and to render the love of truth more intense in proportion as the horizon recedes and ideas multiply. Such ought to be the result of free thinking, and such it is when *thinking* goes hand in hand with *freedom*.

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Critical studies must keep an even pace with philosophy, and both must conspire to push back the lines of credence as far as faith in the spiritual sentiment will permit. The latest investigations have substantiated liberal conclusions and carried them into regions which were inaccessible to the authorities of an early day. A certain amount of denial was necessary of course, but this was made in view of a larger affirmation which had to be brought forward, and was, moreover, confined to matters incidental, not directed at the substance of faith. The assumption of a spiritual nature in man guaranteed the inherent genuineness of all aspiration.

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No doubt the assumption of a creative religious nature in man lent aid to the endeavor to glorify the pagan faiths, and predisposed the mind to accept criticisms on Christianity; but scientific investigation of the world's bibles went on quite independently of this assumption. It was promoted by Catholics and Protestants, by Lutherans and Unitarians, by Germans, French, English, Americans. Certainly the alleged antiquity of a system is not in its favor; for ignorance, credulity, superstition, are much older than this; older than the ancient books, than the ancient thinkers. The oldest things are errors, delusions, falsities. The allegiance of great minds simply proves the limitations of intellect. Sir Thomas More believed in transubstantiation, and Samuel Johnson believed in ghosts. The wide reverence for the Scriptures is an impressive fact, until it is seen that no writings have been so guarded, nor have such pains been taken in regard to any other literature to create for it a

habit of docile veneration. Fidelity is praiseworthy, but it is no pledge of wisdom. On the contrary it draws attention to the merits or demerits of the creed to which it is consecrated. Is witchcraft respectable? Yet it had its martyrs. Is demoniacal possession credible? Yet saints attested it. The fury of the fighter cannot vouch for the worthiness of the cause. If it could, the narrowest credence would be the truest as the world goes, and they who adhere to the "Christian" tradition would be consigned to the darkest cells of it. The newest thing is knowledge. This never paralyzes, and never is fanatical. Its heat is stimulating yet gracious. Its zeal does not scorch or consume. It awakens every faculty, keeps inquiry on the stretch, excites the noblest ambition, and at the same time rebukes the partisan temper in all its manifestations. Its reign is beneficent; its coming is full of hope. It is ever looking forward with sanguine anticipation, and if it is at times impatient, petulant, or imperious, it is because it is fretted by stubborn obstacles that prevent the full realization of its purpose to discover the truth. For a long time to come there will be controversy, but its violence will disappear, its acrimony will gradually cease, the passion for victory will yield to the love of knowledge, and all genuine seekers will unite in the search after light.

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In the last generation the progress of intelligent examination into nature's secrets has been exceedingly rapid. During my active ministry I was hardly aware of it, for though an assailant of the popular religion, a champion of the freest thought, I was a defender of the current religious ideas; since leaving the profession, the significance of the mental revolution that is taking place, has been more fully revealed to me. The advance has approached very near to the heart of the citadel. The questions under discussion are fundamental ones, the existence of a self-conscious deity, the fact of personal continuance beyond the grave, the line of distinction between "material" and "spiritual" things. The dispute hangs on invisible threads of logic. The conservatives occupy positions which radicals of thirty years back could not assume.

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The next step in the development of free thought must be toward the realization of all the ideal supports of mankind, the spiritualizing of the secular, the lifting into heavenly places of this world's activity, the transfiguration of our common life. If by religion is understood the striving after perfection in intellectual things by the untrammelled pursuit of knowledge, in social concerns by the exercise of fraternal kindness, in the spiritual world by aspiration towards a complete surrender to natural law, every free thinker will encourage that and will do what he can to promote it. That there is no final truth discoverable must be admitted, but such a confession need not trouble those who look manfully forward to a future of new discoveries, and gird themselves to remove all obstacles to the knowledge of the world they live in.

Robert Browning in his "Paracelsus," published in 1835, anticipates the doctrine of evolution.

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Thus He dwells in all,  
From life's minute beginnings, up at last  
To man—the consummation of this scheme  
Of being—the completion of this sphere  
Of life; whose attributes had here and there  
Been scattered o'er the visible world before,  
Asking to be combined.

In 1836, Emerson in his "Nature," reiterated this grand prophecy:

A subtle chain of countless rings,  
The next unto the farthest brings,  
The eye reads omens where it goes,  
And speaks all languages, the rose;  
And striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form.

In 1867, science had gone so far that it could announce the Unity of Creation; the absolute Order and Law; one continuous Force; Progress as the end of life. The eternal beauty existed for those who had eyes to see. On this foundation the human heart, with its qualities of mercy, pity, peace, and love, its sentiments of justice and equity, its hunger for advance, its idea of goodness, built up a very noble and benignant conception of deity and the sure hope of moral perfection.

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## XI.

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### THE CLERICAL PROFESSION.

It is natural that the clerical profession should be an order by itself. Every other calling is—the lawyer's, the physician's, the artist's and the merchant's. There is an absurd notion that the clerical profession stands alone; that it has a supernatural origin, which takes it out of the circle of ordinary employments; that it is not to be compared with other institutions of society. But the real dignity of the profession consists in its filling its place among human arrangements. A certain temperament too, seems to belong to all employments. There is the legal temperament, the artistic, the dramatic, the mercantile. It is no disadvantage that one prefers solitude, likes abstract thoughts, has no taste for business enterprise, is fond of books and study. Indeed, this is an advantage for one whose office

it is to amass learning, to weigh opinions in fine scales, to follow the spiritual laws, and to peer into the mystery that surrounds human life. The very misunderstandings, illusions, superstitions that gather around the calling may be recommendations, inasmuch as they prevent the intrusion of rude minds, and draw their attention towards subjects they would not otherwise be interested in.

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A certain amount of positiveness is necessary to ensure the worth of the profession. The Catholic priest has no doubt whatever of the providential establishment of the church in which he is a servant. This must be beyond question or misgiving. This is taken for granted by clergy and laity. All learning must be made to confirm it, all observation is compelled to favor it. The laws of society must have nothing to do with the kingdom of God; for society is to be redeemed, nature is to be supplanted by grace, secular life must therefore be excluded. The priest, such is the theory, dwells out of the world, and is encouraged to do so. He is poor, celibate, homeless, has no attachments, no affections, no terrestrial occupations. He must be to all intents and purposes dead to mortal affairs. One may find fault with earthly institutions; one is bound to find fault with them, but the church must be beyond criticism and must be accepted as a gift from heaven.

The Protestant clergyman holds fast by his doctrine of faith as by divine appointment. His chief tenets must not be submitted to doubt. Whatever he may reject, there remains something he is not tempted to resign—namely, the presence of the Holy Spirit in his creed. Reason may carry the outworks—ceremonies, ordinances, incidental points of belief,—but the citadel is removed from assault. The world-spirit may hover around him, envious, expectant, watchful, applauding his boldness, cheering his progress towards negations, glad to see the gulf betwixt him and the age gradually diminishing, and pressing into every vacant position; society may claim interest in him more and more; but there are points he must not yield, and which he merely wishes to bring into prominence in surrendering others which he regards as secondary. So much may be necessary, but religion must practically take its place among the ideal pursuits of men and be exposed, as they are, to the full examination of the mind before any fair account of it can be given. And this cannot be so long as a region, however small, is shut off from investigation by supernatural powers.

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Moreover, it is the common impression that the office of the ministry is detrimental to the best interest of humanity, because it establishes another caste and thus destroys the unity that is so important in the integrity of the world. By it the priest is a person set apart, hedged about by the laws, held in peculiar reverence, habited in special garments. Some kinds of entertainments, such as dancing, the drama, are commonly forbidden to him. His presence on festive occasions used to be regarded as a gracious intrusion. He was not expected to take part in gayeties or to have any share in frivolities, which were much more hilarious when he was absent and the restraint of his presence was removed. He was thought to be somehow at war with nature, and his looking on at merrymaking was regarded by the polite as a piece of condescension on his part, an evidence of unusual liberality of sentiment. It was but the other day that a young physician, belonging to a Unitarian family, and himself an enthusiastic student of science, praised a minister for excusing his continual absence from church on the ground of his being so well employed. This was regarded as a long step in the direction of indulgence towards natural inclination. Even among rationalists, a symptom of the old idea appears in an expression of the face, the manner of address, the walk, or the general bearing. It is thought a great stretch of charity if he is kind to the atheist, the materialist, the infidel; and to take in the tempted child of nature, the drunkard, the victim of lust, avarice, is extreme good-will, benevolence amounting to saintliness. To abolish from it the pretension of superiority in the form of pity, as the high look upon the low, the good upon the bad, the moral upon the immoral, the virtuous upon the vicious, is, it is presumed, to overlook all recognized distinctions, to enthrone nature, to accept instinct as a safe guide, to renounce religion altogether and reject the saying that "the Christian church is immortal because its fundamental dogma involves a doctrine of God in nature so ample and clear as to satisfy every profoundest want of the heart and every urgent demand of the head towards God forever."

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There are distinctions enough among men at any rate, and to obliterate them as far as possible is the office of true religion and all real humanity; to increase love, to multiply the bonds of fraternity, to bring mankind to a social equality, to annihilate all that keeps mortals apart. Of course the safety of society must be preserved by laws, customs, prejudices, but care should be taken to make these simply protective in their function, and in no event should it be assumed that such distinctions, however radical, have any absolute value or go beyond the limits of this outward world. Save men, if you can, from intemperance, violence, covetousness, lasciviousness, cowardice, gluttony, laziness, from every vice that brutalizes them, renders them objects of hate, fear, suspicion, or jealousy; make their circumstances wholesome, their condition in life invigorating, but do it in the name of enlightenment, do it as members of the human brotherhood, not as members of a divine organization. Many ministers make great efforts to exorcise this demon of exclusiveness, but the effort is too severe for any but the few, and the success of it is of doubtful accomplishment.

The Christian minister is a representative of humanity, pure and simple, without recognition of its division into classes. He is neither rich nor poor, high nor low, in society nor out of it, elevated nor obscure. He is democratic, the friend of everybody, the servant of all, on terms of charity and sincerity with all men. Sectarianism, with its manifold evils of violence, malignity, hatred, misrepresentation, is a standing evidence of the harm done to society by a priesthood, whether Catholic or Protestant, and ministers who have labored to overthrow its influence as being fatal to charity have been obliged to fight against the spirit of party, and to rely more upon their natural disposition than upon their professional training. In this respect the laity have been in advance of their so-called leaders. The people have always been opposed to dogmatical exclusiveness, and have welcomed every sign of generosity towards unbelievers. They have followed their instinct of

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sympathy, they have read the New Testament by the light of their human feeling, and setting common-sense against doctrinal narrowness, have rejoiced at every victory gained over intolerance. They have been friends of brotherhood; they have adopted the cause of liberty; and I must own with grief, the foes they have had to contend with have been, in too many instances, the ministers who would not see that charity was before faith.

Everybody must have observed the unanimity and the persistency with which ministers of all denominations and of all ages have devoted themselves to the rich. In fact the devotion is so conspicuous that it is one of the commonplace criticisms on the profession. People in general assume that this kind of adulation, amounting often to toadyism, is characteristic of the clerical calling, so inseparable from it indeed that the majority of men are incredulous as to any departure from it, and look with unfeigned admiration, when there are no reasons for distrust, on the minister who knows no distinction of persons or conditions, but has regard to intellectual or spiritual considerations alone. Such a man is viewed as a wonder, an exception to all rules, singularly constituted, either extraordinarily humane or extraordinarily obtuse, either more or less than a man. The worship of wealth is so common that some explanation of it must be given. The sufferings, mishaps, troubles of the rich are reputed to be more serious than they are in the ordinary run of cases; their disappointments are more pitiable, their crosses heavier, their losses severer, their sorrows a graver imputation on Providence. They are looked on as the favorites of heaven, and the cotton-wool in which they are wrapped is spoken of as the provision that is made for them expressly by the Lord.

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This may be accounted for on grounds of material convenience. They who have money are of great importance, and that they should be interested in church affairs is of immense moment to all concerned, not to the ministers alone, but to the entire congregation, nay, to the whole community of believing men. There is always need of money, to build churches, pay officials, hire singers, furnish ornaments, support charities, maintain organizations for various ecclesiastical purposes; and it is much easier to get this in larger sums and with little trouble, than to obtain it in little dribbles, with much pain, great expenditure of time, and constant vexation of spirit. The minister, from the nature of the case, is chargeable with this concern, which obliges him to visit frequently the wealthier members of his sect. To this end he must keep on good terms with them, must sit at their tables, eat their dinners, drink their wine, praise their pictures, compliment their tastes, commend their performances, flatter their self-esteem, admire their surroundings, take their side in controversy; and all such conduct is set down by kindly, thoughtful people, to the account of prudence which is more than pardonable in one situated as he is.

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This is quite true, but it is not the whole truth. By implication already, the duty of cultivating the rich as donors involves the qualities of manhood to an indefinite extent. The line of necessary courtesy is not decisively drawn; cannot be drawn by the rules of etiquette. This must be the result of a trained experience, of a delicacy and sensitiveness, of a pride of selfhood, of a loftiness or dignity of mind that are hardly to be looked for in any large class of human beings, however free from special temptation or particular seductions that may be. The influence of luxury, ease, comfort, elegance, is very insidious, so that even an unusual zeal for truth, an extraordinary passion for excellence, yields to the power of moral indifference, of intellectual superficialness, which is characteristic of those who do not do battle with circumstances. It is so much easier to do nothing than it is to do something; it is so charming to be deferred to, to be looked up to, to be flattered, to have one's opinion sought without being involved in discussion, or vexed by opposition, or confronted with scepticism; it is so delightful to the natural man to sit in an easy cushioned chair, and be treated with delicate courtesy and dainty refinement as an authority on matters theological, philosophical, literary, instead of being put on the defensive by keen questioners who submit awkward problems for immediate solution; it is so gratifying to one's self-esteem to be received as a superior being, that ordinary human nature generally succumbs to the temptation and finds ready excuse for acquiescence in the necessity of being on good terms with one's wealthier parishioners, and so securing their all important good-will. In short, a fastidious kind of flunkeyism is engendered that is quite inconsistent with the spiritual life. The rich become a refuge as well as a resource, and the inner man is weakened while the outer man is confirmed. A species of lethargy creeps over mind and conscience. Even the moral purpose faints and languishes, and charity ceases to be athletic, as elegance of form is substituted for pith of resolution. The prophet is induced to say smooth things, to announce easy principles, to gloze over hard interpretations, to keep out of sight unwelcomed truths; and extraordinary courage is required of those who would resist this tendency to complaisance. The rich are, from the nature of the case, easily persuaded of the excellence of existing institutions, ideas, observances. I had been in the pulpit five years before I saw Henry James' remarkable lecture on "Property as a Symbol," and learned for the first time that "Property symbolizes the perfect sovereignty which man is destined to exercise over nature"; that "Property as an institution of human society expresses or grows out of this instinct of sovereignty in man. While this instinct is as yet misunderstood or unrecognized by the individual, while its full issues are as yet unimagined by him, society lends all her force to educate it under this form of an aspiration after property, or a desire to appropriate to one's self, land, houses, money, precious stones, and whatsoever else evidences one's power over nature.... Thus the moral law is nothing more or less than an affirmation of the sacredness of private property. It virtually asserts an individuality in man superior to that conferred by his nature.... Such is the temper of mind which God begets in him, to subdue the whole realm of the outward and finite to himself, to the service of his proper individuality, and so vindicate the truth of his infinite origin.... The sole ground of our sovereignty over nature is inward, consisting in a God-inspired selfhood, instinct with infinite power."

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It would be comforting to believe that a felt consciousness of this infinitude, however dim, animates the attachment of the clergyman to the opulent of any congregation; but I, for one, must make the

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confession that the fact of property was taken literally, that the ideal, symbolical character of it was concealed, that the instinct of sovereignty was unrecognized and unimaginable, and that the divine intent was unsought for, the institution being held quite sufficient to itself and needing no authentication beyond its existence. And such, I apprehend, is the prevailing view among the clergy, whose worship of it is not identical with the adoration of the Infinite.

One cannot undertake to speak with knowledge on a subject so complicated as this is with private motives, personal temperaments, social circumstances; but, as far as my memory goes, the clergy, as a class, have been too much engaged with matters ecclesiastical to be deeply interested in any cause of reform, and too timid to take the initiative in any matter involving disagreeable relations with controlling powers.

While towards the rich the attitude of the clergy is one of allegiance, towards the poor it has been one of patronage. This is a danger. "The poor ye have always with you, and whenever ye will ye can do them good," expresses their doctrine of charity. As if the poor were created in order that others might exercise beneficence; as if poverty was a providential institution, maintained in the interest of religion! It is hard in a so-called "Christian" community to get away from this view. The modern scientific theory and the "Christian" theory are thus at war; the former being intent on the well-being of society, the latter having in mind the cultivation of the individual in tenderness of sympathy; the former educating intelligence, the latter educating feeling. Still there was charity.

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The Catholic Church, to say nothing here of any ecclesiastical purpose in keeping masses of men and women out of the world, gathered those who could not help themselves into great buildings and took care of them. In the Protestant Church the care of the poor has been held to be a religious duty, and a large part of the efforts of Christian ministers is directed to the fostering of pity and generosity in the hearts of the wealthy. To give to those who had nothing was reckoned the chief of graces, and "charity"—interpreted as love for those in want—was placed above "faith" and "hope," even when money alone was given. Not long ago a Unitarian minister exhorted his congregation to set apart for the uses of the poor one tenth part of their annual income, and doubtless he had the consciences of nearly all his hearers with him, for the monstrous proposition has been so often asserted as to seem by this time a commonplace. Probably no man living does that or ever did, and the practice of it on a large scale would pauperize the community. Think of it! Five thousand dollars a year is not a great income, yet if every one who had as much bestowed a tenth part of it on charitable objects what a fund for human demoralization would be raised! And when the income is ten thousand, fifteen thousand, twenty thousand, the amount of imbecility created would be indescribable; inertia would be frightfully increased, and multitudes would sit with folded hands who otherwise would have lifted them to do some honest work. A moral lethargy would fall on the toiling masses; wealth-producing labor would shrink to narrower and narrower limits, and a paralysis of energy would steal over the will of those whose need of resolution is the sorest. Wealth would consequently decrease, and the number of the givers get smaller and smaller until accumulation, which is the life of the modern world as distinguished from the ancient, would be blighted. The industrial classes would be reduced to servitude, enormous fortunes would be gathered by fraud, speculation, cruelty, and progressive society would relapse into sterility. Fortunately the minister could not persuade people to adopt this fatal policy. Fortunately, in this particular, niggardliness went hand in hand with common-sense.

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That the churches, under the lead of the ministers, have done a vast deal in the direction of charity, so far from being denied or disputed, is cordially allowed and even maintained. Indeed, this has been their chief function, and they have discharged it with immense zeal and astonishing results.

But that it was an "ideal" profession is, as I said, a recommendation to the ministry. It is a broad foundation for spiritual-mindedness, for unworldliness. True, the habit of dealing with abstract topics, of holding commerce with purely speculative themes, of entertaining mere theories which cannot be verified, of going back to what are called "first principles," imparts a curiously vague, dreamy, impersonal, impalpable character to the minister's intellect, rendering it unfit to treat concrete questions of life or morals; for this reason he is not often successful as a man of business, a practical politician, a manager of affairs, his cast of mind disqualifying him for close consideration of details.

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The duty of answering unanswerable questions, too, of solving problems that are insoluble, of replying positively to what, from the nature of things, he cannot know, gives him a kind of ingenuity which is not genuine insight, but consists in subtle turnings, windings, in making fine distinctions and splitting hairs, and inventing ingenious interpretations, rather than in keen insight or straightforward analysis. He must seek ways of escape from his pursuers, and, when no other offers, hide in the thicket of mystery or run up the tree of faith. He must, if possible, have an explanation ready, and, if he has none, he must fall back on authority, and be impressive, addressing the sentiment of awe which is usually alive in every bosom, or, in the last resort, asseverating the truth of revelation, and thus silencing the debate he cannot continue. If neither conscience is satisfied, his own or his interlocutor's, there is no remedy save in submission. He makes no attempt to clear up his conceptions, or, if he does, ends at last in vacuity or discontent. His neighbor, unconvinced, concludes that this is a clerical subterfuge, and so far loses confidence in a profession he cannot understand. Probably he does not do it justice, but the effect is the same,—a rooted depreciation such as would not be felt towards a layman who simply said that he had no answer.

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The minister, also, is generally committed to a conception of the universe as a product of the Supreme Will which, makes him an apologist. He is, after a fashion, in the secret of God. He is supposed to deliver messages and to utter oracles. His is the wisdom of the Eternal. His is the Bible. His are the testimonies. He must follow the ways of the Spirit and defend the divine economy in the

constitution of the world. But in each case, every allowance being made for indefiniteness, for largeness of statement and broadness of exposition, the minister must be a champion of the Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, pledged to maintain it against all opponents; and however cordially he may choose that part, the consciousness of being bound may act as a fretting annoyance, not to say a galling restraint.

A singular dogmatism often accompanies this claim to speak in the name of the Almighty; the minister must enunciate truths, not deliver opinions. An authoritative tone gets into his voice, pervades his manner, affects his whole expression of face, is conveyed by his gait and walk, so that he is known at once from afar. Men hush their voices in his presence, ventilate thoughts not natural to them, conceal their actual sentiments, from a feeling that he is to be deferred to, not argued with like another man. The tone of the pulpit animates his conversation and works into the very structure of his thought. He is always a preacher. The atmosphere of Sunday hangs about him. He carries the New Testament into the parlor; unconsciously to himself he uses the language of authority, and finds to his mortification that he is angered by dispute.

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The duty of administering consolation to the afflicted adds to this visionary frame of mind. Frequent intercourse with the suffering, sad, and bereaved, intimate commerce with sick-beds and graves, besides creating ghostly dispositions, deepens his cast of thought. To comfort people under disappointments, to smooth the rugged path, to quiet the perturbed heart, is a business to discharge which all the resources of faith are called into requisition, and any means that will accomplish the end in view are considered as justifiable. In the effort to find comfortable things to say, the temptation to say pleasant things, easy things, amiable things, to present the kindly aspect of Providence, and to indulge happy fancies in regard to human allotments and destiny, is exceedingly strong; so that one may come at last to believe himself what gives so much contentment to others in the severe crises of existence. The loving heart is in perilous proximity to the thinking head. All the sweetest feelings of our nature, the wish to console people, to make them patient, trusting, resigned, cheerful, are brought in to reinforce the faith in a benignant purpose on the part of the Creator, and an unquestioning disposition is encouraged in the spiritual physician as well as in the stricken patient.

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Mr. Henry James says ("Substance and Shadow," p. 214): "Protestant men and women, those who have any official or social consequence in the church, are apt to exhibit a high-flown religious pride, a spiritual flatulence and sourness of stomach which you do not find under the Catholic administration." This is strong language, but not too strong considering the author's abhorrence of exclusiveness, separation, Pharisaism, and his identification of this with official religion.

If humility is the base of all the virtues, as it is commonly reported, then a profession that directly favors pride is not productive of the highest type of character. And if love,—kindness, brotherhood, fellowship,—is the fulfilment of the law, then a calling that puts desire in conflict with duty is not conducive to unity or peace, whether in the private mind or in the collective household. Character, as *naturally* interpreted, consists of an innate superiority to one's fellow-men in the qualities that glorify humanity, purity, heavenly-mindedness, patience, earnestness, truthfulness, sincerity. Character, as *spiritually* interpreted, consists of the cordial affiliation with one's fellow-men in the qualities that unite the atoms of humanity in love, compassion, humility, forgiveness, sympathy. But the higher view has not prevailed in my experience; let me repeat, in the most emphatic language at my command, my conviction that ministers as a body do not succumb to the temptations thus apparently incident to their profession.

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It is commonly supposed that the intellectual part of the minister's labor—the making of the sermons—is most severe. It is imagined that the task of addressing the same audience every Sunday must be exceedingly arduous. This is a mistake. There is a facility of work in every profession. The mind becomes accustomed to running in certain grooves, to going through the same process of thinking, to applying the same rules to many details of practice. The longer one's continuance in the ministry, the easier this becomes. Experience accumulates. Themes multiply. Novel suggestions occur. New thoughts arise. Fresh books are written. Singular questions are proposed. Problems present fresh aspects. The old interests remain in all their force. Men never tire hearing about God, Immortality, Destiny. In truth, the intellectual difficulties become less and less appalling until at last they disappear. The real effort is to keep alive the feelings of humanity; to overcome the inclination towards separation into classes; to avoid distinguishing between persons; to keep love glowing; to maintain the supremacy of soul; to identify spirituality with custom. The preaching is subordinate not to the private practice alone, but to the religious attitude towards mankind, which is conditioned on charity and the recognition of human worth and sonship. The most beautiful trait in the pastor is his universality, his simple, unaffected manhood.

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But enough of criticism. It is a privilege to belong to a profession occupied with things ethereal; to be interested in the grandest themes; to hold intercourse with the loftiest minds; to live aloof from the world; to put the happiest constructions on the events of human life; to interpret Providence beneficently. And it is my firm persuasion that in proportion as the profession throws off the thralldom of ecclesiasticism and dogmatism, it increases in power and is sure to recover its ancient superiority.

## MY TEACHERS.

Among Englishmen, I owe the most to James Martineau, at the time of my ordination (1847), a Unitarian clergyman in Liverpool. His lectures in the Unitarian controversy (1839) on "Christianity without Priest and without Ritual," on "The Christian View of Moral Evil," on "The Bible: What It Is and What It is Not"; his articles on "Distinctive Types of Christianity," on "Creeds and Heresies of Early Christianity," on "The Ethics of Christendom," on "The Creed of Christendom," on "St. Paul and His Modern Students," made a profound impression on my mind. One passage in particular, at the close of the essay on "The Ethics of Christendom," still lingers in my memory:

The old antagonism between the world that now is and any other that has been or is to come, has been modified, or has entirely ceased.... *Here* is the spot, *now* is the time for the most devoted service of God. No strains of heaven will wake man into prayer, if the common music of humanity stirs him not. The saintly company of spirits will throng around him in vain if he finds no angels of duty and affection in his children, neighbors, and friends. If no heavenly voices wander around him in the present, the future will be but the dumb change of the shadow on the dial. In short, higher stages of existence are not the refuge of this, but the complement to it; and it is the proper wisdom of the affections not to escape the one in order to seek the other, but to flow forth in purifying copiousness on both.

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Martineau's intellectual fidelity, accurate learning, earnestness of feeling, were exceedingly fascinating.

In this country Ralph Waldo Emerson was the great teacher. He gave an atmosphere rather than a dogma. He was air and light. He is best described, not as a philosopher, a man of letters, a poet, but as a seer. His gift was that of insight. This he tried to render comprehensive, searching, intelligent, accurate, by reading, study, meditation, the acquaintance of distinguished men; but he was never beguiled into thinking that learning, eloquence, wit, constituted his peculiarity. He had a penetrating, eager, questioning look. His head was thrust out as if in quest of knowledge. His gaze was steady and intense. His speech was laconic and to the purpose. His direct manner suggested a wish for closer acquaintance with the mind. His very courtesy, which was invariable and exquisite in its way, had an air of inquiry about it. There was no varnish, no studied grace of motion or demeanor, no manifest desire to please, but a kind of wistfulness as of one who took you at your best and wanted to draw it out. He accosted the soul, and with the winning persuasiveness which befits friendliness on human terms. There was a certain shyness which indicated the modesty which is born of the spirit.

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But a commanding doer he certainly was not; that is, he was no man of expedients, of practical resources, of merely executive will. He appreciated this kind of ability, as his lecture on Napoleon shows, but he possessed little of it, his Yankee ingenuity being more confined in its range. The moral courage belonged to him, the earnestness, the faith, but his ethereal qualities lacked driving force. His principles made him interested in every movement of reform, for he had a boundless hope which led him sometimes into extravagant anticipations of truth and benefit. Every sign of life, intellectual, moral, spiritual, caught his eye, and so long as it promised new developments of power his eager sympathy went with it, but when the creative period ceased he turned away. He early enlisted in the anti-slavery cause, not because he had entire confidence in the negro, or specially liked the abolitionists, but because he demanded the utmost liberty for all men in order that substantial advantages might be widely shared; but he was not prominent among the workers of that reform. His name stood foremost in the list of those who claimed the emancipation of woman from social or political disability, not that he was a worker in the woman's-rights phalanx, not that he looked for any immediate benefit from that agitation, or felt any particular interest in the leaders or in the success of that individual crusade, but that he was in favor of the largest opportunity for all human beings, and wished every particle of power to be used. From the first he welcomed the Free Religious Association as giving promise of original light, greater breadth, fresh vigor, new revelations of knowledge in that most ideal, but most deplorably limited, of all spheres; but when in his view that promise was unfulfilled, though his name still stood with those of its vice-presidents, he ceased to take any part in its proceedings or to feel any personal concern in its affairs. There was something theoretical, speculative, in his attitude as a reformer. His philosophy pledged him to the utmost individualism, and this called for the utmost liberty, that each might receive all he could of the divine fulness and be as much as his nature required. Hence his own limited expectation; hence his enthusiasm in behalf of individuals like Walt Whitman, John Brown, Henry Thoreau; hence the light that came into his eyes when he sat in some reform convention where high thoughts were spoken. His word was given, and it was always inspiring, emancipating, uplifting, heard in the valleys from the dizziest heights of vision; but force was not his to give. Such words were more than "half battles," to be sure, so invigorating were they to all the champions of good causes, but they were *words* still, and seemed to proceed from some upper region of impersonal mind. They expressed convictions, feelings, desires, but there was lack of blood in them. They seemed made of air; there was soul behind them, but not as much body as many wished. In a word, all the ideal elements were present. He was a man who believed, felt, hoped, had vast resources of faith, but was a thinker more than an actor. Thinking is indeed doing, yet not in the same sphere of achievement.

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Emerson recognized the limitations of genius. "Life is a scale of degrees," he says in the lecture on the "Uses of Great Men."



Between rank and rank of our great men are wide intervals. Mankind have in all ages attached themselves to a few persons who, either by the quality of that idea they embodied, or by the largeness of their reception, were entitled to the position of leaders and lawgivers.... With each new mind a new secret of nature transpires; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born.... We cloy of the honey of each peculiar greatness. Every hero becomes a bore at last.... We balance one man with his opposite, and the health of the state depends on the see-saw.

Emerson looks forward to the time when all souls shall lie open to the heavenly influx, and he regards greatness as an earnest of that possibility. What disappointments he must have felt as he was forced to turn away from people who should have been saints and heroes, but were none! What bitter moments he must have known when he stretched out his arms to welcome a goddess and embraced only a cloud! But his expectations continued eager; no feature betrayed evidence that these practical refutations of his theory had effect on his heart.

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Whether Emerson's constant belief in the Over-soul, his stubborn theism, his persuasion of an immanent God, was an advantage or a disadvantage to his philosophical view of the universe may be doubted. On the one hand, we cannot question the fact that he owed to it his enthusiastic faith in the substantial unity of creation, his optimism, his assurance of future progress, his confidence in man, his moral earnestness, his elevation of soul, his buoyancy of spirit, his forwardness in all endeavors after reform. On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that it led him to take some things for granted, diverted his mind from the unprejudiced observation of phenomena, prevented his rendering full justice to the scientific method, was the cause of wide aberrations in his estimates of human character, and of a curious onesidedness in his judgments on human condition.

Emerson was always profoundly religious, at heart a supernaturalist. The blood of centuries of pious ancestors was in his veins. His soul was uppermost, not his intellect nor his heart. He was a closet man, a minister at the altar. True, he rejected every form of the religious sentiment, and moved with entire freedom among dogmas however expressed in word or in rite. Every attempt at giving voice to spiritual emotion was disagreeable to him.

I like a church; I like a cowl;  
I like a prophet of the soul;  
And on my heart monastic aisles  
Fall like sweet strains or pensive smiles;  
Yet not for all his faith can see  
Would I that cowed churchman be.

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Theology had fallen from him like a shroud. He would not venture any definition of the spiritual laws. Doctrine had become faith; prayer was changed into aspiration; the speechless utterance was the only one he cordially listened to. But faith he held fast; aspiration he cherished; the inarticulate language of the eternal was ever in his ears.

Ever and anon would come a burst of conviction. "Oh, my brothers, God exists!" he cries in an ecstasy of emotion. Some years ago Emerson seemed fascinated by the inductive method, so that some of his admirers thought he would become a convert to physical science. But the bent of his nature asserted itself, and he pursued the deductive system as before. His passion for "First Truths," as they were called, was irresistible. He could not abandon the philosophy of intuition, and all his studies—comprehensive, profound, and original as they were,—his insatiable thirst for knowledge, his inordinate appetite for details of fact, incidents, anecdotes, gleanings from literature of every kind, were subservient to this.

Emerson's serenity is often spoken of as evidence of the power of his religious faith. It may allow of this construction, but it may be accounted for on other and different grounds which lie nearer at hand and proceed immediately from more obvious sources. How far may a long ancestral experience in devout meditations, practices, longings, worked into the system and producing a sedate, calm, interior temperament, go in explaining that almost imperturbable tranquillity? The piety of his forefathers was so genuine that it drove him from the church of his adoption, and rendered another calling sacred. Their descendant exhibited the same saintliness which they possessed but in a different fashion. And he was probably saintlier than they were, because he was their child. His brothers had the same characteristic of equanimity by virtue of the same parentage. His brother William, whom I knew intimately in New York, showed in his daily life a similar dignity, and tradition reports the same of Charles. It was the perfect fruitage of centuries of heavenly-minded men, not the peculiarity of an individual soul.

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This predisposition to inwardness was favored by the long seclusion of Concord, which kept Emerson aloof from the world and prevented the friction which is so damaging to serenity. He saw those only who respected, loved, honored, and revered him. He came into collision with none. Men of thought, unambitious men, students, farmers, were his fellow-townsmen. Several hours in each day he was alone with his books or his mind. When he visited the city it was for an intellectual or social purpose, as one who had dropped from a star and was soon to vanish. His contact was with men of letters, clergymen, publishers, friends, gentlemen interested in mental pursuits who had left their business in order to disport themselves in the fields of thought. These added to his stores of wisdom, and sent him home replenished rather than drained. The gains of his day were not dissipated either by business occupation or pleasure.

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Then, whether from disposition or philosophy we cannot tell, this man avoided everything dark, evil,

unwholesome, unpleasant. Sickness of all kinds, complaint, depression, melancholy, was an abomination to him. He turned away from ugly sights and sounds, thus evading conflict. He never argued, never discussed, but said his word as well as he could, and encouraged others to say theirs, in this way hoping to get at the truth. By this course he escaped the usual provocations to ill-temper, and was forced upon an undisturbed equipoise of mind. Nothing helps serenity so much as avoidance of contest, and when one can thoroughly convince himself that there is no rooted evil in the world to be fought against, an even condition of soul is not hard to maintain; optimism is proverbially cheerful, but an optimism that is grounded in principle must be unconquerable by any force that circumstances can bring against it.

It must be remembered that Emerson was not a man of warm temperament, not tropical in color or in heat; more like the morning, cool and breezy, than like the sultry noon-day, or the glowing evening; more like the dewy spring, than the effulgent summer or the fruit-bearing autumn; not a child of the sun, rather suggesting the still, white, imaginative moonlight. There was an air of remoteness about him. His remark to the inn-keeper,—“heat me red-hot,” tells the story. Simple habits kept his frame wiry, and a New England nurture saved his mind from luxuriant uncleanness. By nature he was passionless. The beautiful “Threnody” on the death of his boy, reveals the sorrow of a soaring mind rather than the grief of a crushed heart. To command one’s self enough for such an effort evinces a rare power of rising above mortal conditions. Such a constitution finds solitude congenial and is calm by force of inclination. Friendship seems an emotion better suited than love to that ethereal soul, which was always radiant but seldom burning, benignant, seldom craving, always gracious in imparting, seldom hungry for receiving. One might walk in his illumination, but one could hardly bask in his heat, or lie on his bosom, or nestle near his heart. They that knew him at home may speak more warmly of him, but thus he appeared to people outside; thus he appeared to many who had admired him as I did and tried to get close to him.

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The love of wild, untrimmed nature, the want of interest in cultivated gardens, was part of his theory of the universe as the expression of God; the richer, the less it was interfered with. He would approach as near to the Creator as possible, listening for the divine voice, which was most clearly heard in the wilderness. To the same source must be ascribed his partiality for wild, untrained men, —foresters, hunters, pioneers, trappers, back-woodsmen. He sought everywhere after originality, freshness, power, in individuals and in groups. He hailed a genius, however rough. Unconventionality excited his enthusiasm to such a degree that he could scarcely contain himself, but said the most extravagant things in the ecstasy of his hope. Men of polished outside he did not care for; mechanical men, however successful, politicians, however popular and adroit, were his aversion. Accomplishments, however great, scholarship however finished, he did not respect. He wanted the rough, uncut gem. Genius of whatever description, in whatever class, whatever its order or grade, was his joy. In him the love of truth predominated. He submitted to the inconvenience of imperfect opinion, but respected the highest law of his being. He believed in the eternal laws of mind, in the self-existence of right, in purity, veracity, goodness. He was one of the most honest of men, one of the cleanest, and he did his utmost to bring his life into correspondence with his best thought. That all created things must be imperfect was part of his creed; that this imperfection ran through human character he was as much convinced as any man; and his efforts were unceasing to turn men’s eyes towards the beauty “ancient but ever new,” which he in his moments of insight beheld. No one lives up to his most exalted faith. No one ever endeavored to do so more sincerely and humbly than Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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In my early ministry, the discourses of Dr. Orville Dewey on “Human Nature,” “Human Life,” “The Nature of Religion,” seemed all-sufficing. I read them over and over again with increasing admiration, and his solutions of spiritual problems were accepted as final.

Miss Mary Dewey, in the admirable memoir of her father, lays great stress on his affectionate qualities. These cannot be too emphatically asserted; yet they probably had more scope than even she suspected. Indeed, unless I am much mistaken, they formed the basis of his character. He was a most deep-feeling man. He loved his friends in and out of the profession, with a loyal, hearty, obliging, warm, and even tender emotion, expressing itself in word and deed. It was overflowing, not in any sentimental manner, but in a manly, sincere way. He was a man of infinite good-will, of a quite boundless kindness. His voice, his expression of face, his smile, the grasp of his hand,—all gave sign of it. He felt things keenly; his sensibilities were most acute; even his thoughts were suffused with emotion. He could not discuss speculative themes as if they were cold or dry. Nothing was arid to his mind. In prayer it was not unusual for his audience to discern tears rolling down his cheeks. One day, in his study, on speaking about the intellectual implications of the “Philosophie Positive,” he dropped his head and seemed for a moment lost in reverie largely made up of devotion. In him, heart was uppermost; intellect, conscience, were of subordinate value when taken alone; in fact, they were incomplete by themselves, and wanted their proper substance. He said once that his skin was so delicate that the least soil on his hands was felt all through his system and prevented him from working. This excessive sensibility, which could not be understood by the world at large, was at the bottom of his likes and dislikes, of his personal fears and hopes. Excitement drained off his strength. He exhausted himself physically, and fell into ill-health by exertions that would not have taxed an ordinary constitution. It cost him a great deal to write sermons, to visit the sick or sorrowing, to conduct public services. At the same time, he was disqualified, by a certain want of steel in his blood, for any but the clerical profession, where qualities like his are of inestimable value, and of the rarest kind. He was a minister from the beginning, always profoundly interested in questions of the interior life, and though he early left the orthodox communion and became a preacher of Unitarian Christianity, making it his work to apply religious ideas to all the concerns of the natural world and the secular life, he retained all the fervor of spirit that characterized the most devout believer. A vein

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of passionate feeling ran through all his discourses, and while his themes were taken from daily existence, his thoughts were fixed on eternity. He was absorbed in the destiny of the human soul, of the *individual* soul, bringing all discussions to that point, and trying to make lasting impressions on the spiritual natures of men and women.

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When I first knew him he had the reputation of being a self-indulgent man. This was a great mistake. His way of life was exceedingly simple, and his habits were almost abstemious. In fact, neither his physical nor his mental constitution allowed of any indulgence in eating or drinking. Still the impression was a natural one, for a certain amount of ease, exemption from care, gayety, was necessary to him. The society of elegant, accomplished people was indispensable to his recreation and rest. His motive for seeking such was not the love of luxury so much as a demand for recreation and a craving for repose. He was not, in any sense, an earthy man or one who loved sensual delights. On the contrary, he was always mindful of his calling, always intent on high subjects, always ready to lead intercourse upwards, always, to the extent of his power, interested in the moral aspect of current discussions; over-anxious, if anything, to approach speculative themes. He possessed an eager, unresting, questioning mind. He was always thinking, and on great subjects of theology or philosophy, and he put into them an amount of feeling that is extraordinary with intellectual men.

That he should have been so sensitive as he was to the words and suspicions of anti-slavery men who charged him with being an advocate of a fugitive-slave law, an apologist for slavery, a ready tool of the inhuman, reactionary party of the country, is not surprising. His dread of pain, his hatred of falsehood, his horror of injustice, his love of fair play, will sufficiently account for this; while the impossibility of explaining himself kept the wound open. That for thirty years the sore should have bled, shows the delicacy of his temperament and the shrinking nature of his will. To speak of him as a friend of slavery is absurd. No one can read his sermon on "The Slavery Question," preached shortly after the annexation of Texas and at a moment of great excitement at the North in regard to the advances of the slave-power, and not perceive that he was deeply moved.

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"*Are these people MEN?*" he said; "that is the question. If they are *men*, it will not do to make them instruments for mere convenience,—for the mere tillage of the soil;—if they are *men*, it is not enough to say that they have a sort of animal freedom from care, and joyance of spirits. If they are *men*, they are to be cultivated; their faculties are to be regarded as precious; they are to be improved.... If he is a *man*, then he is not only improvable and ought to be improved, but he *will improve* in spite of all we can do." And a great deal more to the same effect. He indignantly protested against treating "an intelligent creature, a fellow-being, a brother-man, a being capable of indefinite expansion and immortal progress," as one would treat a tree, a flower, an ox, or a horse. "Grant that the African of the present generation cannot be raised to our stature; yet if in the course of ages he may be, and if it is our policy systematically to arrest or to retard his growth, does the case materially differ from what I have supposed?" Namely that of a child. Dr. Dewey visited slave-States and talked with slaveholders in order to make himself fully acquainted with the condition of opinion and of feeling about the case, and he took occasion everywhere to argue the Northern side. This ought to be enough in the way of vindication of his personal sentiments.

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At the same time, he was a Unionist of the Webster school. His attachment to the Union was intense. Disunion in his judgment meant ceaseless discord, the end of republican institutions, the arrest of civilization, the indefinite postponement of progress, the hopelessness of education and uplifting for the slave, the withdrawal of Northern influence, the final overthrow of government by moral powers. A long reign of anarchy, in the course of which the lovers of the race must see their visions of good disappear, would supervene, and this he could not contemplate with equanimity.

Then he was an old-fashioned enemy of war, especially of civil war. He was a sincere lover of peace, and a believer in the arts of peace, in industry, education, the diffusion of intelligence, the weaving of the ties of fraternity; and though he acknowledged the heroic mission of strife, he recoiled instinctively from it. War, in his estimation, was an inevitable necessity in the order of the world, but it was an awful element in the "world problem"; "a fearful scourge," a condition to be outgrown along with vice, passion, injustice, selfishness, ambition, a sign that is destined to disappear as intelligence and Christianity come in. It must be submitted to as an ordination of Providence, but it should never be precipitated by men, least of all should it be brought on hastily, by unreasonableness, malignity, or hate. The evils of war were precisely such as appealed most directly to his imagination; they were so personal, they were so domestic, they were so pitiable, they were so full of tears. He shrank from violence, from rage, from party ambition, from curses and cries. He loved his countrymen, and, so long as any reason remained, he could not bear to think of fighting. So long as any oil was left in the can, the troubled waters were not to be abandoned by the peace-makers. It was much for him to have patience with those who used angry words, even in a cause of righteousness. He, for his part, could not scold or overstate, or do anything in a harsh temper.

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Dr. Dewey believed in colonization; not necessarily in Africa, but in a separation between the white and black races, in the civilization of the negro. In the tenth lecture of the course on "The Problem of Human Destiny" (1864), he takes occasion to welcome "the great hope" that thus was opened "for purging our American soil from the stain of slavery. Many of us have long been asking how this is to be done. Look at Africa, surrounded by a wall of darkness, and filled with cruelty and blood, with no civilizing influence in herself, as the story of ages has proved; what now do we see? Britain sends to her borders the man-stealer, to tear her children from her bosom and transport them to the American colonies. It was a deed of unmingled atrocity, compared with which capture in war was generous and honorable; the African King of Dahomey grows white by the side of the Saxon slave-trader. But what follows? The African people in this country improve, and are now far advanced beyond their kindred at home. And now they begin to return; they are building a state on their native

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borders which promises to stop the slave trade with Africa and to spread light and civilization through her dark solitudes." At the close of his discourse on the slavery question, he said:

If I were to propose a plan to meet the duties and perils of this tremendous emergency that presses upon us, I would engage the whole power of this nation, the willing co-operation of the North and the South, if it were possible, to prepare this people for freedom; and then I would give them a country beyond the mountains,—say the Californias,—where they might be a nation by themselves. Ah! if the millions upon millions spent upon a Mexican war could be devoted to this purpose,—if all the energies of this country could be employed for such an end,—what a noble spectacle were it for all the world to behold, of help and redemption to an enslaved people! What a purifying and ennobling ministrations for ourselves!

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The intimacy with Dr. Charming re-inforced the conclusions which were native to Dr. Dewey's temperament. The moderate view, the dread of overstatement, the fear of fanaticism, the faith in reason, the love of tranquillity, the desire after truth, were rooted in his mind. His constitutional conservatism was confirmed. Then he was a Unitarian, and therefore rational in his methods, inclined to judge by arguments, to sift opinions by the understanding. The abolitionists were, for the most part, either Calvinists or transcendentalists, people who followed an inward voice, who placed interior conviction before ratiocination, and encouraged moral sentiment to take the lead in action, blowing coals into a flame, and not content unless they saw a blaze. The Unitarians, as a class, were not ardent disciples of any moral cause, and took pride in being reasoners, believers in education, and in general social influence, in the progress of knowledge, and the uplifting of humanity by means of ideas. The habit of discountenancing passion may have been fostered in a school like this. Perhaps if young Dewey had continued in his old belief he would have been a more vehement reformer than he was. His natural glow was softened down into a mild effulgence, communicating warmth to his convictions, but not producing a burning zeal for any substance of doctrine.

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His power of emotion made him a powerful preacher but prevented his being a great philosopher. Dr. Bellows, who was his close friend for many years, described him as a man of "massive intellectual power," and then went on to impute to him the gifts that belong to the pulpit orator: "poetic imagination," a "rare dramatic faculty of representation." Perhaps by "massive" Dr. Bellows meant the power to throw thoughts in a mass, with cumulative effect. This power Dr. Dewey certainly possessed in an extraordinary degree. But of philosophical talent he had little. Indeed, he seemed to be conscious of this himself. At the end of his first lecture before the Lowell Institute he said:

I am not sorry that the place and occasion require me to make this a popular theme. I am not to speak for philosophers, but for the people. I wish to meet the questions which arise in all minds that have awaked to any degree of reflection upon their nature and being, and upon the collective being of their race. I have hoped that I should escape the charge of presumption by the humbleness of my attempt—the attempt, that is to say, to popularize a theme which has hitherto been the domain of scholars.

The lecture assumes the existence of a Personal God, the reality of a conscious soul, the freedom of the human will, the fact of a moral purpose in creation, the perfectibility of man, the idea of progress, the evidence of design in the universe attesting a divine intelligence. The treatment nowhere shows metaphysical acumen or speculative insight. On every page is brilliancy, eloquence, skilful manipulation of arguments, fervent appeal to conscience. Nowhere is subtlety or depth of intuition. Take for example the discourse on "The Problem of Evil," the most intellectually exacting of all subjects. It ends thus after a series of pictures:

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Give me freedom, give me knowledge, give me breadth of experience; I would have it all. No memory is so hallowed, no memory is so dear, as that of temptation nobly withstood, or of suffering nobly endured. What is it that we gather and garner up from the solemn story of the world, like its struggles, its sorrows, its martyrdoms? Come to the great battle, thou wrestling, glorious, marred nature! strong nature! weak nature! Come to the great battle, and in this mortal strife strike for immortal victory! The highest Son of God, the best beloved of Heaven that ever stood upon earth, was "made perfect through suffering." And sweeter shall be the cup of immortal joy, for that it once was dashed with bitter drops of pain and sorrow; and brighter shall roll the everlasting ages, for the dark shadows that clouded the birth-time of our being.

This is not argument, but preaching—very fine, stimulating, powerful preaching, but preaching nevertheless; quite different from James Martineau's treatment of the same theme, in the course of the Liverpool lectures (delivered in 1839). Mr. Martineau, too, addressed a popular assembly, and closed his discourse in a strain of exhortation. Still, the grave tone of the previous discussion sobered the rhetoric, and the background of the ancient debate made the moral lessons solemn. Philosophy yielded to the necessities of ethics, much as the "Kritik der Reinen Vernunft" gave place to the "Kritik der Practischen Vernunft" of Kant—the preacher and the reasoner standing indeed on different ground, but the moral instruction being tempered by the philosophical.

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Orville Dewey was a great preacher, perhaps the greatest that the Unitarian communion has produced; greater as a preacher than Dr. Channing, because more various and more sympathetic, nearer to the popular heart, less inspired by grand ideas, and for that reason more moving. He was imbued with Channing's fundamental thought—the "Dignity of Human Nature,"—and illustrated it with a wealth of imagination, enforced it by an urgency of appeal, quickened it by an affluence of

dramatic representation all his own. His function was to apply this doctrine to every incident of life, to politics, business, art, literature, society, amusement, and he did this with a boldness, a freedom, a frankness unusual at any time, but without example when he was in the ministry. I shall never forget, in one of his sermons, an allusion to a symphony of Beethoven which gave me a new conception of the essential humanity of the pulpit's office, of the close association that there was between religion and art. His conversational style, impassioned but not stilted and never turgid, was exceedingly impressive, while his constant employment of the forms of reasoning added weight to his sentences. The discourse was plain, and yet from its copiousness it was ornate; and the affectionate tone assumed an air of grave remonstrance which was deepened in effect by the appearance of formal logic. The hearer seemed to be admitted to the secrets of a living, earnest mind, and to be listening to something more than the usual enunciations of ethical principle. At the same time his own will was consulted, he was taken into partnership with the orator and introduced to the processes of conviction. His state of feeling was considered, his objections were met, his scruples answered, his arguments confronted. He was, in short, treated like a rational being, to be reasoned with, not to be looked down upon.

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Dr. Dewey was always a friend of liberal thought. There are no more significant pages in his daughter's memoir of him than those which contain his correspondence with Mr. Chadwick, one of the most radical of Unitarian divines. He was himself a student of divinity at Andover, early converted to Unitarianism, became an assistant and warm friend of Dr. Channing, but instead of remaining stationary in dogmatic faith, took a rational view of all religious questions, favored the largest liberality, and welcomed every effort to adapt spiritual ideas to actual knowledge. He had no dogmatic prepossessions, and no professional fears. What he asked for was sincerity coupled with earnestness. This being given, conclusions, within certain limits, of course, were of little moment. Theodore Parker used to sadden and irritate him, but less on account of his opinions than on account of his pugnacious manner in expressing them. Parker rather despised him for what he regarded as his time-serving disposition, and could not understand his mental delicacy; but men who thought as Parker did were even then on the best terms with Dr. Dewey, whose mellowness, on the whole, increased instead of diminishing with age, and was greatest in his declining years.

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He was a man fond of personalities; even in his addresses on the greatest themes, he would if possible narrow the subject down to the measure of individual application. Thus when lecturing on "The Problem of Evil," after submitting various considerations, he adds:

Broad and vast and immense as that problem may appear, it is after all, in actual experience, purely individual.... The truth is, nobody has experienced more of it than you or I have, or might have, experienced. With regard to all the intrinsic difficulties of the case, it is as if one life had been lived in the world; and since no man has lived another's life, or any life but his own, there *has been* to actual individual consciousness *but one life* of thirty, seventy, or a hundred years lived on earth. The problem really comes within that compass.... If I can solve the problem of existence for myself, I have solved it for everybody; I have solved it for the human race.... Do you and I find anything in this our life that makes us prize it, anything that makes us feel that we had rather have it than have it not? Doubtless we do and other men do; all men do.

This passage illustrates well the tendency to personal reference that distinguished the man. In a discourse on war delivered before the Peace Society he resolves its miseries into those of the individual, as if mass—affecting, as it does, nations, civilizations, humanity itself—counted for nothing. This tendency explains his fondness for his friends, his strength of sympathy, his tenacity of attachment, his love for people. It does not betoken a broad, deep, philosophic mind, but it does betoken a warm, clinging, affectionate nature.

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It made him too a charming feature in society, a delightful talker, an easy, graceful, delectable companion, an interested adviser and counsellor, a beloved person in his family, an excellent townsman.

We should be grateful for this, that one has lived to irradiate a somewhat sad profession, to warm the bleak spaces of mortal existence, to throw a gleam of gladness upon the sunless problems of human destiny. It is a great deal to be assured that a living heart has walked with us, and that a living voice has proclaimed the heart-side of man's lot.

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### XIII.

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## MY COMPANIONS.

These were many, but most of them are living and cannot, therefore, be spoken of. There is an advantage in writing about the dead, for they cannot protest against the handsome things you say, and they cannot remonstrate against the unhandsome things. I shall on this account choose but two, with whom I was very intimate, and who are very near to my heart. I shall give sketches of John Weiss and Samuel Johnson, and first of John Weiss.<sup>[B]</sup>

This man was a flame of fire. He was genius unalloyed by terrestrial considerations; a spirit lamp always burning. He had an overflow of nervous vitality, an excess of spiritual life that could not find vents enough for its discharge. As his figure comes before me it seems that of one who is more than half transfigured. His large head; his ample brow; his great, dark eyes; his "sable-silvered" beard and full moustache; his gray hair, thick and close on top, with the strange line of black beneath it, like a fillet of jet; his thin, piping, penetrating, tenuous voice, that trembled as it conveyed the torrent of thought; the rapid, sudden manner, suggesting sometimes the lark and sometimes the eagle; the small but sinewy body; the delicate hands and feet; the sensitive touch, feeling impalpable vibrations and detecting movements of intelligence within the folds of organization (they say he could tell the character of a great writer by holding a sealed letter from his hand),—all indicated a half-disembodied soul. His spoken addresses and written discourses confirm the impression.

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I first met him at the meetings of the "Hook-and-Ladder,"<sup>[C]</sup> a ministerial club of which we both were members. At the house of Thomas Starr King, in Boston, he read a sermon on the supremacy of the spiritual element in character, which impressed me as few pulpit utterances ever did, so fine was it, so subtle, yet so massive in conviction. Illustrations that he used stay by me now, after the lapse of more than forty years. I next heard him in New Bedford, at the installation of Charles Lowe, when, in ill-health and feeble, he gave, in substance, the discourse on Materialism, afterwards published in the volume on "Immortal Life." It struck me then as exceedingly able; and it derived force from the intense earnestness of its delivery, as by one who could look into the invisible world, and could speak no light word or consult transient effects. Many years later, I listened, in New York, to his lectures on Greek ideas, the keenest interpretation of the ancient myths, the most profound, luminous, sympathetic, I have met with. He had the faculty of reading between the lines, of apprehending the hidden meaning, of setting the old stories in the light of universal ideas, of lighting up allusions. The lecture on Prometheus I remember as especially radiant and inspiring; but they were all remarkable for positive suggestions of a very noble kind.

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[C] We copy from a private letter the following account of the origin of this club and of its grotesque name, which has lost, alas! its significance to the younger generation. "In the year 1844 (I think it was) a few of us young ministers formed a club, including Charles Brigham, Edward Hale, John Weiss, with one or two elders, as Dr. Hedge and, later, O. B. Frothingham, Starr King, W. R. Alger, William B. Greene, and others. We went long without a name, in spite of my urgent appeals as Secretary, till one fine day, at George R. Russell's house in West Roxbury, in an after-dinner frolic, Weiss turned the garden-engine hose upon a fellow-member and drenched him from head to foot; upon which escapade it was unanimously agreed to call ourselves the 'Hook-and-Ladder,' by which name the memory of it is fondly kept among us to this day. A similar older fraternity had gone by the name of the 'Railroad Association,' and, in imitation, when it was proposed to borrow a title from some like line of industry we, on this sudden whim, chose the fire-department."

His genius was eminently religious. Not, indeed, in any customary fashion, nor after any usual way. He belonged to the Rationalists, was a Protestant of an extreme type, an avowed adherent of the most "advanced" views, a speaker on the Free Religious platform, a writer for the *Massachusetts Quarterly*, and for the *Radical*. His was a purely natural, scientific, spiritual faith, unorthodox to the last degree,—logically, historically, critically, sentimentally so,—so on principle and with fixed purpose. The accepted theory of religion excited his indignation, his scorn, his amazement, and his mirth. He could brook no dogmatic limitations, even of the most liberal sect, but went on and on, past all barriers, facing all adversaries, confronting every difficulty, and resting only when there was nothing more to discover. He had an agonized impatience to know whatever was to be known, to get at the ultimate data of assurance. Nothing less would satisfy him. His cup of joy was not full till he could touch the bottom. Then it overflowed, and there was glee as of a strong swimmer who is sure of his tide. His exultation is almost painful, as he welcomes fact after fact, feeling more and more positive, with each new demonstration of science, that the advent of certainty was by so much nearer. Evidence that to most minds seemed fatal to belief was, in his sight, confirmatory of it, as rendering its need more clear and more imperious. "We need be afraid of nothing in heaven or earth, whether dreamt of or not in our philosophy." "The position of theistic naturalism entitles it not to be afraid of all the scientific facts that can be produced." "There is dignity in dust that reaches any form, because it eventually betrays a forming power, and ceases to be dust by sharing it." "It is a wonder to me that scholars and clergymen are so skittish about scientific facts." "We owe a debt to the scientific man who can show how many moral customs result from local and ethnic experiences, and how the conscience is everywhere capable of inheritance and education. He cannot bring us too many facts of this description, because we have one fact too much for him; namely, a latent tendency of conscience to repudiate inheritance and every experience of utility, to fly in its face with a forecast of a transcendental utility that supplies the world with its redeemers, and continually drags it out of the snug and accurate adjustment of selfishness to which it arrives." There is a great deal to the same purpose. In fact, Mr. Weiss cannot say enough on this head. He accepts the doctrine of evolution in its whole length and breadth. "Of what consequence is it whence the living matter is derived? We are not appalled at the possibility that organic matter may be made out of non-living, or, more properly, inorganic matter. We are nerved for such a result, whether it occur in the laboratory or in nature, by the conviction that the spiritual functions are no more imperilled by using matter in any way, than that the Creator hazarded his existence by originating matter in some way to be used by himself and by us." "Science does me this inestimable benefit of providing a universe to support my personal identity, my moral sense, and my feeling that these two functions of mind cannot be killed. Its denials, no less than its affirmations, set free all the facts I need to make my body an expression of mental independence. Hand-in-hand with science I go, by the steps of development

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back to the dawn of creation; and, when there, we review all the forces and their combinations that have helped us to arrive, and both of us together break into a confession of a force of forces."

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This cordial sympathy with science, this absence of all savor of a polemical spirit, this hearty welcoming of every fact of anatomy and chemistry, is very noble and inspiring. It is very wise, too, though the noble, hearty side was alone attractive to him. He had in view no other, being a single-minded lover of truth. But, nevertheless, he could not have adopted a more politic course. For thus he propitiated the scepticism of the age, struck in with the prevailing current, disarmed opposition, and erected his own principles on the eminence which scientific men have raised and which they cannot build too high for his purposes. He doubles on his pursuers, and fairly flanks his foes. This throws the labor of refuting him on the idealists, who may not care to become responsible for his positions, and may demur to conclusions he arrives at, while they cannot but applaud his general aims, and wish they could give positive assent to all his specific doctrines. There was always this discrepancy between his sentiment and his logic; but it came out most conspicuously in his elaborate arguments.

The burden of his exposition was the existence of an ideal sphere, quite distinct from visible phenomena; facts of consciousness attesting personality, a moral law, an intelligent cause, an active conscience, a living heart; order, beauty, harmony, humanity, self-forgetfulness, self-denial. As he states it:

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I claim, against a strictly logical empirical method, three classes of facts: first, the authentic facts of the Moral Sense, whenever it appears as the transcender of the ripest average utility; second, the facts of the Imagination, as the anticipator of mental methods by pervading everything with personalty, by imputing life to objects, or by occasional direct suggestion; third, the facts of the Harmonic Sense, as the reconciler of discrete and apparently sundered objects, as the prophet and artist of number and mathematical ratio, as the unifier of all the contents of the soul into the acclaim which rises when the law of unity fills the scene. Upon these facts, I chiefly sustain myself against the theory which, when it is consistently explained, derives all possible mental functions from the impacts of objectivity.

If Mr. Weiss had stopped with this general thesis, he would probably have carried most Rationalists, certainly the mass of Transcendentalists, with him. They would have been only too glad to welcome so clear and brilliant a champion. But he insisted on gathering up these conceptions into two points of doctrine—God and Immortality. On these points his arguments become strained, and too subtle for ordinary minds. Indeed, many will be inclined to suspect his whole exposition, which would be a misfortune of a very grave character. Mr. Emerson avoided all definite assertion of personality carried beyond the limits of individuality in the present state of existence. Mr. Weiss is more daring, and proclaims a God who arranges creation *as it is*, and an immortality that drops what to most people constitutes their highly valued possessions—namely, their "animalities" of various kinds. What will most men think of a God who "takes his chances," who "in planet-scenery and animal life is at his play," who puts up in his divine laboratory "curare and strychnine," and cannot "recognize the word *disaster*," though he makes the thing? To how many will an immortality be conceivable that can "belong only to immutable ideas," that only "springs from the vital necessity of their own souls," that is a clinging "to the breast of everlasting law"?

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To tell the truth, the arguments themselves for this rather questionable result of idealism are somewhat unconvincing, not to say fanciful. They are chiefly of a dogmatic kind, that may be met with counter affirmations, equally valid. Many of them are stated in a symbolical or poetical or illustrative manner, the most dangerous of all methods. Examples of this might be multiplied indefinitely. I had marked several for confirmation, but they were too long for quotation. One instance of his mode of reasoning may be given<sup>[D]</sup>:

It is objected that no thought and feeling have ever yet been displayed independently of cerebral condition; they must have brain, either to originate or to announce them. If brain be source or instrument of human consciousness, what preserves it when the brain is dead? But there would have been no universe on such terms as that. What supplied infinite mind with its preliminary *sine qua non* of brain matter?

[D] It occurs in "American Religion," p. 149.

But, surely, if this is an argument at all, if it does not beg the very question in debate—namely, whether there is an infinite mind,—is it not an argument for atheism? For either the existing universe fully expresses Deity, in which case Deity is something less than infinite; or Deity must be conceived as very imperfect, and a progressive, tentative Divinity is no better than none.

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To be sure, he says: "We attribute Personality to the divine Being, because we cannot otherwise refer to any source the phenomena that show Will and Intellect." That is to say, we yield to a logical necessity. To argue that materialism "reeks with immortality" because "the baldest negation is not merely a verbal contradiction of an affirmation, but a contribution to its probability,—for it testifies that there was something previously taken for granted,"—is really a play upon words, inasmuch as the denial is simply an affirmation of certain facts, and by no means a categorical declaration involving all the facts at issue. By claiming none but relative knowledge, the antithesis is removed.

One is conscious of a suspicion that the author's tremendous overflow of nervous vitality had much to do with the vehemence of his persuasions. He himself countenances such a suspicion. "I confess," he declares, "to an all-pervading instinct of personal continuance, coupled with a latent, haunting

feeling that there is a point somewhere in human existence, as there has been in the past, where animality controls the fate of men. Where is that point? We recoil from every effort to draw the line." He had a very strong sense of personality, with its inevitable reference of persistency. "To us, perhaps," he cries, in a kind of anguish, "no thought could be so dreadful, no surmise so harrowing, as that we might slip into nonentity. We impetuously repel the haunting doubt. We shut the eyes, and cower before the goblin in abject dread until it is gone. With the beauty-loving and full-blooded Claudio, we cry,—

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Oh, but to die, and go we know not where."

and he quotes the rest of the famous passage in "Measure for Measure," adding for himself: "Put us anywhere, but only let us live; and we could feel with Lear, when he says to Cordelia,—

Come, let's away to prison.  
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage."

Then, too, there come to us the tender and overpowering moments when we can no longer put up with being separated from beloved objects, who tore at the grain of our life when they went away elsewhere, with portions of it clinging to them. We must have them again. Shall life be stabbed and no justice compensate these sickening drippings of the soul in her secret faintness? The old familiar faces have registered in our hearts a contempt for graves and burials. Not so cheaply can we be taken in, when the lost life lies quick in memory still, and cries against the insults which mortality wreaks on love.

Is not this an exclamation of temperament?

John Weiss was essentially a poet. His pages are saturated with poetry. His very arguments are expressed in poetic imagery. To take two or three examples:

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One who rides from South-west Harbor to Bar Harbor in Mt. Desert will see a grove in which the pines stand so close that all the branches have withered two-thirds of the way up the trunks, and are nothing but dead sticks, broken and dangling. But every tree bears close, each to each, its evergreen crown; and they seem to make a floor for the day to walk on. This pavement for the feet of heaven, more precious than the fancied one of the New Jerusalem, stretches all round the world, above the thickets of our spiny egotism, where people run up into the only coherence upon which it is safe for Deity to tread.

Or this about the poet's inspired hour:

Through flat and unprofitable moments, a poet is waiting for the next consent of his imagination. The bed of every gift, that lately sparkled or thundered as the freshet of the hills sent its surprises down, lies empty, waiting for the master passion to open the sluice when it hears the steps of coming waves. The poet's nature strains against the dumb gates of his body and his mood. With power and longing he hears them open, and is brim full again with the rhythm that collects from the whole face of Nature,—the hillside, the ravine, the drifting cloud, the vapors just arrived from the ocean, the drops that flowers nod with to flavor the stream, the human smiles that colonize both banks of it. All passions, all delights hurry to possess his thought, crowd into the precincts of his person, pain him with the tumult in which they offer him obedience, remind him of his last joy in their companionship, and will not let him go till he ennobles them by bursting into expression. Relief flows down with every perfect word; the congested soul bleeds into the lyric and the canto; the poet's burden becomes light-hearted, and the supreme moment of his travail, when it breaks in showers of his emotion, cools and comforts him; he must die or express himself. All the blood in the earth's arteries is running through his heart; all the stars in the sky are set in his brain's dome. This light and life must be discharged into a word, and the poet restored to health and peace again.

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Or the following rhapsody about health:

What a religious ecstasy is health! Its free step claims every meadow that is glad with flowers; its bubbling spirits fill the cup of wide horizons and drip down their brims; its thankfulness is the prayer that takes possession of the sun by day and the stars by night. Every dancing member of the body whirls off the soul to tread the measures of great feelings, and God hears people saying: "How precious also are thy thoughts, how great is the sum of them! When I awake, I am still with thee." Yes,—when I awake, but not before; not while the brain is saturated with nervous blood, till it falls into comatose doctrines, and goes maundering with its attack of mediatorial piety and grace; not while a stomach depraved by fried food, apothecary's drugs, and iron-clad pastry (that target impenetrable by digestion) supplies the constitution with its vale of tears, ruin of mankind, and better luck hereafter. When all my veins flow unobstructed, and lift to the level of my eyes the daily gladness that finds a gate at every pore; when the roaming gifts come home from Nature to turn the brain into a hive of cells full of yellow sunshine, the spoil of all the chalices of the earth beneath and the heavens above,—then I am the subject of a Revival of Religion.



Or these passages about music, of which he was always a devoted lover, a passionate admirer, an excellent critic. My first extract is used to illustrate the doctrine of evolution, and suggests Browning's poem of "Abt Vogler." It should be said, by the way, that Weiss was a great student of Browning, whose lines in "Paracelsus," prophetic of the evolution doctrine, was often on his lips. He even understood "Sordello."

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The divine composer, summoning instrument after instrument into his harmony, climbed with his theme from those which offered but a single note to those that exhaust the complexity of thought and feeling, to combine them into expression, kindling through hints, phrases, sudden concords, mustering consents of many wills, releases of each one's felicity into comradeship, till the sweet tumult becomes his champion, and bursts into an acclaim of a whole world. "I ought—so then I will." The toppling instruments concur, become the wave that touches that high moment, lifts the whole deep, and holds it there.

When perfect music drives its golden scythe-chariot up the fine nerves, across the bridge of association, through the stern portcullis of care, and alights in the heart of man, there is adoration, whether he faints with excess of recognition of one long absent, and lies prostrate in the arms of rhythm, feeling that he is not worthy it should come under his roof, or whether he mounts the seat and grasps the thrilling reins; God's unity is riding through his distraction, brought by that team of all the instruments which shake their manes across the pavement of his bosom, and strike out the sparks of longing.

In calling Mr. Weiss essentially a poet, I am far from implying that he was not a thinker. Perhaps he was more subtle and more brilliant a thinker for being also a poet—that is, for seeing truth through the medium of the imagination, for following the path of analogy. At any rate, his being a poet did not in the least interfere with the acuteness or the precision of his thinking, as any one can see who reads his chapters—those, for example, which compose the volume entitled "American Religion." I had marked for citation so many passages that it would be necessary to quote half the book to illustrate my thesis. When I first knew him, he was a strict Transcendentalist. Dr. Orestes Brownson, no mean judge on such matters, spoke of him as the most promising philosophical mind in the country. To a native talent for metaphysics, his early studies at Heidelberg probably contributed congenial training. His knowledge of German philosophy may well have been stimulated and matured by his residence in that centre of active thought; while his intimacy, on his return, with the keenest intellects in this country may well have sharpened his original predilection for abstract speculation. However this may have been, the tendency of his genius was decidedly toward metaphysical problems and the interpretation of the human consciousness. This he erected as a barrier against materialism; and this he probed with a depth and a fearlessness which were truly extraordinary, and would have been remarkable in any disciple of the school to which he belonged. No one that I can think of was so fine, so profound, so analytical. His volume on "American Religion" was full of nice discriminations; so was his volume on the "Immortal Life"; so were his articles and lectures. His "Life of Theodore Parker" abounded in curious learning as well as in vigorous thinking. He could follow, step by step, the great leader of reformatory ideas, and went far beyond him in subtlety and accuracy of mental delineation. He could not rest in sentiment, must have demonstration, and never stopped till he reached the ultimate ground of truth as he regarded it. Ideas, when he found them, were usually, not always, expressed in symbolical forms. His alert fancy detected likenesses that would have been concealed from common eyes; and often the splendor of the exposition hid the keenness of the logical temper, as a sword wreathed with roses lies unperceived. But the tempered steel was there and they who examined closely felt its edge.

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He was a man of undaunted courage, being an idealist who lived out of the world, and a living soul animated by overwhelming convictions, which he was anxious to convey to others as of immense importance. He believed, with all his heart, in the doctrines he had arrived at, and, like a soldier in battle, was unconscious of the danger he incurred or of the wounds he received, being unaware of his own daring or fortitude. He was an anti-slavery man from the beginning. At a large meeting held in Waltham in 1845, to protest against the admission of Texas as a slave State, Mr. Weiss, then a minister at Watertown, Mass., delivered a speech in which he said: "Our Northern apathy heated the iron, forged the manacles, and built the pillory," declared that man was more than constitutions (borrowing a phrase from James Russell Lowell), and that Christ was greater than Hancock and Adams. To his unflinching devotion to free thought in religion, he owed something of his unpopularity with the masses of the people, who were orthodox in opinion, though his failure to touch the general mind was probably due to other causes. The class of disbelievers was pretty large in his day and very self-asserting. Boldness never fails to attract; and brilliancy, if it be on the plane of ordinary vision, draws the eyes of the multitude, who are on the watch for a sensation.

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The chief trouble was that his brilliancy was not on the plane of ordinary vision, but was recondite, ingenious, fanciful. He was too learned, too fond of allusions—literary, scientific, historical,—too swift in his mental processes. His addresses were delivered to an audience of his friends, not to a miscellaneous company. They were of the nature of soliloquies spoken out of his own mind, instead of being speeches intended to meet the needs of others. His lectures and sermons were not easy to follow, even if the listener was more than usually cultivated. Shall it be added that his sincerity of speech, running into brusqueness, startled a good many? He was theological and philosophical, and he could not keep his hands off when what he considered as errors in theology or philosophy came into view. His wit was sharper than he thought, while the laugh it raised was frequently overbalanced by the sting it left behind in some breasts. It was too often a "wicked wit," barbed and

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poisoned, which one must be in league with to enjoy. They who were in sympathy with the speaker were delighted with it, but they who were not went off aggrieved. No doubt this attested the earnestness of the man, who scorned to cloak his convictions; but it wounded the self-love of such as were in search of pleasure or instruction, and interfered with his general acceptableness. A broad, genial, good-natured, truculent style of ventilating even heresies may not be repulsive to people of a conventional, believing turn; in fact, it is not, as we know. But the thrusts of a rapier, especially when unexpected, are not forgiven. Mr. Weiss drew larger audiences as a preacher on religious themes than he did as a lecturer on secular subjects, where one hardly knew what to look for, because he was known to be outspoken and capable of introducing heresies on the platform.

Then he was in all respects unconventional. His spontaneous exuberance of animal spirits, which led him to roll on the grass, join in frolicsome games, play all sorts of antics, indulge in jokes, mimicry, boisterous mirthfulness, was inconsistent with the staid, proper demeanor required by social usage. How he kept himself within limits as he did was a surprise to his friends. Ordinary natures can form no conception of the weight such a man must have put upon his temperament to press it down to the level of common experience. Temptations to which he was liable every day do not visit average minds in their whole lifetime, and cannot by such minds be comprehended. The stiff, upright, careful old man cannot understand the jocund pliability of the boy, who, nevertheless, simply expends the superfluity of his natural vigor, and relieves his excess of nervous excitability. On thinking it all over, remembering his appetite for life, his joy in existence, his nervous exhilaration, his love of beauty, his passionate ardor of temperament, I am surprised that he preserved, as he did, so much dignity and soberness of character. I have seen him in his wildest mood, yet I never saw him thrown off his balance. With as much brilliancy as Sydney Smith, he had, as Sydney Smith had not, a breadth of knowledge, a depth of feeling, a soaring energy of soul that kept him above vulgar seductions, and did for him, in a nobler way, what ambition, love of place, conventional associations did for the famous Englishman.

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The difficulty was that he was too far removed from the common ground of sympathy. He could not endure routine, or behave as other people behaved, and as it was generally fancied he should. If Sydney Smith's jocularly interfered with his promotion, how much more did he have to contend with who to the jocularly added an enthusiastic devotion to heresy, a partiality for metaphysical speculation, and a poetic glow that removed him from ordinary comprehension! With an unworldliness worthy of all praise, but fatal to the provision of daily bread, he left the ministry, a fixed income, a confirmed social position, ample leisure for study and for literary pursuits, and launched forth on the uncertain career of lecturer. He was not the first who failed in attempting to harness Pegasus to a cart, in the hope of making him useful in mundane ways. Neither discharged his full function. The cart would not run smoothly, and the steed was not happy. The old profession has this advantage: that to all practical purposes, the wagon goes over the celestial pavement where there is no mud nor clangor, and Pegasus can seem to be harnessed to a chariot of the sun.

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Weiss simply disappeared from view. His books were scattered; his lectures and sermons were worked over and over, the best of them being published in his several volumes. A few relics of the author remain in the hands of his widow, who is grateful for any recognition of his genius, any help to diffuse his writings, and tribute to his memory. They who knew him can never forget him. Perhaps the very vividness of their recollection makes them indifferent to the possession of visible memorials of their friend.

Samuel Johnson should be known as the apostle of individualism. The apostle I say, for this with him was a religion, and the preaching of individualism was a gospel message. He would not belong to any church, or subscribe to any creed, or connect himself with any sect, or be a member of any organization whatever, however wide or elastic, however consonant with convictions that he held, with beliefs that he entertained, with purposes that he cherished, with plans that were dear to him. He never joined the "Anti-Slavery Society," though he was an Abolitionist; or the "Free Religious Association," though its aims were essentially his own, and he spoke on its platform. He made it a principle to act alone, herein being a true disciple of Emerson, whose mission was to individual minds. He wrote a long letter to me on the occasion of establishing the "Free Religious Association," of which I wished him to become a member, that recalls the letter written by Mr. Emerson in reply to George Ripley when asked to join the community of Brook Farm, and whereof the following is an extract:

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My feeling is that the community is not good for me, that it has little to offer me which with resolution I cannot procure for myself.... It seems to me a circuitous and operose way of relieving myself to put upon your community the emancipation which I ought to take on myself. I must assume my own vows.... I ought to say that I do not put much trust in any arrangements or combinations, only in the spirit which dictates them. Is that benevolent and divine, they will answer their end. Is there any alloy in that, it will certainly appear in the result.... Nor can I insist with any heat on new methods when I am at work in my study on any literary composition.... The result of our secretest attempts will certainly have as much renown as shall be due to it.

Johnson ended by discarding the church entirely. In 1881 he wrote:

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For my part, every day I live the name *Christian* seems less and less to express my thought and tendency. I suspect it will be so with the Free-thinking world generally.

In a sermon, "Living by Faith," he says:

There is no irony so great as to call this "flight out of nature" and the creeds that

come of it, "faith." The purity of heart that really sees God will have a mighty idealization of humanity at the very basis of its creed, and act on it in all its treatment of the vicious, the morally incapable and diseased. It is time Christendom was on the search for it.

In the paper on "Transcendentalism," he says:

Christianity inherited the monarchical idea of a God separate from man, and a contempt for natural law and human faculty which crippled its faith in the spiritual and moral ideal. It became more and more a materialism of miracle, Bible, church. Even its essay to realize immanent Deity yielded a more or less exclusive, mediatorial God-man; and it treated personality as the mere consequence of one prescriptive, historical force, just as philosophical materialism treats it as mere product of sensations.

Mr. Johnson abhorred the monarchical principle. It was his endeavor to track it from its origin, through all its forms of institution, ceremonial, dogma, symbol, from the earliest times to the latest, through the whole East to the farthest West. This was the burden of his studies in Oriental religions, the sum of his criticism, the aim of his public teaching. He was profoundly, intensely, absorbingly religious, but the form of his religion was not "Christian" in any recognized sense, Romanist, Protestant, or Unitarian. The most radical thought did not altogether please him. His was a worship of Law, Order, Cause, Harmony, impersonal, living, natural; a recognition of mind as the supreme power in the universe; a cosmic, eternal, absolute faith in intellectual principles as the substance and soul of the world. God was, to him, a spiritual being, alive, vital, flowing in every mode.

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All power of growth and service depends, know it or not as we may, on an ideal faith in somewhat all-sufficient, unerring, infinitely wise and tender, inseparable from the inmost of life, bent on our good as we are not, set against our failures as we cannot be. It means that there can in fact be no philosophy of life, no law of good, no belief in duty, no aspiration, but must have such in-dwelling perfection, as being alone reliable to guarantee its word. This only is my God; infinite ground of all finite being; essence of reason and good.... When you see a function of memory, or a law of perfection, let your natural piety recognize it as wise and just and good and fair. Be loyal to the moral authority that affirms it ought to be, and somehow must be. Let your *soul* bring in the leap of your mind to grasp it. Then, if you cannot see God in perfect, absolute essence, you will know the Infinite and Eternal in their relation to real and positive existence; feel their freedom in your own; know their inseparableness from every movement of your spiritual being.... The love we feel, the truth we pursue, the honor we cherish, the moral beauty we revere, blend in with the eternity of the principles they flow from, and then, glad as in the baptism of a harvest morning, expanding towards human need and the universal life of man, our souls walk free, breathing immortal air. That is God,—not an object but an experience. Words are but symbols, they do not define. We say "Him," "It" were as well, if thereby we mean life, wisdom, love.... Must we bind our communion with the just, the good, the true, the humanly adequate and becoming to some personal life, some special body of social circumstances, some individual's work in human progress and upon human idealism? How should that be, when the principles into which the moral sense flowers out in its maturity as spiritual liberty, essentially involve a freely advancing ideal at every new stage revealing more of God, whom nothing but such universal energy can adequately reveal?... If then, we cannot see the eternal substance and life of the universe, it is not because Deity is too far, but because it is too near. We can measure a statue or a star, and look round and beyond it; but the Life, Light, Liberty, Love, Peace, whereby we live and know, and are helpful and calm and free, which measures and surrounds and even animates us, is itself the very mystery of our being, and known only as felt and lived. God stands in all ideal thought, conviction, aim, which ever reach into the infinite; and thence, as if an angel should stand in the sun, come attractions that draw forth the divine capabilities within us, as the sun the life and beauty of the earth. God is the inmost motive, the common path, the infinite import of all work we respect, honor, purely rejoice in, and fulfil; of art, science, philosophy, intercourse,— whatsoever function befits the soul and the day.

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These quotations, which might be multiplied indefinitely, in fact, which it is difficult not to multiply, are probably enough to satisfy any who really wish to know that here was a truly religious man, a really devout man, the possessor of a living faith; one who held fast to more Deity than the multitude cherished, and welcomed him in a much more cordial, comprehensive, natural manner; one who fairly drenched the world and man with a divine spirit, but who was all the more spiritual on this account, as a man attests his vigor by his ability to lay aside his crutches, and put the medicine-chest, bottles, and boxes on the shelf, to walk in cold weather without an overcoat, or lie naked on the ice and melt it through.

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Of course, the only justification of a pretension of this kind is the actual vitality necessary for such a feat, the sanity demanded by one who would stand or go alone. In Samuel Johnson's case there was no question of this. Spiritually, he was a whole man, self-poised, self-contained, strong, clear, alert, a hero and a saint. His conversation, his bearing, conduct, entire attitude and manner indicated the most jubilant faith. He never faltered in his confidence, never wavered in his conviction, never abated a jot of hope that in the order of Providence all good things would come. There was something staggering to the ordinary mind, in his assurance of the divine wisdom and love. There

was something altogether admirable in the elevation of his character above the trials and vexations that are incident to the human lot, and that seemed heaped upon him. For his own was not a smooth or fortunate life, as men estimate felicity. His health was far from satisfactory. He was not rich or famous or popular or sought after. He lived a life of labor, in some respects, of denial and sacrifice. Not until after his death was the full amount of his renunciation apparent even to those who thought they knew him well.

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He was a Transcendentalist—that is to say, he believed in the intuitive powers of the mind; he was sure that all primary truths, such ideas as those of unity, universe, law, cause, substance, will, duty, obligation, permanence, were perceived directly, and are not to be accounted for by any data of observation or inference, but must be ascribed at once to an organic or constitutional relation of the mind with truth.

That the name "Transcendentalism" was given, a century ago, to a method in philosophy opposed to the theory of Locke—that all knowledge comes from the senses,—is more widely known than the fact that what this method affirmed or involved is of profound import for all generations. It emphasized Mind as a formative force behind all definable contents or acts of consciousness—as that which makes it possible to speak of anything as *known*. It recognized, as primal condition of knowing, the transmutation of sense-impressions by original laws of mind, whose constructive power is not to be explained or measured by the data of sensation; just as they use the eye or ear to transform unknown spatial notions into the obviously human conceptions which we call color and sound. All this the Lockian system overlooked—a very serious omission, as regards both science and common-sense.

And again, in the same article—that on "Transcendentalism," first printed in the *Radical Review* for November, 1877, and afterwards included in the volume of "Lectures, Sermons, and Essays":

What we conceive these schools to have misprized is the living substance and function of mind itself, conscious of its own energy, productive of its own processes, active even in receiving, giving its own construction to its incomes from the unknown through sense, thus involved in those very contents of time and space which, as historical antecedents, *appear* to create it; mind is obviously the exponent of forces more spontaneous and original than any special product of its own experience. Behind all these products must be that substance in and through which they are produced.

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And again, for we cannot be too explicit on this point:

It is certain that knowledge involves not only a sense of union with the nature of that which we know, but a real participation of the knowing faculty therein. When, therefore, I have learned to conceive truths, principles, ideas, or aims which transcend life-times and own no physical limits to their endurance, the aforesaid law of mind associates me with their immortal nature. And this is the indubitable perception or intuition of permanent mind which no experience of impermanence can nullify and no Nirvana excludes.

It will be observed that Mr. Johnson does not make himself answerable for specific articles of belief on God or immortality, but confines his faith to the persuasion of indwelling mind, sovereign, eternal, imperial. "Immortality," he says, "is immeasurable chance for all. In its light, all strong, blameless, heroic lives—divine plants by the wayside—tell for the nature they express. God has made no blunder in our spiritual constitution. Power is in faith." This intense belief in the soul, in all the native capacities of our spiritual constitution, in the supremacy of organic feelings, ideas, expectations over merely private desires, this burning confidence in divinely implanted instincts, this absolute certainty that every promise made by God will be fulfilled, explains the tone of exulting hope in which he writes to bereaved friends.

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I wish I could tell you how firmly I believe that feelings like these (that the absent one cannot be dead), so often treated as illusion, are *true*, are of God's own tender giving; that in them is the very heart of his teaching through the mystery that we call death. Our affections are *forbidden by their maker* to doubt their own immortality.... Immortal years, beside which our little lives are but an hour—what possibilities of full satisfaction they open! And we sit in patience, knowing that they must bring us back our holiest possessions—those which have ever stood under the shield of our noblest love and conscience and so are under God's blessing forever.

How far such a declaration as this comports with the demand for general immortality made in behalf of those who are conscious of no noble love, who have attained to no conscience, and have no holy possessions, we are not told. Perhaps Mr. Johnson would seize on the faintest intimations of mind as evidencing the presence of moral being, as Mr. Weiss does. But he did not dwell on that side of the problem. Plainly he ascribed little value to mere personality, viewed abstractly and apart from its spiritual development. He wrote to those whom he knew and loved, to remarkable people.

Yet it would not be fair to conclude that immortality was denied to the basest. If immortality is "opportunity," a "chance for all," it is for those who can profit by it or enjoy it. If any are debarred, the cause must be their own incompetence. They simply de cease. There is no torment in store for them; no hell is possible.

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Samuel Johnson was an enthusiastic evolutionist, but of mind itself, not of matter as ripening into

mind. The ordinary conception of evolution,—that the higher came from the lower,—was exceedingly repugnant to him. Every kind of materialism he abhorred as illogical and irrational. The theories of Comte,—that "mind is cerebration;" of Haeckel,—that it is a "function of brain and nerve;" of Strauss,—that "one's self is his body;" of Taine,—that a man is "a series of sensations," were to him as absurd, in science or philosophy, as they were fatal to aspiration and progress.

The crude definition of evolution as production of the highest by inherent force of the lowest is here supplanted by one which recognizes material parentage as itself involving, even in its lowest stages, the entire cosmic *consensus*, of whose unknown force mind is the highest known exponent.

He is alluding to Tyndall's statement that mind is evolved from the universe as a whole, not from inorganic matter. For himself, he says:

Ideas were not demonstrated, are not demonstrable. No data of observation can express their universal meaning.... What else can we say of ideas than that they are wondrous intimacies of the soul with the Infinite and Eternal, its contacts with universal forces, its prophetic ventures and master steps beyond any past!... The grand words, "I ought" refuse to be explained by dissolving the notion of right into individual calculation of consequences, or by expounding the sense of duty as the cumulative product of observed relation of succession.... How explain as a "greater happiness principle," or an inherited product of observed consequences, that sovereign and eternal law of mind whose imperial edict lifts all calculations and measures into functions of an infinite meaning? And how vain to accredit or ascribe to revelation, institution, or redemption, this necessary allegiance to the law of our being, which is liberty and loyalty in one?

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This is absolute enough. It is plain that to this writer the notion of extracting intellect from form is ridiculous.

At the same time the method of evolution is the one adopted by the supreme Mind in its endeavor to awaken in man religious ideas. The exposition of the original faiths—Indian, Chinese, Persian—is a long and eloquent argument for this thesis. All criticism, all thinking, all analysis, all study of history, all investigation of phenomena, point in this direction. This is the rule of creation; this is the solution of the problem of the universe. The successive degrees of this divine ascent, he maintains, are distinctly traceable in the records left for our reading. The threads are fine, of course, but what have we eyes for? It is not necessary that everybody should see them, and the few who can are amply rewarded for the trouble they take in putting their fingers upon the very lines of the heavenly procedure. His peculiar strain of genius admirably qualified him for this delicate task. It was serious, critical, earnest, and aspiring. At one period of his life he was a mystic, wholly absorbed in God, and he always had that tendency towards the more passionate forms of idealism which led him to mystical speculations. The search for God was ever the animating purpose of his endeavor. The law of the blessed life was never absent from his thought. He, all the time, lived by faith, and was naturally disposed to see the gain in all losses. His mind had that penetrating quality which loved to follow hidden trails, and appreciated the subtlest kinds of influence. In a striking passage he speaks of the

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great mystery in these influences which thoughtless people little dream of, and which common-sense, so called, cares nothing about. In the wonderful manner in which, through books, the spirits of other men, long since dead, enter into and inspire ours; in the eloquent language of eye and lip which without words, merely by expression, conveys deepest feelings; in the presence in our souls of strange presentiments, intuitions of higher knowledge than science or learning can give, voices which seem the presence of other spirits in ours, which make us feel often that death, so far from removing our dear friends from us, brings them nearer to our souls so that they *cannot* be lost;—in all these wonderful ways we see dimly the unveiling of holy mysteries which the future is to fully open to us, mysteries which we can even now, in our sublimer and holier secret moments, feel trying to disclose themselves to us.

This was written in a letter to his sister, on the occasion of a visit to the menagerie to see Herr Driesbach, the horse-tamer. A man who could spring into the empyrean from such ground may be trusted to behold Deity where others behold nothing but dirt; and they who submit to his guidance are pretty certain to come out full believers in the spiritual powers.

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Johnson absolutely subordinated dogma to practice, holding fast to the idea involved in the declaration that he who doeth the will shall know the doctrine. He began with the ethics of the individual, the family, the social circle, seeing every principle incarnated there. How faithful he was in all domestic relations the world will never know, for there are details that cannot be divulged. But in all public affairs his constancy was perfect. Dr. Furness of Philadelphia used to say that the anti-slavery struggle in this country taught him more about the essential nature of the Gospel than he had learned in any other way. Samuel Johnson had the same conviction. In a private letter written in 1857 he says:

Everything in this crisis of American growth centres in the great conflict about this gigantic sin of slavery. That is the battle-field on which the questions are all to be fought out, of moral and spiritual and intellectual Freedom against the Absolutism of sect and party; of Love against Mammon; of Conscience against the State; of Man against Majorities; of Truth against Policy; of God against the Devil. It is really

astonishing how everything that happens with us works directly into this fermenting conflict.

They who remember his addresses during the war will not need any confirmation of this announcement, and they who heard or have read his sermon on the character and services of Charles Sumner will have the fullest assurance of the cordial appreciation with which every phase of the struggle was entered into.

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But though so ardent a follower of the doctrine that ideas lead the world, Johnson was not induced to go all lengths with the sentimentalists. While warmly espousing the cause of the workingman his papers on "Labor Reform" show how keenly critical he could be of measures proposed for his benefit. No one will accuse him of indifference to the claims of woman, but he spoke of "Woman's Opportunity" rather than of "Woman's Rights"; is inclined to think that it is not true that she is left out of political life from the present wish to do her injustice; that "on the whole, the feeling, if it were analyzed, would be found to be rather that of defending her right of exemption, relieving her from tasks she does not desire.... Among intelligent men at least, actual delay to wipe out the anomaly of the voting rule is not so much owing to a spirit of domination or contempt as is too apt to be assumed, as it is to a respect for what woman has made of the functions she has hitherto filled, and the belief that she holds herself entitled to be left free to work through them alone." He has nothing to say regarding the superiority of woman's nature; ventures no definition of her sphere; is not unconscious of feminine infirmities; doubts the efficacy of the ballot; confesses that the level of womanhood would be, at least temporarily, depressed by the larger area of practical diffusion; is by no means certain that women would necessarily act for their own good, and is deeply persuaded of the inferiority of outward to inward influence. This is the one thing he is sure of; this and the principle that "liberty knows—like faith and charity—neither male nor female." In the war between Russia and Turkey he took the part of Turkey, not only because he respected the rights of individual genius and resented invasion, but for the reason that he distrusted the civilizing tendencies of Russia, and thought the interests of Europe might be trusted to the Ottoman as confidently as to the Russian. In a discourse entitled "A Ministry in Free Religion," delivered on the occasion of his resigning the relation of pastor to the "Free Church at Lynn," June 26, 1870, he said:

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The pulpit has no function more essential than an independent criticism of well-meaning people in the light of larger justice and remoter consequences than most popular measures recognize. The truest service is, perhaps, to help correct the blunders and the intolerances of blind good-will and narrow zeal for a good cause; to speak in the interest of an idea where popular or organized impulse threatens to swamp its higher morality in passionate instincts and absolute masterships, to maintain that freedom of private judgment which cannot be outraged, even in the best moral intent, without mischievous reaction on the good cause itself.

In this connection he speaks of temperance, the amelioration of the condition of the "perishing" or "dangerous" classes, the various schemes for benefiting the laboring men, plans for adjusting the relations of labor and capital, arrangements for diffusing the profits of production,—causes which he had at heart, but which should be discussed in view of the principle of individual freedom, which must be upheld at all hazards. He was a close reasoner as well as a warm feeler, and would not allow his sympathies to get the upper hand of his ideas. He hoped for the best; he had faith in the highest; he anticipated the brightest; but he tried to see things as they were. He was a student, not a sentimentalist, and while he was ready to follow the most advanced in the direction of spiritual progress, he was not prepared to take for granted issues that still hung in the balance of debate, or to prejudge questions that had not been answered, and could not be as yet.

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Such moderation and patience are not common with reformers, and few are independent enough to confess misgivings which are more familiar to their opponents than to their friends. Candor like this shows a genuine unconsciousness of fear, a sincere love of truth, an earnest postponement of personal tastes, ambitions, and connections to the axioms of universal wisdom and goodness; a loyalty to conviction that is very rare, that never can exist among the indifferent, because they do not care, and which is usually put aside by those who *do* care as an impediment if not as a snare. In courage of this noble kind, Johnson excelled all men I ever knew, for they who had it, as some did, had not his genius, and were spared the necessity of curbing ardor by so much as their temperament was more passive and their eagerness less importunate. Of course of the lower sort,—the courage to bear pain, loss, the misunderstanding of the vulgar, to face danger, to encounter peril, none who knew him can question his possession. In fact, he did not seem to suffer at all, so jocund was he, so much in the habit of keeping his deprivations from the outside world; even his intimates could but suspect his sorrows of heart.

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Samuel Johnson was an extraordinary person to look at. He had large dark eyes; black, straight, long hair; an Oriental complexion, sallow, olive-colored; an impetuous manner; a beaming expression. His voice was rich, deep, musical; his gait eager, rapid, swinging; his style of address glowing; his aspect in public speech that of one inspired. He was fond of natural beauty, of art, literature, music; full of fun, witty, mirthful, social. He was attractive to young people, delightful in conversation, ready to enter into innocent amusements. His eye for scenery was fine and quick, his interest in practical science sincere and hearty, his concern for whatever advanced humanity cordial, and his freshness of spirit increased if anything with years.

## XIV.

## MY FRIENDS.

It is impossible to mention them all, and to single out a few from a multitude must not be done. I should like to commemorate those who came nearest to me by their earnest work and faithful allegiance, but these cannot be spoken of, and I prefer to enumerate some of those with whom I was less intimate.

Alice and Phœbe Cary came to New York in 1852, and were prominent when I was there; their famous Sunday evenings, which were frequented by the brightest minds and were sought by a large class of people, being then well established. These were altogether informal and gave but little satisfaction to the merely fashionable folks who now and then attended them. The sisters were in striking contrast. Phœbe, the younger, was a jocund, hearty, vivacious, witty, merry young woman, short and round; her older sister, Alice, was taller and more slender, with large, dark eyes; she was meditative, thoughtful, pensive, and rather grave in temperament; but the two were most heartily in sympathy in every opinion and in all their literary and social aims. Horace Greeley, one of their earliest and warmest friends, was a frequent visitor at their house. There I met Robert Dale Owen, Oliver Johnson, Dr. E. H. Chapin, Rev. Charles F. Deems, Justin McCarthy and his wife, Mrs. Mary E. Dodge, Madame Le Vert, and several others.

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Among my friends was President Barnard, of Columbia College, the only man I ever knew whose long ear-trumpet was never an annoyance; Ogden N. Rood, the Professor of Physics at Columbia, a man of real genius, whose studies in light and color were a great assistance to artists, himself an artist of no mean order and an ardent student of photography; Charles Joy, Professor of Chemistry, a most active-minded man, who received honors at Goettingen and at Paris, and contributed largely to the scientific journals; a man greatly interested in the union of charitable societies in New York; Robert Carter, then a co-worker in the making of Appleton's Cyclopaedia; Bayard Taylor, novelist, poet, translator of Goethe, traveller; Richard Grant White, the Shakesperian scholar; Charles L. Brace, the philanthropist; E. L. Youmans a man fairly tingling with ideas, and peculiarly gifted in making popular, as a lecturer, the most abstruse scientific discoveries. The breadth of my range of acquaintances is illustrated by such men as Roswell D. Hitchcock, of Union Seminary, the learned student, the impressive speaker; Isaac T. Hecker, the founder of the Congregation of the Paulists; Dr. Washburn, the model churchman of "Calvary"; Henry M. Field, editor of the *Evangelist*, a most warm-hearted man, so large in his sympathies that he could say to Robert G. Ingersoll, "I am glad that I know you, even though some of my brethren look upon you as a monster because of your unbelief," and welcomed as an example of "constructive thought," Dr. Charles A. Briggs' Inaugural Address as Professor of Biblical Theology at Union College; John G. Holland (Timothy Titcomb), a copious author. The *Tribune* company was most distinguished: There was, first of all, the founder, Horace Greeley, a unique personality, simple, unaffected, earnest, an immense believer in American institutions, a staunch friend of the working-man, and a brave lover of impartial justice; Whitelaw Reid, who was, according to George Ripley, the ablest newspaper manager he ever saw; and Mrs. Lucia Calhoun (afterward Mrs. Runkle), one of the most brilliant contributors to the *Tribune*. Of George Ripley I may speak more at length, as he was my parishioner and close friend. In my biography of him, written for the "American Men of Letters" series, I spoke of him as a "remarkable" man. One of my critics found fault with the appellation, and said it was not justified by anything in the book, as perhaps it was not, though intellectual vigor, range, and taste like his must be called "remarkable"; such industry is "remarkable"; no common man could have instituted "Brook Farm" and administered it for six or seven years; could have maintained its dignity through ridicule, misunderstanding, and fanaticism; could have cleared off its liabilities; could have turned his face away from it on its failure, with such patience, or in his later age, could have alluded to it so sweetly; no ordinary person could have adopted a new and despised career so bravely as he did. No journalist has raised literature to so high a distinction, or derived such large rewards for that mental labor. He deserves to be called "remarkable," who can do all this or but a part of it, and, all the time, preserve the sunny serenity of his disposition. If the biography failed to present these traits it was, indeed, unsuccessful. Yes, Mr. Ripley was an extraordinary man. It is seldom that one carries such qualities to such a degree of perfection, and it may be worth while to look more closely at his character.

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George Ripley had a passion for literary excellence. From his boyhood he possessed a singularly bright intelligence, a clear appreciation of the rational aspect of questions. He was not an ardent, passionate, enthusiastic man, of warm convictions, vehement emotions, burning ideas. His feelings, though amiable and correct, were of an intellectual cast. They sprang from a naturally affectionate heart, rather than from a deeply stirred conscience, or an enchanted soul. If he had been less healthy, eupeptic, he would scarcely have been so gay; a vehement reformer he was not; a leader of men he could not be. He had not the stuff in him for either. The element of giving was not strong in him. He was not an originator in the sphere of thought; not a discoverer of theories or facts; not an innovator on established customs. But mentally he was so quick, eager, receptive, that he seemed a pioneer, an enthusiast, a saint; his quickness passing for insight, his eagerness for a passionate love of progress, his receptivity for charitableness. He appeared to be more of an image-breaker than he really was. In fact, the propensity to iconoclasm was not part of his constitution. But his mind was wonderfully alert. He had his antipathies, and they were strong ones, his likes and dislikes, his tastes and distastes, but these were instinctive rather than the expression of rational principle or a deliberate conclusion of his judgment. In one instance that I know of, he threw off a man with whom he had been associated for many years, and in connection with whom he labored daily for a time, a

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very accomplished and agreeable person to whom he was indebted for some services, because he thought that the individual in question had been unjust to some of his friends; but that this was not entirely a matter of conscience would seem to be indicated by the fact that he sent a message of affection to this man, as he neared the grave. In the main, so far as he was under control, intellectual considerations determined his course. He was prevailing under the influence of mind; he acted in view, a large view, of all the circumstances; as one who takes in the whole situation, and has himself under command. This is not said in the least tone of disparagement, but entirely in his praise, for the supremacy of reason is more steady, even, reliable than the supremacy of feeling however exalted in its mood. He that is under the control of mind is at all times *under control*, which cannot be said of one who is borne along by the sway of even devout emotion. I have in memory cases where passion might have betrayed Mr. Ripley into conduct he would have regretted, had it not been for the restraining power of purely rational considerations. His early religious training may have produced some effect on his character, but this is more likely to have operated at first than at the later stages of his career. The love of old hymns, the habit of attending sacred services, the fondness for Watts' poems, a copy of whose holy songs always lay on his table, showed a lingering attachment to this kind of sentiment up to the end of his life; but it existed in an attenuated form, and at no period after his youth exerted much sway over him. His predominating bent was intellectual, and this caused a certain delicacy, fastidiousness, aloofness, which kept him in the atmosphere of love as well as of light.

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From his youth this was his leading characteristic. As a boy he was ambitious of making a dictionary, a sign of his carefulness in the use of words, and an omen of the value he was to set on definitions and on exactness in the employment of language. At school he was an excellent scholar, at college he stood second, but was graduated first owing to the "suspension" of a brilliant classmate who might have excelled him but for the mishap of a college "riot" in which he took part. In the languages and in literature he was unusually proficient, while in mathematics,—that most abstract, severe, precise of pursuits,—his success was distinguished. In later-life his devotion to philosophy marked the man of speculative tastes. His early letters to his father, mother, sister, reveal a consciousness of his own peculiarities. Here are extracts:

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The course of studies adopted here [Cambridge], in the opinion of competent judges, is singularly calculated to form scholars, and moreover, correct and accurate scholars; to inure the mind to profound thought and habits of investigation and reasoning.

The prospect of devoting my days to the acquisition and communication of knowledge is bright and cheering. This employment I would not exchange for the most elevated situation of wealth or power. One of the happiest steps, I think, that I have ever taken was the commencement of a course of study, and it is my wish and effort that my future progress may give substantial evidence of it.

I know that my peculiar habits of mind, imperfect as they are, strongly impel me to the path of active intellectual effort; and if I am to be at any time of any use to society, or a satisfaction to myself or my friends, it will be in the way of some retired literary situation, where a fondness for study and a knowledge of books will be more requisite than the busy, calculating mind of a man in the business part of the community. I do not mean by this that any profession is desired but the one to which I have been long looking. My wish is only to enter that profession with all the enlargement of mind and extent of information which the best institutions can afford.

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These quotations are enough to show what was the prevailing impulse of the man. An intellectual nature like this, calm, studious, accomplished, eager, is subject to few surprises and experiences rarely, if ever, marked by crises, cataclysms, eruptions, in passing from one condition of thought to another at the opposite extreme of the spiritual universe. A process of growth, gradual, easy, motionless, takes the place of commotion and violent uproar such as passionate temperaments are exposed to. In 1821 he writes to his sister from Harvard College: "We are now studying Locke, an author who has done more to form the mind to habits of accurate reasoning and sound thought than almost any other." On the 19th of September, 1836, the first meeting of the Transcendental Club was held at his house in Boston. In 1838 he replied to Andrews Norton's criticism of Mr. Emerson's Address before the Alumni of the Cambridge Divinity School. In 1840 he said to his congregation in Purchase Street:

There is a faculty in all—the most degraded, the most ignorant, the most obscure—to perceive spiritual truth when distinctly presented; and the ultimate appeal on all moral questions is not to a jury of scholars, a conclave of divines, or the prescriptions of a creed, but to the common-sense of the human race.

But this substitution of the intuitive for the sensational philosophy—a change which affected all the processes of his thought and actually caused a revolution in his mind—was made silently, quietly, without agitation, without triumph, in a sober, conservative manner, very different from that of his friend Theodore Parker, who carried the same doctrines a good deal further, and advocated them with more heat like the burly reformer he was.

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In religion, Mr. Ripley's position was the same that it was in philosophy. In fact the intellectual side of religion interested him more than the spiritual or experimental side. It was mainly a speculative matter, where it was not speculative it was practical; in each event it concerned the head rather than the heart, as being an opinion rather than a feeling. He was instructed in the school of orthodoxy, and, as a youth, was strict in his allegiance to the old system of belief; but he became a disciple of



Dr. Channing, and later a rationalist of the order of Theodore Parker, a friend of Emerson, an adherent of what was newest in theology. Yet, in this extreme departure from the views of his early years, he betrayed no sign of agitation, no trace of internal suffering. He wished to go to Yale instead of Harvard, because "the temptations incident to a college, we have reason to think, are less at Yale than at Cambridge." He preferred Andover to Cambridge, being "convinced that the opportunities for close investigation of the Scriptures are superior to those at Cambridge, and the spirit of the place, much relaxed from its former severe and gloomy bigotry is more favorable to a tone of decided piety." Still, he goes to Cambridge, is "much disappointed in what he had learned of the religious character of the school," and, on more intimate acquaintance is impressed by "the depth and purity of their religious feeling and the holy simplicity of their lives"; "enough to humble and shame those who had been long professors of Christianity, and had pretended to superior sanctity." In 1824 a bold article in the *Christian Disciple*, a Unitarian journal, the precursor of the *Christian Examiner*, excited a good deal of comment, not to say apprehension. He writes to his sister about it as follows:

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You asked me to say something about the article in the *Disciple*. For myself, I freely confess that I think it a useful thing and correct. The vigor of my orthodoxy, which is commonly pretty susceptible, was not offended. Now, if you have any objections which you can accurately and definitely state, no doubt there is something in it which had escaped my notice. If your dislike is only a misty, uncertain feeling about something, you know not what, it were well to get fairly rid of it by the best means.

The same year he writes to his mother:

I am no partisan of any sect, but I must rejoice in seeing any progress towards the conviction that Christianity is indeed "*glad tidings of great joy*," and that in its original purity it was a very different thing from the system that is popularly preached, and which is still received as reasonable and scriptural by men and women, who in other respects are sensible and correct in their judgments. When shall we learn that without the spirit of Christ we are none of us His? I trust I am not becoming a partisan or a bigot. I have suffered enough, and too much, in sustaining those characters, in earlier, more inexperienced, and more ignorant years; but I have no prospects of earthly happiness more inviting than that of preaching the truth, with the humble hope of impressing it on the mind with greater force, purity, and effect than I could do with any other than my present conviction.

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In 1840 the ministry was abandoned forever, for more secular pursuits. After 1849 his activities were wholly literary; he had no connection with theology, and none who did not know his past suspected that he had once been a clergyman.

The same cast of thought, not "pale" in his case, suffused his action at Brook Farm and made a Utopia quiet, calm, dignified, pervaded by the radiance of mind, the gentle enthusiasm of the intellect. The heat came in the main from other sources. He was receptive rather than original, inflammable rather than fiery, brilliant rather than warm. The heat was supplied by those near him, by those he trusted, and by those he loved. Not that he was deficient in concern for society; far from it; but his interest was more philosophical than philanthropic. The subject of an association that should combine intellectual and mechanical labor and should diminish the distance between the tiller of the ground and the educator was agitated among the thinkers he was intimate with. Dr. Channing had such a project at heart. Mrs. Ripley burned with humane anticipations. Plans for social regeneration were in the air. It was impossible for one who lived in the midst of ardent spirits, or was sensitive to fine impressions, or was cultivated in an ideal wisdom that was not of this world, to escape the contagion of this kind of optimism; Emerson was saved by his belief in individual growth; Parker by his steady common-sense; others were protected by their conservatism of temperament or of association, by their want of courage, or their want of faith; but men and women of ideal propensities, like Nathaniel Hawthorne, W. H. Channing, J. S. Dwight, joined the community, which promised a new era for Humanity. Mr. Ripley would probably have left the ministry at any rate, for it had become distasteful to him, but it is not likely that he would have undertaken the management of Brook Farm unless he had been assured of its success; for he was a New England youth by birth and by disposition, prudent, careful, thrifty; his very enthusiasm was of the New England type, the product of theological ideas, a creation of the gospels, a desire to introduce the "Kingdom of Heaven," a continuance of the prophetic calling. New England is as noted for its fanaticism as it is for its theology. Its fanaticism is the offspring of its theology, and in proportion as its theology disappears its fanaticism decreases. In Mr. Ripley's case the theology had reached very near to its last attenuation and the fanaticism had tapered off into a gentle enthusiasm. He undertook to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth because he had given up the expectation of a kingdom of heaven in the skies; and he undertook to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth by rational, economic means, not by religious interventions. He was subject to that peculiar kind of excitement that comes to a few people in connection with the keen exercise of their intellectual powers, when they have laid hold of what seems to them a principle—an excitement that is easily mistaken for moral earnestness even by one who is under its influence, which, indeed, lies so close to moral earnestness as to feel quickly the effect of moral earnestness in others, notwithstanding the checks applied by practical wisdom. Mr. Ripley had struck on a theory of society, which at that time was passing from the phase of feeling into the phase of philosophy. The theory was in the air; the most susceptible spirits were full of it; all noble impulses were in its favor, it belonged to the order of thought he had attained; it was native to the aspirations that inflamed the men and women with whom he was most intimate; their feelings awoke his intellect, and he was carried away by a stream whereof he appeared to himself to be a tributary and whereof he appeared to others as the main

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current, on account of his impetuosity, and the vigor with which he proceeded to put the idea into practice. In his own mind he was realizing the dream of the New Testament, but, in fact, he was testing a principle of which the New Testament was quite unconscious, the modern principle of the equal destinies of all men. He had abandoned the New Testament ground of allegiance to Jehovah, and had adopted the human ground of fidelity to social law. He was still under the spell of religious emotions, but they had become merged in the abstractions of rationalism and merely lent an added glow to his ideas, so that he could readily imagine that he was actuated by spiritual convictions when, in fact, he was doing duty as a disciple of socialist philosophers. His own interest in Brook Farm was in the main speculative, though through his personal sympathies he was moved toward an enterprise that had moral ends in view.

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Once embarked in it, he gave his whole mind to its accomplishment,—all his industry, all his organizing talent, all his high sense of duty. He worked day and night; he wrote letters; he answered inquiries; he mastered the science of agriculture; he did the labor of a practical farmer; he maintained the supervision of the strange family that gathered about him. Very remarkable was his success in keeping the intellectual side uppermost, in keeping clear of the temptations to give way to instinctive leanings. His associations were with books and study and bright people. He brought the most brilliant men and women of the day to the place. He awakened the interest of the general community. He diffused an atmosphere of cheerful hope around the experiment. It is easy to make sport of Brook Farm; to laugh at the odd folks who came there; to ridicule their motives and actions; to repeat stories of extravagant conduct; to tell of the eccentric behavior of men and maidens who were right-minded but impulsive; to follow spontaneousness to its results; to trace the course of unrestricted liberty. But it is not fair to remember these things as peculiarities of Brook Farm, as incidents of its conception, or as incidents that were agreeable to Mr. Ripley. He exerted the whole weight of his character against them. He watched and guarded. We do not hear of him in connection with the scandals, the laxities, or the frolics. His efforts were directed to the supremacy of ideas over instinct, the idea of a regenerated society, something very different from joyousness, or merriment, or the fun of having a good time. He, too, was gay; he felt the delight of freedom; but his gayety was born of happy confidence in the principle at stake, his delight was connected with the advent of a new method of intercourse among men. I remember hearing him once deliver a speech in Boston. In it he spoke of the "foolishness of preaching," and avowed his willingness to be a pioneer in the task of breaking out a new future for humanity, a ditcher and delver in the work of constructing the new building of God. He had the coming time continually in view. Others might enjoy themselves, others might grow tired of waiting, but he held smiling on his way, determined to carry out the idea to the end. There was something grand in the steady intellectual force with which he did his best to carry through a principle that commanded more and more the assent of his reason. When the demonstration of Charles Fourier was laid before him, no argument was required to persuade him to adopt it. He took it up with all his energy; his enthusiasm rose to a higher pitch than ever; the rationale of the movement was revealed to him, and apparently he saw for the first time the full significance of the scheme he had been conducting. The impelling power of an intellectual conviction was never more splendidly illustrated. Nobody discerned so clearly as he did the financial hopelessness of the experiment. Nobody felt the burden of responsibility as he felt it. Yet he did not flinch for a moment, and his patient assumption of the indebtedness at last had the stamp of real heroism upon it. His renewal of the most painful traditions of "Grub Street" until the liabilities of Brook Farm were cleared off is one of the noble histories, a history that cannot be told in detail because of the modesty which has left no record of toil undergone or duty done. The old simile of the sun struggling with clouds, and gradually clearing itself as the day wears on, best illustrates my view of this man's accomplishment. There were the clouds of orthodoxy which were burned away at Cambridge. Then came the clouds of Unitarian divinity, which were dispelled by the transcendental philosophy. These were succeeded by the dark vapors of the ministry, and these by the sentimental philanthropy of New England rationalism. At length his intellect broke through these obscurations and showed what it truly was.

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On the failure of Brook Farm and the final dismissal of all plans for creating society anew, Mr. Ripley's faculties emerged in their full strength. The New England element was withdrawn. There was no longer thought for theology or reform, but solely for knowledge and literature. In Boston he had taken on himself every opprobrious epithet. In his final letter to his congregation he avows his interest in temperance, anti-slavery, peace, the projects for breaking down social distinctions; simply, it would seem, because his philosophy, falling in with popular sentiment, pointed that way; for he was never publicly identified with any of these causes, or ranked by reformers in the order of innovators. Indeed, one of the old Abolitionists told me that she had never associated him with the anti-slavery people, though her family went to his church. In New York there was no pretence of this kind. The devotion to literature absorbed his attention. His democratic concern for the workingmen continued, but in a theoretical manner, if we may judge from the fact that he took no part in domestic or foreign demonstrations, that he made no speech, attended no meeting, consorted with no social reformers, did not even keep up his intimacy with the original leaders of socialism in this country. When the sadness of his first wife's death was over, and the drudgery of toil was ended, he was happier than he had ever been. No time was wasted; no talent was misused. Mental labor was incessant, but in performing it there was pure delight. It is usual to think of his early life as his best, and there were some who regarded him as an extinct volcano; but I am of the opinion that his latter years were his most characteristic, and that he was most entirely himself when his intellectual nature came to its full play. In proportion as the "olden thoughts, the spirit's pall," fell off, he became peaceful and sweet; his view backward and forward became clear, his purpose steady, his will serene. The past was distasteful to him and he seldom alluded to it; but as one puts his childhood and his age together, a steady development is seen to run through both. His could not be a cloudless day,

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but he went on from glory to glory. His age more than justified the promise of his youth. In his latter years he befriended aspiring young men; he made literature a power in America; he threw a dignity around toil; he associated knowledge with happiness, and rendered light and love harmonious. His favorite author was Goethe, the apostle of culture. His familiarity with Sainte-Beuve, the master of literary criticism, was so great, that on occasion of that writer's decease, he sat down and wrote an account of him without recourse to books. Though without knowledge of art, destitute of taste for music, and deficient in æsthetic appreciation, his sympathy was so large and true that these deficiencies were not felt. The intellectual sunshine was shed over the entire nature, and the book was so universal that it seemed to embrace everything.

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This is the property of pure mind, rarely seen in such perfection of lucidity. Such a mind is at once conservative and radical; conservative as treasuring the past, radical as anticipating improvement in the future. There is nothing like fanaticism, but a bright look in every direction, a place for all sorts of accomplishments, hospitality to each new invention, a radiant acceptance of all temperaments. The mind cannot be superstitious, for it cannot believe that divine powers are identified with material objects or occasional accidents; it cannot be ever sanguine as those are who indulge in abstract visions of good, for it knows that progress is very slow and gradual, and that the welfare of mankind is advanced by the process of civilization, by cultivation, acquirement, refinement, the gains of wealth, elegance, and delicacy of taste. It judges by rational standards, not by sentimental feelings, accepting imperfection as the inevitable condition of human affairs and bounded characters. It is not exposed to the convulsions that accompany even the most exalted moods, but calmly labors and quietly hopes for the future.

I do not say that George Ripley was such a mind, merely that his tendency was in that direction. He was limited by traditions; he had too many prejudices. The axioms of the transcendental philosophy clung to him. The shreds of religion hung about him. He could not divest himself of the ancient clerical memories and ways, nor wholly throw off the mantle of personal sympathy he had so long worn. He was not completely secular.

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That he was a perfect man is less evident still. His sunny quality was due in some degree to a happy temperament, and was subject to the eclipses that darken the blandest natures, and render sombre the most hilarious spirits. He lacked the steadfast courage of conviction, was somewhat over-prudent and timid, afraid of pain, of popular disapproval, of criticism and opposition. This may have been due in part to his frequent disappointments and the carefulness they forced upon him, to the distrust in his own judgment which he had occasion to learn, and the necessity of confining his action to the point immediately before him. But I am inclined to think that this apprehensiveness was constitutional. If it is suggested by way of objection that the bold experiment of Brook Farm, made in the face of obloquy and derision, indicated moral courage of a high stamp, I would remind the critic of the warm approbation of his friends, and the confident expectation of success on the part of those he was intimate with. His wife not merely gave him her countenance but stimulated his zeal, and surrounded him every day with an atmosphere of faith. He had the applause of Dr. Channing, and the support of his brilliant nephew. Men like Hawthorne, Ellis Gray Loring, George Stearns, not to mention others, urged him on. His own well-beloved sister was one of his ardent coadjutors. He had hopes of Emerson. In short, so far from being alone, he stood in an influential company, and instead of his being altogether unpopular was encompassed by the good-will of those he prized most. It would have required courage to resist such influences. Besides, he was inflated by a momentary enthusiasm which carried him along in spite of himself and would not allow his judgment to work. A sudden storm struck him, lifted unusual waves, caused unexampled spurts of foam, made the ordinarily quiet water boisterous and dangerous, and threw long lines of breakers on the coast, so that what was a still lake became of a sudden a tempestuous sea. One must not hastily imagine that the water had become an ocean, or that it was really an Atlantic formerly supposed to be a pool.

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Then it must be said he loved money too well. This infirmity was not native to him, but must probably be imputed to early poverty, the necessity of working hard in order to pay debts not altogether of his own contracting, thus pledging the meagre income of the first sixty years of his life. His final income was large, but it was earned by incessant literary toil, which naturally rendered him avaricious of the rewards that might come to him. His generosity did not have a fair chance to show itself outside of his family. There it was lavish, but there it was too much mixed up with affection, duty, and pride to be credited to his manhood. He did not live long enough, either, to attain complete superiority over his accidents. He was already an old man before he had money for his wants. I remember meeting him on Broadway in 1861, the year of his wife's death, and he said: "My grief is embittered by the thought that she died just as I was getting able to obtain for her what she needed." He was then fifty-nine years of age. It cannot be expected that any impulse of generosity will overcome the habits of a life-time at so advanced a period as this. That they showed themselves at all is remarkable, and establishes as well their power as their existence.

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In a word, this man was too heavily weighted by circumstances to do his genius full justice. He seemed to be two individuals, with little in common between them. As one looked at his past or at his present, his real character was differently judged. The most plausible account of him was that which supposed the experiences to be buried in a deep grave, which was seldom uncovered even by the man himself, who lived in the day before him, and rarely glanced back save to mourn over or to make sport of his former career. The only way of establishing a unity in his history is to concede the supremacy of the intellectual quality over the moral in his first endeavors. The prejudice in favor of the moral was and is so strong that to maintain this supremacy will seem like a condemnation of him, though meant in his praise. He probably would so have considered it, especially when carried away by the flood of memories. It was easy for him to be mistaken. His merit consists in the energy of the

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reason which made headway against a host of disadvantages and achieved something resembling a victory in the end. Some time hence, when the homage paid to sentiment shall have yielded to the worship of knowledge, George Ripley will be regarded as one of the earliest apostles of the light.

All these greatly enriched my life in New York, opened new spheres of activity, and enlarged my whole horizon, both intellectually and socially. Their variety, elasticity, and vigor in many fields of intellectual force added much to the extension of my view, and acted, not merely as a refreshment, but also as a stimulus.

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## XV.

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### THE PRESENT SITUATION.

The progress of mind is continuous. Strictly speaking, there are no periods of transition, no crises in thought. The history of ideas presents no gap. Every stage begins and ends an epoch. One is often reminded of the common notion that the year begins and ends at a particular moment. Every day begins and ends a year; every hour is equally sacred. Yet solemn thought, worship, self-examination, are precious, and these can be secured only by the observance of times and seasons; so that we fall on our knees and pray when the old year ends and the new one begins.

So, as a point of time must be fixed upon, we will begin with Thomas Paine. It is not easy to speak fully and justly of Paine, because in so doing we must speak of the misapprehensions and mis-statements of which he has been the victim; and even if we refute these, the bare mention of them leaves a stain on his fame. No doubt his method—application of common-sense to religion—was essentially vicious. Common-sense is an admirable quality in practical affairs, quite indispensable in the management of business of all kinds, but it has no place in the discussion of works of the higher imagination—of poetry, art, music, or faith. But such was the man's genius, such was the demand of his age. It is easy to speak of his ignorance, his coarseness, his impudence, his vanity; but it must be remembered that his education was very imperfect, for he was utterly ignorant of any language but his own, and he did not, apparently, read even the English deists; that he was a man of the people; that he lived in an age of revolutions; that he stood for the rights of common humanity. It must be remembered also that, in the first place, he brought the human mind face to face with problems which had been appropriated by a special class that considered itself exempt from criticism. In the next place he was in dead earnest; not attacking the Bible or religion out of flippancy or brutality, but because he really hated the interpretations that were usually given of sacred things; his attack was against orthodoxy, not against faith. "His blasphemy," says Leslie Stephen, "was not against the Supreme God, but against Jehovah. He was vindicating the ruler of the universe from the imputations which believers in literal inspiration and dogmatical theology had heaped upon him under the disguise of homage. He was denying that the God before whom reasonable creatures should bow in reverence could be the supernatural tyrant of priestly imagination, who was responsible for Jewish massacres, who favored a petty clan at the expense of his other creatures, who punished the innocent for the guilty, who lighted the fires of everlasting torment for the masses of mankind, and who gave a monopoly of his favor to priests or a few favored enthusiasts. Paine, in short, with all his brutality, had the conscience of his hearers on his side, and we must prefer his rough exposure of popular errors to the unconscious blasphemy of his supporters." Then Paine *did love his kind*; he abhorred cruelty, and desired, after his fashion, to elevate his race.

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Examples of this are numerous. At the time when the "Common Sense" and "Crisis" were having an enormous sale, the demand for the former reaching not less than one hundred thousand copies, and both together offering to the author profits that would have made him rich, Paine freely gave the copyright to every State in the Union. In his period of public favor and of intimate friendship with the founders of the government, Paine declined to accept any place or office of emolument, saying: "I must be in everything, as I have ever been, a disinterested volunteer. My proper sphere of action is on the common floor of citizenship, and to honest men I give my hand and heart freely." The State of Virginia made a large claim on the general government for lands. Thomas Paine opposed the claim as unreasonable and unjust, though at that very time there was a resolution before the legislature of Virginia to appropriate to him a handsome sum of money for services rendered. In 1797, Paine was the chief promoter of the society of "Theophilanthropists," whose object was the extinction of religious prejudices, the maintenance of morality, and the diffusion of faith in one God. "It is want of feeling," says this *heartless blasphemer*, "to talk of priests and bells, while infants are perishing in hospitals, and the aged and infirm poor are dying in the streets." In 1774, Paine published in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, a strong, anti-slavery essay. While clerk in the Pennsylvania Legislature he made an appeal in behalf of the army, then in extreme distress, and subscribed his entire salary for the year to the fund that was raised. Towards the close of his life, he devised a plan for imposing a special tax on all deceased persons' estates, to create a fund from which all, on reaching twenty-one years, should receive a sum to establish them in business, and in order that all who were in the decline of life should be saved from destitution. It is not generally known that Paine often preached on Sunday afternoons at New Rochelle. In England he spoke in early life from Dissenting pulpits, and to him we owe this exquisite definition of religion: "It is man bringing to his Maker the fruits of his heart." All this is evidence that honorable considerations were at the bottom of his own belief. He was, according to his view, the friend of man, and in this interest wrote his books. He introduced

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He certainly repeated the ideas of Collins and Toland, and the conceptions that were floating in the air, breathed by Voltaire and Diderot; but he did give them voice. The English deists were dead, and would have continued so but for him. He was essentially a pamphleteer, the master of a very rich, simple style that went directly to the hearts of the people. His best performances were unquestionably political, but all his works were marked by the same peculiarities. His mistake was in supposing that the power that could animate an army could pull down a church.

Paine was no saint, but he was no sinner above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. He drank too much; he took too much snuff; he was vulgar; he was a vehement man in a vehement age; he went to dinner in his dressing-gown; and he certainly did not bring his best convictions to bear on his private character; but he did wake up minds that had been dumb or oppressed before. The "Age of Reason" went everywhere, into holes and corners, among back-woodsmen and pioneers, and did more execution among plain moral men than many a book that was more worthy of acceptance. It is a pity that his disciples should be content with repeating his denials, instead of building on the rational foundations which he laid. For instance, they might, while adding to his criticism of the Scriptures, have shown their high moral bearing and their spiritual glow. They might have carried out further his "enthusiasm for humanity," showing that man had more in him than Paine suspected. They might have been justified by more scientific reasons his belief in God and in immortality. They might have been truly rationalists as he wanted to be, but could not be at that period. But they were satisfied with saying over and over again what he said as well as he could, but not as well as they can. He was simply a precursor, but he was a precursor of such men as Colenso and Robertson Smith, and a large host of scholars beside.

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Paine's best exponent in America is perhaps Robert G. Ingersoll. He is a sort of transfigured Paine. He has all Paine's power over the masses, being perhaps the most eloquent man in America; more than Paine's wit; more than Paine's earnestness; more than Paine's love of humanity; more than Paine's scorn of deceit and harshness,—for he extends his abhorrence of cruelty even to dumb beasts. He has great power of sympathy, a tender feeling for misery of all kinds. He is a poet, as is evident from these words:

We do not know whether the grave is the end of this life or the door of another, or whether the night here is somewhere else a dawn. The idea of Immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed into the human heart with its countless waves beating against the shores and rocks of time and faith, was not born of any book or of any creed or of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow, Hope, shining upon the tears of grief.

Paine's simple childlike belief in God and Immortality, Ingersoll remands to the cloudy sphere of agnosticism, as Paine probably would now; but it is my opinion that if evidence which he regarded as satisfactory—that is, legal evidence—could be given, he, too, would accept these articles; for he has none of the elements of the bigot about him. His detestation is simply of hell and a priesthood; for pure, spiritual religion, he has only respect. Like Paine, he attacks the ecclesiasticism and theology of the day, and is satisfied with doing that; and, like Paine, he has convictions instead of opinions, and his character is all aflame with his ideas.

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In his private life, in his family relations, in his public career, there is no reproach on his name—nothing that he need be ashamed of.

Mr. Ingersoll does not worship the Infinite under any recognized form or name, but that he adores the *substance of deity* is beyond all doubt; he worships truth and purity and sincerity and love,—everything that is highest and noblest in human life. One word more I must say,—that his motive is essentially religious. It is his aim to lift off the burden of superstition and priestcraft; to elevate the soul of manhood and womanhood; to promote rational progress in goodness; to emancipate every possibility of power in the race; and this is the aim of every pure religion,—to open new spheres of hope and accomplishment.

The disintegration of the popular orthodoxy goes on very fast, and always under the influence of the moral sentiment. This is very prettily put by Miss Jewett, in one of her short stories, entitled "The Town Poor." Two ladies, jogging along a country road, fall to talking about an old meeting-house which is being *improved* after the modern fashion. One of them laments the loss of the ancient pews and pulpit, and the substitution of a modern platform and slips. The other says:

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When I think of them old sermons that used to be preached in that old meeting-house, I am glad it is altered over so as not to remind folks. Them old brimstone discourses! you know preachers is far more reasonable now-a-days. Why, I sat an' thought last Sabbath as I listened, that if old Mr. Longbrother and Deacon Bray could hear the difference, they'd crack the ground over 'em like pole beans, and come right up 'long side their headstones.

In Chicago, some years ago, orthodox preachers begged a pronounced radical to stay and help them fight the matter out on the inside; and a minister of one of the principal churches there distinctly said that he did not believe in the infallibility of the Bible or an everlasting punishment. A Congregational minister in Connecticut expressed himself as thoroughly in sympathy with the advanced party in theology. An orthodox clergyman in New England declared that he did not know of an orthodox minister in the whole range of his acquaintance who believed in the old doctrine. A

minister in Rhode Island, who occupied a high position in the orthodox church, while declining to make an open statement on account of social and political reasons, avowed his willingness to write a private letter disclaiming all belief in the accepted views. The Rev. Howard MacQueary, the Episcopal rector of Canton, Ohio, who has recently published a book, entitled the "Evolution of Man and Christianity," has been convicted of heresy against his own protest and the popular sentiment. The successor of Henry Ward Beecher, in Brooklyn, N. Y., recently published the essentials of his creed. There is no fall in it, no trinity, no miracle in the old sense, no eternal punishment. He declares, frankly, that there is no difference *in kind* between man, Jesus, and God, but only a difference *in degree*. The same man recently preached in King's Chapel, and lectured in Channing Hall. The Andover controversy distinctly reveals the decay of the ancient theology. In England dissent has gone very far, as is evident from a book called "The Kernel and the Husk," written by the Rev. Dr. E. A. Abbott, the author of the article on "The Gospels," in the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica." In this article the fall is repudiated, the trinity, miracles, the virgin birth, the physical resurrection of Jesus, and eternal punishment; yet even his bishop has not rebuked him. Yes, the moral sentiment is certainly coming to its rights.

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Of Unitarianism, after what has been said, it is unnecessary to speak. That there should be a difference between the East and the West is natural. The East holds fast, in large sense, to the ancient theological traditions. The West never had them, and can therefore declare that its fellowship is conditioned on no doctrinal tests, and can welcome all who wish to establish truth and righteousness and love in the world. The West will ultimately prevail; the temper of the East is rapidly wasting away, and the breach will soon be closed up. The new Unitarian churches will be founded on a practical basis, the only requirement being that the minister should be deeply in earnest about religious things. The characteristic of all churches, of whatever name, is an urgent interest in social reform, a deep concern for the disfranchised and oppressed, and a warm feeling towards the elevation of mankind. The universal prayer is, to borrow the pithy language of Dr. F. H. Hedge: "May Thy kingdom come on earth!" not "May we come into Thy kingdom."

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If it was hard to do full justice to Thomas Paine, it is harder to do full justice to the Broad Churchman. There is no authoritative account of his position to which appeal can be made, and the great variety of opinion on incidental points makes it difficult to frame any description which the leaders would accept. A great deal depends on the change of circumstances, the ruling spirit of the time, the prevailing tendencies of thought in the period,—whether scientific, critical, or social,—and a great deal depends, too, on the peculiarities of individual temperament, but the fundamental doctrines are the same. The ordinary observer can see the largeness, sympathy, inclusiveness, devotion to actual needs. But the ordinary observer cannot see the real basis of faith in human nature; the manifestation of the Divine Being in the highest possibilities of man; the trust in a living, active, communicating God.

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These are cardinal points, and must be insisted on. The inherent depravity of man; his essential corruption; his absolute inability to receive any portion of the divine life, is naturally repudiated. But his feebleness, crudeness, imperfection, his dearth and deficiency, his sensuality, hardness, love of material things, is insisted on, and cannot be exaggerated. Still there is a germ of the divine nature in him, a spark of the divine flame which can be kindled. The familiar language of Longfellow expresses this idea exactly:

"Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,  
Who have faith in God and Nature,  
Who believe that in all ages  
Every human heart is human,  
That in even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not,  
That the feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness  
And are lifted up and strengthened:—  
Listen to this simple story."

To this nature, thus receptive, God addresses Himself. He is the Father, the absolute Love, and his desire is to lead men upward towards the height of divine perfection. In all ages, in every way, he has been trying to do this; and all nature, all art, all literature is full of this affection for his child. Even the Pagan myths express this striving of God with man. The existence of what we call evil is assumed, but there is no attempt to explain it or theorize about it or reconcile it with any mode of philosophy. To us it may be simply the divine effort to startle the soul into a consciousness of itself. Even the worst forms of doubt, of denial, of atheism may be parts of this divine effort; even men like Strauss and Feuerbach may be witnesses for truth, because they drive men back in horror from the pit of disbelief, and compel them to take refuge through tears and prayers in the supreme love. Of absolute evil we cannot be sure that there is any; so many ways must the infinite spirit have to awaken men to a sense of their own destiny.

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I cannot better convey my thought than by recounting the essence of two sermons that I heard some years ago from eminent preachers in different American cities; the first was on the death of Charles Darwin. After a very ornate service, the minister dwelt enthusiastically on the merits of Darwin as a philosopher, described his system, and declared that his own belief in the Deity of Christ, was confirmed in large measure by Darwin's theory of the Selection of the Fittest. The statement was

startling at first, for the two doctrines seemed to point in opposite directions, but the speaker probably meant that the Christ expressed all the potentialities of human nature; that he was the Fittest; not a miracle, not an exception to humanity, but the perfection of man; in other words, a divine person. The other sermon turned on the murder of Sisera (Judges iv, 18), as contrasted with a statement in the first epistle of John (iv, 8), "God is love." The rector spoke of the assassination of Sisera in terms of extreme abhorrence; called it treacherous, cruel, base, and then said: "See what progress the human mind has made from this period to that when John was written." The common impression is that the *human* mind had nothing to do with it, it being the *divine* mind that was alone in question. But what the preacher meant was evidently this,—either that the divine mind dropped thoughts into the human mind as fast as they could be appreciated, or that the human mind, imperfect in development, apprehended all that it could of the perfect mind. Whichever case we assume, the integrity of the divine mind is secured, and at the same time the growth of the human.

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At this point, the conception of the Broad Churchman's idea of the inspiration of the Scripture must be dwelt upon, for the doctrine is very remarkable, and throws a flood of light upon his whole conception of the aim and purpose of Christianity. According to the common notion, the Bible is literally the word of God, and men have nothing to do but to submit themselves to its authority. They must suppress all natural desires, all dictates of their moral sense, to this supreme standard of truth and rectitude. According to this notion, the whole of man, as a thoroughly corrupted being, is *subject*, in obedience to this law. The second theory, adopted by the American Broad Churchman, holds that the Bible *contains* the word of God; and this implies that there may be a part of the Bible that is not the word of God, and opens the way to an indefinite amount of criticism, speculation, and doubt. The English Broad Churchman holds, as I understand it, the common doctrine, but with this immense difference. That whereas, according to the common notion, the Bible is the word of God, he maintains that the whole object of the Bible is to educate and uplift man. The word is a minister to human needs. Through it, God is trying in various ways, by history, biography, tale, and song, to warn, persuade, teach, inspire the human soul. Sometimes he can do nothing but startle, shame, provoke; and the very things we find fault with may be designed for moral education. The Bible, itself, encourages this idea. Does not Paul preach reconciliation? Does not John speak of God as love? God hardened the heart of Pharaoh in order that he might show that He was stronger than Pharaoh. Jacob was not altogether a lovely character, but the Lord wrestled with him and lamed him, thus showing his own disapproval of the patriarch's temper. David was a seducer, adulterer, and murderer, but he *repented*, was ashamed, was sorrowful, and this repentance made him a man after God's own heart. It was not that God *approved* of his conduct, but that he wanted to make us *disapprove* of it. In like manner Luther based his faith on the Bible, because it convicted him of sin, and drove him to seek refuge for himself in Christ. The Church as an organization has always this one purpose in view—to minister to the soul of man. The "Articles" fairly throbbled with this conception. The outrage committed by the "Evangelicals," men who insist upon everlasting punishment and talk of doom, consists in their overlooking this divine purpose towards humanity.

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The *doctrines* of the Church—the Deity of Christ, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension—bear this testimony, and are inexplicable without it. But these doctrines simply convey one thought. The Christ must be God, otherwise he could not exemplify the perfect love; he must be Incarnate, otherwise he could not mingle with men. His Resurrection teaches his absolute triumph over death; his Ascension is a pledge of his union with God and his perpetual intercourse with God's children.

The two *rites*, Baptism and Communion, give the same idea. Baptism imports a recognition of the duty to lead a Christian life; and Communion imports a wish, on the part of all who partake of it, to enter into the privilege of a perfect harmony with Christ. None of these points are reached by criticism, or any array of texts, though passages may be cited in confirmation of them. But the proof is derived from experience, from the felt need of enlightenment and inspiration, from prayer and the yearning after eternal life. No doubt it is taken for granted that neither the Bible nor the Church expresses the *whole* word of God. The word is as large as the divine love, and this is infinite. The complete word of God includes all nature, all history, and all life.

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It will be understood that the Broad Church notion is only a theory and rests entirely on its reasonableness. It is simply a modification of Episcopalianism, and none but an Episcopalian would be likely to adopt it. Its interest for us consists in its *human* character, in its earnestness for social reform, in its passionate desire to make conscience and justice and freedom of the Spirit supreme in all human affairs. It is essentially an ethical system with an ecclesiastical addition and a heavenly purpose.

There is certainly a great difference between the Broad Church in America and the Broad Church in England; there are no Thirty-Nine Articles in this country; there is no National Church. The Broad Churchman here is still a Churchman, but the system is much more elastic and much more intellectual. The Church is to him also a divine institution, but not a final establishment; and it becomes divine by virtue of its helpfulness in imparting the divine life and its power of human service. The sacraments have become symbols, venerable from their antiquity, but more venerable from their use. The Broad Churchman is an orthodox believer, but he accepts only the simplest creeds, and he interprets them in accordance with the rational principles of thought, and with his fundamental conception of Christianity, holding not to the written letter, but to the real meaning of the Confession. This meaning is, he maintains, easily reconcilable with the idea that all revelation is made to a living mind,—whether that of a race or an individual,—and that the Bible is merely the record of it. No *book*, in his estimation, can be inspired. This, coupled with a belief in the unlimited progress of the natural conscience, brings the system within the category of modern arrangements.

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The idea that man is *developed* into the divine life, not *converted* to it, seems to be the heart of the

system. The writings of F. D. Maurice are full of it. He said that he did not know what the Broad Church was, and disclaimed any position in it; yet he is its reputed father, and certainly held its cardinal doctrine. This was the soul of his teaching; this dictated his likes and his dislikes; this animated his dissent from the Evangelicals on the one hand and the Rationalists on the other; this made him cling to the "Articles"; this made him love the Church. I cannot better convey my notion of the Broad Churchman's credence than by quoting some passages from Maurice:

I think that the *ground-work of this thought* and this humanity *is laid bare* in the Thirty-nine Articles; *that for that ground-work* [namely, the living God, the living Word] all our different schools are trying to produce feeble and crumbling substitutes; that we must recur to it if we would pass the narrow dimensions of Calvinism, Anglicanism, Romanism; if we would learn what a message we have for Jews, Mahometans, Brahmans, Buddhists, for all the nations of the earth, as well as our poor people at home.

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I cannot doubt that this belief [the confession of a God, who was, and is, and is to come] is latent in every man now; that we are all living, moving, having our being in this God, and that He does reveal Himself to His creatures gradually, before He is revealed in His fulness of glory.

I do perceive that if I have any work in the world, it is to bear witness of this name [the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost], not as expressing certain relations, however profound, in the divine nature, but as the underground of all fellowship among men and angels, as that which will at last bind all into one, satisfying all the craving of the reason as well as of the heart, meeting the desires and intuitions that are scattered through all the religions of the world.

The Church must either fulfil its witness of the redemption for mankind or be cut off. And I cannot help thinking that a time is at hand when we shall awaken to this conviction, and when we shall perceive that what we call our individual salvation means nothing, and that our faith in it becomes untenable when we separate it from the salvation which Christ wrought out for the world by His incarnation and sacrifice, resurrection and ascension.

He has been pleased to reveal to me in His Son the brightness of His glory, His absolute love. On that point I have a right to be certain; he who says I have not, rejects the Bible and disbelieves the incarnation of the Lord. I will not give up an inch of this ground; it is a matter of life and death.

By baptism we claim the position which Christ has claimed for all mankind.... More and more I am led to ask myself what a Gospel to mankind must be, whether it must not have some other ground than the fall of Adam and the sinful nature of man.... No doctrine can be so at variance as this, with the notion that it is a Gospel which men have need of, and in their inmost hearts are craving for.

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Why is not this system sufficient? Simply because the claim that Christ is God, does not seem made out to severely critical minds. Such as these must hold even the Broad Church to be a mythology, beautiful and innocent, but still a mythology. The word "mythology" implies no disparagement. A mythology is simply the poetical form of an idea, and takes its character from the nature of the ideas it represents. The pagan mythology is on this account very different from the Christian, and a mythology that has universal love as its basis may well be called innocent and beautiful. To the doctrine of trinity, philosophically considered, even Unitarian scholars make no objection. What they cannot accept is the deity of Jesus as an historical person. The Christ is not, in their opinion, an historical person, but a doctrine, not identical with the man of the New Testament. The Divine Being has never, in their estimation, appeared on earth. They only who can put aside criticism, can suppress it, can regard it but as one of many manifestations of mind, can fix their eyes on a church for society at large and not for individuals, will be likely to accept it, and they will on the ground that it is altogether human, a church for mankind.

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The last phase in the development of the moral sentiment is represented by the "Ethical Societies." It is natural that the origin of these should be Jewish, for the Jews are unencumbered by the mysteries of the Christian theology; their genius is for social organization, and the moral element is very large in their religion. It is natural, too, that the system should be purer here than in England. Some of the members of the "Cambridge Ethical Society" are members of the Church of England, and have to be warned not to set themselves needlessly in opposition to the work of the Christian churches. The "Edinburgh Ethical Club" is mainly a debating society. In America it is usual to have a lecturer, and stated services on Sunday. But these services are very simple, nay, even bare; there is no prayer, and no scripture, no architecture or art or poetry; but there is an intense earnestness, nay, enthusiasm, for social reform. There are kindergartens for the poor children of the streets, there are classes for the untaught, libraries for the workingmen, plans for better lodging and employment for the families of artisans. There is no fixed doctrine in regard to the origin of the moral sentiments, lest any should be alienated; the object being to combine all who have at heart the moral interests of mankind. The peculiarity of these societies is not so much that they lay emphasis on the moral as distinct from the spiritual interests, or aim to break down the dividing line between Religion and Ethics, as it is that they rest upon conscience as the supreme authority, that they assume its practical function, build upon it as the one and only thing absolutely known. There is no pretence of following, even at a distance, the charities of the old churches with their vast funds, their immense organizations, their heaps of tracts, their legions of missionaries, all employed in calling unbelievers into the fold. The

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object is to elevate all mankind by appealing to their moral instincts, on the ground of their inherent ability to rise in the scale of being.

To make their position clear let me quote the words of the founder of these societies, contained in an article entitled "The Freedom of Ethical Fellowship," in the first number of the *International Journal of Ethics*:

It is the aim of the Ethical Societies to extend the area of moral co-operation so as to include a part, at least, of the inner moral life; to unite men of divers opinions and beliefs in the common endeavor to explore the field of duty; to gain clearer perceptions of right and wrong; to study with thoroughgoing zeal the practical problems of social, political, and individual ethics, and to embody the new insight in manners and institutions....

It would be a wrong and a hindrance to the further extension of truth to raise above our opinions the superstructure of a social institution. For institutions in their nature are conservative; they dare not, without imperilling their stability, permit a too frequent inspection or alteration of their foundations.... The subject part of mankind, in most places, might, with Egyptian bondage expect Egyptian darkness, were not the candle of the Lord set up by himself in men's minds, which it is impossible for the breath or power of man wholly to extinguish. It is to this "candle of the Lord set up in men's minds" that we look for illumination. It is in the light which it sheds that we would read the problems of conduct and teach others to read them. We appeal directly to the conscience of the present age, and of the civilized portion of mankind. There remains as a residue a common deposit of moral truth, a common stock of moral judgments, which we may call the common conscience. It is upon this common conscience that we build.... The contents of the common conscience we would clarify and classify, to the end that they may become the conscious possession of all classes; and in order to enrich and enlarge the conscience, the method we would follow is to begin with cases in which the moral judgment is already clear, the moral rule already accepted; and to show that the same rule, the same judgment, applies to other cases, which, because of their greater complexity, are less transparent to the mental eye....

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And here it may be appropriate to introduce a few reflections on the relations of moral practice to ethical theory in religious belief. To many it will appear that the logic of our position must lead us to underestimate the value of philosophical and religious doctrines in connection with morality, and that, having excluded this from our basis of fellowship, we shall inevitably drift into a crude empiricism. I may be permitted to say that precisely the opposite is at least our aim, and that among the objects we propose to ourselves, none are dearer than the advancement of ethical theory and the upbuilding of religious conviction. The Ethical Society is a society of persons who are bent on being taught clearer perceptions of right and wrong, and being shown how to improve conduct. At least, let us hasten to add, the ideal of the society is that of a body of men who shall have this bent. Is it vain to hope that there will in time arise those who will render them the service they require....

It is safe to say that every step forward in religion was due to a quickening of the moral impulses; that moral progress is the condition of religious progress; that the good life is the soil out of which the religious life grows. The truths of religion are chiefly two,—that there is a reality other than that of the senses, and that the ultimate reality in things is, in a sense transcending our comprehension, akin to the moral nature of men. But how shall we acquaint ourselves with this super-sensible? The ladder of science does not reach so far. And the utmost stretch of the speculative reason cannot attain to more than the abstract postulate of an infinite, which, however, is void of the essential attributes of divinity. Only the testimony of the moral life can support a vital conviction of this sort....

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The Ethical Society is friendly to genuine religion anywhere and everywhere, because it vitalizes religious doctrines by pouring into them the contents of spiritual meaning.... A new moral earnestness must precede the rise of larger religious ideals; for the new religious synthesis which many long for, will not be a fabrication, but a growth. It will not steal upon us as a thief in the night, or burst upon us as lightning from the sky, but will come in time as a result of the gradual, moral evolution of modern society, as the expression of higher moral aspirations, and a response to deeper moral needs.

In his famous essay on "Worship," Emerson says:

There will be a new church founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawm or psaltery or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry.

Is this the church that Emerson predicted? It looks like it. Already we seem to hear the shawms and sackbuts. Already there are desires after a more rich and melodious administration.

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The last number of the *International Journal of Ethics* contains two articles: one on "The Inner Life in

Relation to Morality," the other on "The Ethics of Doubt," which suggest a transcendental ground for moral beliefs; and they who dissent from this position surround *action* with an ideal solemnity. At all events it is something to see, even at a distance, a city that hath foundations.

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## XVI.

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### THE RELIGIOUS FUTURE OF AMERICA.

In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of October 15, 1860, M. Renan wrote a remarkable article on the "Future of Religion in Modern Society." This paper of course dealt largely with questions that were interesting at that time, but it also contains very acute observations on the whole subject, which are of universal concern. His conclusions are that neither Judaism nor Romanism nor the established forms of Protestantism will constitute the coming faith, which must be spiritual (that is, free of space and time), undogmatical, and enfranchised. "The religious question," he says, "finds its solution in liberty.... The liberal principle pre-eminently is that man has a soul, that he is to be reached only through the soul, that nothing is of value save as it effects a change in the soul. An inflexible justice, granting with inexorable firmness liberty to all, even to those who, were they masters, would refuse it to their adversaries, is the only issue that reason discovers for the grave problems raised in our time." This essay, along with that of Emile de Laveleye of Liège in Belgium, on the "Religious Future of Civilized Communities," written in 1876, sums up the whole question. It only remains to apply their principles to America.

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Many dread the prevalence of Roman Catholicism. I confess I never could share in that apprehension. For if there is anything certain it is the unchangeableness of the lines of division that separate the three great regions of the earth, each having its own faith. There is the Greek Church, which rules in Asia; the Latin Church, which is confined to the Latin races, and is strongest in Southern Italy, where the people are most ignorant and supine; and the Protestant Church, which prevails in Northern Europe among the Germanic nations. As Renan says:

Nothing will come of the mutual struggle of the three Christian families; their equilibrium is as well assured as that of the three great races which share between them the world; their separation will secure the future against the excessive predominance of a single religious power, just as the division of Europe must forever prevent the return of that *orbis romanus*, that closed circle, which allowed no possible escape from the tyranny that unity has engendered.

Moreover, the Roman Catholic faith is essentially *Italian*, and as such can have no permanent influence in Germany, England, or America. The great popes of the Middle Ages, whose genius raised the papacy to power and splendor, were Italians. Italy, until a few years ago, was isolated; not a great political power, as it is now, among other powers of Europe, nor drawn by political affiliations into the schemes of other dominions. Besides, the Catholic Church had the advantages of the Italian genius for organization, command, wisdom in practical affairs. Then, too, it had the immense benefit of the old Roman treasures of art, which gave a glory to the system. These considerations alone would make it impossible that Romanism, in its foreign form, should ever become the religion of the United States. There may be another kind of ecclesiasticism, but without the ancient authority; an ecclesiasticism which stands for pomp, ornament, display, beauty, but not for anything more. There is evidence that every form of religion here is disposed to take on elements of decoration,—architecture, music, stained glass, drapery, pictures, and monuments; but this is only a sign of increasing wealth, not of increasing subjection.

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In addition to all this, the *genius* of the American people is strongly against anything like submission to authority. The love of liberty is exceedingly powerful. It is claimed that Romanism is not committed to any form of government, that it is as favorable to republican institutions as to monarchical; but this is not the opinion of Renan, who was born and trained in the church, and who is therefore entitled to speak with knowledge; nor is it the opinion of other scholars, Martineau for instance, who says in his article on the "Battle of the Churches" (*Westminster Review*, January, 1851):

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We are convinced it cannot occupy the scope which English traditions and English usage have secured; that every step it may make is an encroachment upon wholesome liberty; that it is innocent only where it is insignificant, and where it is ascendant will neither part with power nor use it well, and that it must needs raise to the highest pitch the common vice of tyranny and democracy,—the relentless crushing of minorities.

But whether this charge of absolutism be just or not, Romanism has been so long associated as a polity with monarchical governments that it has contracted a habit of domineering, and the people can never be persuaded that the papacy is democratic in its constitution.

Americans are very suspicious, too, of any interference on the part of the government. If a system demands an army, a palace, lands, it must pay for them out of its own private means. A generation or more ago it was possible for an administration to give for a merely nominal sum, in the very heart of a large city, great estates to one denomination. This is possible no longer. Every sect must vindicate

itself, and stand on its own feet; this alone would make it impossible for a church so poor as the Catholic to establish itself in this country on any terms of supremacy.

The desire for change which is inherent in the American mind must also prove fatal in the end to any claim of absolute stability. Protestantism is therefore better for Americans than Romanism is, because it is more portable, more various, more accommodating to popular tastes and inclinations.

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There is no disposition to undervalue the work of the Catholic Church. Its great saints, its heroic martyrs, its stupendous missions, its enormous philanthropy, its influence in educating and controlling masses of people, cannot be exaggerated; and still it is destined to wield an immense influence as a spiritual power over the human race; but it never again can be the absolute system it once was. However it may commend itself to certain classes in our population, it must always be simply one department in the universal church.

But it will be said that the Catholic Church may *accommodate* itself to republican institutions. M. Renan doubts whether any radical change can be made. He says:

Catholicism, persuaded that it works for the truth, will always endeavor to enlist the state in its defence or its spread.... Catholicism is, in fact, the believer's country, far more than is the land of his birth. The stronger a religion is, the more effective it is in this way.... More and more have Catholics been brought to think that they derive life and salvation from Rome. It is especially worth remarking that the new Catholic conquests exhibit the most sensitiveness on this point. The old provincial Catholic, whose faith belonged to the soil, has less need of the Pope, and is much less alarmed at the storms that menace him, than the new Catholics, who are coming fresh to Catholicism, and regard the Pope, after the new system, as the author and defender of their faith.... Catholicism has been seduced into becoming a religion essentially political. The Pope becomes the actual sovereign of the church.

But supposing that such an alteration is possible, that the church can abase its pretensions to supremacy over all other sects, that Romanism simply melts into our society,—in this case, the papacy, as usually understood, becomes simply a form of church government like Presbyterianism or Congregationalism or Episcopacy; Catholicism becomes a purely spiritual faith, and, as such, is not only harmless but beneficent.

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The religion, therefore, of America cannot be ecclesiastical; neither can it be dogmatic. I was on the point of saying *theological*; but there is a great difference between theological and dogmatical. Dogmatism is theology raised to power. Theology there always must be; some account of the Supreme Power in the world; some report of the contents of the Divine Mind. The present indifference to theology is hardly a good sign, unless it be an indifference to theology as usually regarded—that is, to the old systems of theology. The future religion, for this reason, cannot be Protestantism. For Protestantism is essentially dogmatical. It claims superiority to Romanism on the one hand and to infidelity on the other. Furthermore, it is identified with the Bible. Now, modern scientific criticism has so riddled the Bible, that it no longer can serve as a foundation. And this foundation being taken away, Protestantism must lose its corner-stone, and rest entirely on a rational basis. Likewise, Protestantism encourages sectarianism. It exists, in fact, only in numerous parties, each jealous of the rest and seeking to build up its own establishment without regard to the well-being of opposing bodies. There is a dream of unity amid all this diversity. But such unity can be gained only by the sacrifice of the very peculiarity of division, and the admission of certain things which all have in common; and such a reconciliation, besides the tyranny it engenders, cannot be desired, as it would be fatal to all activity. Sectarianism itself, apart from the "hatred, malice, and uncharitableness" which accompany it, may not of necessity be an evil; but sectarianism as it exists now is an evil of very great moment, and yet, without something of this alienation between sects Protestantism would decline.

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Is Unitarianism then to be the coming religion? I cannot think so. Unitarianism is but a form of Protestantism; the most attenuated form. It is committed to the Bible; held to it indeed by a very fine thread, but still held to it. No doubt it has gained greatly in the last years. The annual circulation of its tracts has risen in twenty-five or thirty years from fifteen thousand to three hundred thousand copies. A quarter of a century ago there was but one Unitarian church on the Pacific coast, now there are eighteen. A generation since it had, in the whole region from the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains, only fourteen churches, now there are ninety; and in the same period, sixty-three new societies have come into being in the New England and Middle States. Still, as compared with the great sects, it is very small, and never can be their rival. And this because, however interesting and precious it may be to some people, it lacks, and must ever lack, owing to its critical character, the elements of a great religion, the passionateness that charms the people, and the moral enthusiasm that catches up the few men of genius. The period of "pale negotiations" is past; but in proportion as the system becomes positive it tends more and more towards the principle that animates the ethical societies, namely, its supreme devotion to the moral law. Thus it stands at the beginning, not at the end, of the line of advance, and has all the work of building up to do, before it can grow in general influence.

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No, the religion of the future in America must be of the spirit; not merely as being independent of form and dogma, but as cherishing a great hope for the soul, and a great aspiration after perfection. No doubt every spirit must have a form of some kind, but it need not be a fixed, established, dominant imposition. M. Renan touched the matter exactly when commenting on the interview of Jesus with the woman of Samaria: "Woman, the hour is coming and now is, when men shall worship neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem, but when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in

spirit and in truth." Renan says:

When the Christ pronounced this word, he became really a Son of God, and for the first time spoke the word upon which eternal religion shall repose. He founded the worship without date, without country, which shall endure to the end of time. He created a heaven of pure souls, where one finds what one asks in vain for on the earth, the perfect nobleness of the children of God, absolute purity, total abstraction from the impurities of the world, the liberty which has its complete amplitude only in the world of thought.... The love of God conceived as the type of all perfection, the love of man, charity, his whole doctrine is reduced to this; nothing can be less theological, less sacerdotal, nothing more philosophical, more profound, or more simple.

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The coming religion must also be humane and social. Intellectual it must certainly be, but it must, too, be emotional and adoring. There are three implications in it—a spiritual nature in man, a living power in the universe, an eternal life of progress and attainment, and these are assured only by reason.

The coming religion, we may add, must be Christian in name, because Christianity as an ideal faith has worked itself into our common life. It is the soul of our laws, of our customs, of our institutions. All assume its authority; all respect its sanction. The great thinkers of the world conspire in thinking so. Thus Goethe says:

Let intellectual culture progress; let natural science extend our knowledge; let the human mind grow; it will never outstrip the grandeur of Christianity, nor its moral culture.

Strauss, in his essay on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," declares that humanity never will be without religion; and Laveleye says:

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It is Christianity which has shed abroad in the world the idea of fellowship, from which issue the aspirations after equality which threaten the actual social order; it is also the influence of Christianity which arrests the explosion of this subversive force, and its principles, better comprised and better applied, will bring back by degrees peace in society.

Ours is a scientific age. There is a general demand for knowledge, a desire for demonstrated truth. Many will believe nothing that they cannot see with their eyes. In this sense, and in this sense alone, it is true that facts count for nothing in the domain of religion. But there are facts of the inner world that are quite as important as any facts in the outer world,—facts of the imagination; facts of love; facts of faith. Nothing is truer than that we are saved by hope. Science has enlarged the world; has beautified it; has made it look orderly, harmonious, poetic; but the realm of the known is very small indeed as compared with the realm of the unknown, and the more we discover, the more we find that there is to discover. The realm of the inner world is immensely large; and thousands of years must elapse before we discover its contents, if we ever do. The language of James Martineau is as true today as it was when the words were spoken, more than fifty years ago:

Until we touch upon the mysterious, we are not in contact with religion; nor are any objects reverently regarded by us, except such as, from their nature or their vastness, are felt to transcend our comprehension.... The station which the soul occupies when its devout affections are awakened, is always this; on the twilight between immeasurable darkness and refreshing light; on the confines between the seen and the unseen; where a little is discerned and an infinitude concealed; where a few distinct conceptions stand in confessed inadequacy, as symbols of ineffable realities.... And if this be true, the sense of what we do not know is as essential to our religion as the impression of what we do know: the thought of the boundless, the incomprehensible, must blend in our mind with the perception of the clear and true: the little knowledge we have must be clung to as the margin of an invisible immensity; and all our positive ideas be regarded as the mere float to show the surface of the infinite deep.

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Shall I say that some form of theism will be the religion of America in the future? Not the literal theism of a generation or more ago, with its individual God, its contriving Providence, its supplicatory prayer, its future of retribution; nor yet the theism of Theodore Parker, of an infinite God revealed in consciousness, "the Being, infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, infinitely just, infinitely loving, and infinitely holy." It well may resemble the system described by Francis W. Newman in his book called "Theism," published in London in 1858. In this work he describes a religion based on conscience, without regard to any form of professed faith, yet covering in its theory and practice the whole region of ideal ethics. Different minds approach the problem from different directions. Mr. F. E. Abbot ("Scientific Theism," 1885) appeals to science; Josiah Royce printed a volume in 1885 entitled "The Religious Aspect of Philosophy," wherein he pursues the line of sympathetic thought; James Martineau in his "Study of Religion" (1888), bases his system on the moral sense; but all three arrive at the same point—a supreme mind in creation.

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We must be careful not to confound Theism with Deism, for though both are the same word—one Greek and one Latin—and mean the same thing, yet they stand for entirely different conceptions. Deism is a purely negative system, weighed down with denials. It is content when it has rejected what it calls all supernatural adjuncts—miracles, revelations, an inspired Scripture. Its face is set

towards the past, not toward the future, and it is simply what is left of the old systems of belief, having no positive philosophy of its own. But Theism is a positive, fresh, original faith. It gazes forward, and builds on the natural consciousness of man, making no criticism on previous modes of belief. It is full of hope and enthusiasm, looking towards something that is before it, not scorning but believing. All that it needs in order to become a popular faith is a poetical element, something imaginative, symbolical, picturesque. The intellectual requirements it already possesses. It is affirmative; it is universal.

Neither must this kind of theism be identified with natural religion, unless natural religion be made to comprehend facts of the inner as well as the outer world—facts of psychology as well as of physiology; facts of mind as well as of body. Such a theism is not a mere reminiscence, either, of an ancient faith; for every form of mediatorial religion, however modified, simplified, "enlightened," as it is called, leaves something of its temper behind it. The intellect is haunted by old modes of truth; the heart lingers around the ancient places of reverence; the conscience refers to some antique authority; the soul cannot pray except in the language of a pater-noster or a psalm. A scent as of roses may hang round the human mind; but the roses will be grown in some garden of the East, not in ours. Such a theism as I am thinking of will be grounded in Ethical Law. You may call it "Christian," if you will, because the word *Christian* expresses the highest form of the moral sentiment, and carries a supreme authority to the human conscience; but on the *human conscience* it must rest. It will be a noble, pure faith, giving a welcome to all knowledge, bright with anticipation, warm with enthusiasm. As John Weiss has said so much better than I can what I mean, I will quote a passage from him. It occurs in "American Religion" (page 67):

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Cannot the power which sustains, without budging from the spot, my personal vitality, sustain and nourish the immediate conscience of which that vitality makes me aware? I cannot hurt my health, nor tell a lie, nor commit a fraud, nor strike my brother, nor leave the beggar in the ditch, nor parade my superiorities, without knowing it by direct intimation. My pains are its rebukes, my delights its sympathies, my hopes its suggestions, my sacrifices its impost, my heavenly longings its apology for haunting me forever. There is a power in which I live and move and have my being, in which I eat, drink, breathe, sleep, wake, love and hate, marry, and protect a home. Is it incapable of sustaining all my functions of true religion on the spot as well as these? Do I have these without a mediator, and must I travel for the rest? When I undertake to breathe by tradition it will be time for me to get a sense of God in the same way.

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The Dignity of Human Nature must be our watchword; of human *nature*, not of human *character*. For human *nature* denotes the *capacities* of man, what he *ought* to be and *shall* be, not what he *is*. Human character expresses only the undeveloped condition of man, and is therefore not to be taken as a final stand. This doctrine does not belong to a sect or a church, but to all mankind. It assumes an entirely new conception of the basis of religious faith; it makes a new beginning; it starts a new system; it exactly reverses the ancient order of thought, and builds up from a completely original foundation.

The weightiest objections proceed from the undeveloped character of man. For example, the common saying that conscience is crude, confused, either does not exist at all, or erects inconsistent standards of right and wrong. But if a high criterion of morality is established, as it is, it has an educating and sustaining power. Every saint attests it; all the bibles of the world voice it; revelation owes to it its authority. Great souls do but raise the common level on which common souls tread; as the discovery of the ancient pavements in the Forum at Rome opens to ordinary feet the way that statesmen and heroes went. When I was in Salem, a young man who was very much addicted to drink, being remonstrated with, urged that he could not help it, that he was born so, just as another was born to praise and pray. His appetite for ardent spirits was just as natural to him as the preacher's appetite for spiritual things. His argument could not be refuted, but I always thought that in his hours of reflection, if he had any, he must have despised himself. At all events, the outside observer would class him with a lower order of humanity; the fixed rule of conscience being a universal judge.

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Again, the slowness of moral advance is flung in our teeth; the stubbornness of vice and evil. But we must give time for improvement and cultivation. All good things must wait—coal, petroleum, gas, electricity; the fertilizing qualities of guano were known and announced a full generation before the industrial world acted on the discovery; now millions of dollars are made by its importation. We are so used to thinking of the globe as round, and of men as living at the antipodes just as we live here, that we cannot believe that once it was deemed impossible for human creatures to live with their heads downward and their feet upward, and to walk like flies upon a ceiling. None but hopelessly crazy or foolish people were supposed to entertain such a notion. So the time will come when it shall be as natural for men to do right as to breathe; when all kinds of injustice, cruelty, and tyranny will be instinctively abandoned. When that time does come, men will be unable to believe that the ages ever were when men could make brutes of themselves or brutally treat each other. An eminent divine, commenting on a passage in Matthew, xviii., 15—"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican,"—said: "This is equivalent to saying, 'You must begin all over again; must start fresh from the beginning.'" This was very bad exegesis, but it was excellent morality; even the "heathen

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man and the publican" holds in his bosom all the possibilities of human nature; and we are bound to believe that in time the like of him may be saintly.

The decline of faith in religion, the passion for material things—money, fame, luxury,—is often cited as a proof that man is going downward; but may not this be a simple return to honesty and a rudimental integrity; a disposition to depend on one's self, and not on any mediator or redeemer? Let us build then in hope and faith, for, after all, these are the great architects. A listener to an eminent divine once said that when he got up to speak a radiance seemed to grow round his head; the great walls of a temple seemed to rise above him; the audience was composed of all nations, all sorts and conditions of men, and a choir of seraphs made the music; and yet this man spoke in a small, low-browed hall to a scanty audience, and the hymns were badly sung by a voluntary company. Such power has a great conviction; and when a deep conviction like that is extended and confirmed, the visible church will match the invisible, and shepherds will again hear the songs of angels.

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## XVII.

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### CONFESSIONS.

The course of spiritual advance is traced with difficulty and hesitation. It is the most obscure phase of the general problem of progress, which is almost insoluble. There are so many currents and counter-currents; so many tributaries; so many swift torrents and still bays; so many times the stream seems moving in the opposite direction—it is not surprising if some have concluded that there was no progress at all, that we only moved in a circle, went over the same ground again and again, and even marched backwards; what some counted gain others counted loss. A keen examination suggests that on the whole advance has been made, allowance being conceded for many a turn and variation.

The law of evolution may be considered established, but the method of evolution is hidden. The law of hereditary descent may be admitted, and yet the lines of hereditary descent are by no means obvious. Tendencies may even run in parallel lines, may aid each other, may confuse each other, may neutralize each other, may go very far or lie close at hand, and in any individual instance it is almost impossible to find how they work.

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In my own case the inferences of temperament followed each other. During the first fifty years of my life I was mainly under the influence of my father's temperament. I sang, wrote hymns and poems, sent pieces to the papers, was sanguine, inclined to take a happy view of all experiences; but at the same time I was conscious of another train of thought which struggled fitfully with the first, acquiring more and more power until at last it gained the ascendancy, and I found myself more inclined to conservatism, as it is called, to a grave, sober, serious regard for existing institutions and modes of opinion. It is said that this might have been the effect of years, inasmuch as after middle life one is very apt to experience a change of sentiment. But in my own case time will hardly explain the phenomenon, for long before I came to middle age I was aware of this less hopeful tendency in my constitution. It was my mother's influence succeeding my father's. And though it never entirely prevailed, I can see how it may have shadowed my visions of the future. And it makes me somewhat distrustful of the entire sanity of my criticism. I am afraid of not being hopeful enough.

I have sometimes suspected myself of a too critical disposition, a propensity to discover defects in men and opinion, to look at the dark side of systems that were repudiated; and in the effort to correct the aberrations of a literal estimate I may have gone too far in the opposite direction, rendering more than justice to antagonistic doctrines. But this, if it was an error, was certainly not an error to be ashamed of. For say what we will, the partial man is not the whole man, nor is cold perception true perception. There must be sympathy in every act of judgment, as Dr. Diman wisely wrote ("The Theistic Argument," p. 32): "In the pursuit of the highest truth not one faculty but all faculties need to be enlisted." Every system, however formal or dogmatical it may have become, had in the beginning its spiritual aspect; it was piously, if not humanely, meant; and in order to be rightly comprehended, should be surveyed from the inside. The most repulsive doctrine has something to urge in its favor, and it is the duty of the true rationalist to find out what it may be.

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If the inclination to take a common-sense view of opinions was derived from my mother's side, a strong democratic bent was primarily due to her. My grandfather was a poor boy who earned his fortune by the simple qualities of industry, integrity, perseverance, independence, faithfulness, honesty,—virtues which he bequeathed to his children. These inherited dispositions were encouraged by the social influences of the public school, which, in spite of its laborious method of imparting a knowledge of Latin and Greek, threw the lads together, thus breaking down artificial distinctions; and also by my experience at Harvard College, where scholarship was associated with mere manhood, and was cultivated by youth of all conditions. The anti-slavery agitation was a practical instructor in humanity, indicating as it did the widest sympathy of race. An assumption of the essential identity of all sorts of mind was a cardinal principle of transcendentalism, while my later experiences confirmed these early tendencies. My societies in Jersey City and New York were popular in their composition. The "Free Religious Association" was based on universal sentiments. The clerical profession was, in my day, broadly human, so that aristocratic proclivities had small hope of prevailing. In fact, the lessons which I learned from R. W. Emerson and Wendell Phillips sank

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deeply in, and became clearer as years went on.

One can hardly say that learning is retrogressive when one thinks of Dr. Döllinger, of Germany; Ernest Renan, of France; Benjamin Jowett, Arthur P. Stanley, James Martineau, of England; but erudition must, as a rule, be conservative; for it associates the mind directly with the past, binds one down to facts of history, and lays great stress on the testimony of evidence. It still is true that abundance of luggage is a sign that one is far from home. And they who can move quickly with all this weight upon them must have extraordinary genius.

An indifference to dogma is also characteristic of a speculative reformer; and I cannot recollect the time when I cared much for doctrinal differences. All questions were to me open questions. I had doubts about everything, and never suffered acute pain from such doubts. The influence of Jesus, the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, were always exposed to misgivings. Everything active was interesting to me, whether it looked toward "radicalism" or not. This was an advantage, not merely because it saved me from suffering, but because it enabled me to face all emergencies.

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But some one will say: Does not the love of truth count for anything? Yes, undoubtedly it does. But lovers of truth do not by any means belong to the same school, or look for light from the same quarter; some are Romanists, some Protestants; some have no religion at all. Lovers of truth are found in all denominations, from Calvinist to Unitarian, from Christian to Buddhist. Truth exists for us in layers. There are truths of the letter and truths of the spirit; there is truth to fact, and truth to fancy; there is truth to the individual soul, and truth to the public conscience; there is truth to the heart, to the moral sense, to the spiritual intuition: but it will not do to charge lack of truthfulness upon anybody simply because he does not hold the same opinion with ourselves. M. Renan somewhere says that in order to judge a system one must have been in it as a disciple, and outside of it as a critic. But then only a very extraordinary person can do this. As a disciple he must be earnest, intelligent, devoted; as a critic he must be without prejudice, without animosity, and without guile. Thus the point of view must of necessity be individual. There can be no general or absolute standard of judgment. One thing only is certain: the fact of spiritual progress; but what constitutes this progress nobody can tell. Since 1822 till now the change in *Unitarianism* has been immense, and it has consisted in the gradual supremacy of reason over tradition, but it has been almost too sudden and too swift. Progress had better be slow, in order that it may be sure. One step at a time, for the reason that only one step at a time can be taken safely. We must not jump at conclusions. There must be unbounded catholicity of thought, but it must not be made up of indifference, concession, and idle compliance.

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Experience has taught me many things—this among others, that there is no final criterion of truth, not criticism, or "science," or philosophy, or liberty. There is no question any more of "destructive" and "constructive." The Supreme Power is always constructive, and the Supreme Power is sure at last to prevail. There is an old Greek fable, that Apollo once challenged Jupiter to shoot. The sun-god shot an arrow to the very confines of the earth; then Jupiter, at one stride, reached the limits of creation, and said, "Where shall I shoot?" We are not Jupiters; we are not Apollos; but we can take our stand and shoot our arrows a little way into the dark. The utmost we can do is to be steadfast in our own places; be faithful to our own calling; draw our own shaft to the head. Father Hecker said a brave thing to me when, on declining my request that he would speak before the Free Religious Association, he took the ground that in a few weeks Catholicism would enter Boston in triumph. I honored the Broad Churchman, who said to me once that he always preached Christ as an historical person, and wished he had a church big enough to hold all humanity; and I admired the Presbyterian clergyman who commended the sincerity of Dr. Briggs, whom some regarded as a heretic. Fidelity to one's own word and gift is the one thing needful here.

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Whether it be the tendency of modern thought, or whether it be not, to abandon the Christian religion and cast discredit on every kind of faith held by the churches and professors throughout the world, cannot, in this generation, be decided. In any event, we shall not be left desolate. For nature will remain, with its unfathomable resources of use and beauty. The mind will remain, with its infinite faculties of reason and imagination. The heart will remain, with its insatiable affections and desires. Conscience will remain, with its sense of duty. The sentiments of awe, wonder, admiration, worship, will not expire. The reconstructive powers will still be active, and every creative quality will continue in full operation. Knowledge, literature, art, will live and flourish in new manifestations; and no original capacity will lie unemployed.

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We should have learned by this time that nothing dies before its hour has come; that processes of recuperation keep even pace with processes of decay; that forms alone perish while principles endure; that living things become more mighty and glorious as they throw off encumbrances; that strength always in the end accompanies simplicity.

The idea of God has passed through several phases, and each new phase has been a gain. The deity who was an individual has become a person; the attributes of personality, as commonly understood, have disappeared, so that pantheism has succeeded to a mechanical theism; God has become a name for our most exalted feelings, so that instead of saying "God is Spirit," some read "Spirit is God"; yet the ancient reverence more than persists, is on the increase. And if the course of disintegration of the old clumsy conception should go on, there need be no apprehension that loving veneration will decline.

The future life is no longer associated with retribution, and immortality means opportunity instead of doom. Should the doctrine of moral influence follow upon the doctrine of spiritual progression, the essential significance of the tenet would be preserved, for that is ethical not individual.

Prayer, too, is no more a begging for favors, or an act of intercession. Supplication for outward benefits has given place to petition for spiritual gifts, and this to pure aspiration, the desire for excellence; still the soul's passion is as deep as ever, perhaps deeper. [Pg 297]

If Mr. Tyndall's prophecy should be fulfilled, and we should come to "discover in that matter which we, in our ignorance, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of every form and quality of life," then what we call matter would simply assume new properties commensurate with novel tasks. The properties themselves will remain as they were, and will in nowise change their peculiarity. The ancient attributes of mind will persist, whatever theory of their origin be adopted. The old sanctities will endure, and the burden of responsibility will fall upon another pair of shoulders.

Thus every virtue will be maintained in complete vigor,—reverence, aspiration, trust, submission, confidence, serenity, patience, fortitude,—and nothing will be lost.

Then there is the social world, in which we "live and move and have our being." This "encompasses us behind and before, and lays its hand upon us." There is not an hour in the day, hardly a moment of the hour, when the call of duty is not made upon us. None but the rarest spirits discharge the claims of mercy and brotherhood; people generally do not know what they are; repudiate them when presented. The preachers have more than they can do to induce practice of even the commonest virtues of good will. Humanity, in its grand aspects, is left to the writers of Utopias. Not a day passes that conscience is not over-worked, even when it is not perplexed by misgivings in regard to the amount or the kind of service it ought to render. Some have sought an escape in the immortal life from the demands of this; and some have denied the doctrine of another world because it drew attention away from this, and made the ills of the present seem light in view of some coming beatitude. In truth, the friends of that great hope will do well to remember that it is identical with moral attainment; that it is for great souls; that [Pg 298]

The life of heaven above,  
Springs from the life below.

It is, to say the least, doubtful whether any future life can do more than ripen seeds that are sowed here, or whether spiritual perfection will owe anything essential to other events of time, while it is certain that nothing is sure to abide but what is born of love.

Unless the doctrine of a future life can be used to reinforce the doctrine of moral attainment in the present state of existence, its power must depart. The cords of personal affection are not strong enough to hold the belief. The true inference from disbelief is not expressed in the words, "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die"; but in these, "I must work while it is day." This idea is a very old one. The air was full of it when I was a youth. It was the soul of all liberal faith. The *Westminster Review*, which was in full force in my early manhood, having begun in 1824, two years after my birth, was animated by it. The *Prospective Review*, the organ of the spiritual Unitarians, and edited by such men as James Martineau, John James Taylor, John Hamilton Thom, and Charles Wicksteed, a magazine aiming to "interpret and represent Spiritual Christianity in its character of the Universal Religion," was started about 1845. In its pages "spirituality" was intimately associated with "humanity." The books of F. W. Newman, "The Soul" (1849); "Phases of Faith" (1850); "Catholic Union" (1854), teemed with this conception. The charming verses of William Blake, published in his "Songs of Innocence," had somehow come to my knowledge. [Pg 299]

To mercy, pity, peace, and love,  
All pray in their distress;  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For mercy, pity, peace, and love  
Is God, our Father dear;  
And mercy, pity, peace, and love  
Is man, His child and care.

For mercy has a human heart;  
Pity, a human face;  
And love, the human form divine  
And peace, the human dress. [Pg 300]

Then every man of every clime  
That prays, in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form  
In Heathen, Turk, or Jew;  
Where mercy, love, and pity dwell,  
There God is dwelling too.

In this country the same idea prevailed in the early period of transcendentalism, and gradually worked its way into the common heart. Channing lent it an impulse. His brilliant nephew, William Henry Channing, exemplified it. The transcendental preachers all insisted on it. The "Dial" was



charged with it. The most kindling literature of my growing days drew inspiration from it. Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and every other attempt at association was built upon it. Modern socialism owes to it the fascination it has for the heart; and we cannot listen to a sermon now that does not throb with the emotion it excites.

For myself I must confess that I have no interest in another life, save as it encourages the endeavor after this human excellence. My mental constitution makes me insensible to sentimental considerations, to arguments addressed to private affections. As my first sermon was about the brotherhood of man, so my present hope is that love may increase, and that the reign of theology may be succeeded by that of charity.

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This was the dream of Abbot Joachim, in the twelfth century, the Cistercian monk, founder of the monastery of Floris, author of "The Everlasting Gospel." It was his notion that the existing era of Christianity was passing away. According to him, there were three dispensations, corresponding to the three persons in the Trinity—that of the Father, that of the Son, that of the Spirit,—the dispensation of Awe, the dispensation of Wisdom, and the dispensation of Love. The first was represented by Peter, the organizer, the patron saint of Romanism; the second, by Paul, the preacher of the Word, the bulwark of Protestantism; the third by John, the seer, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love. How much the pious man meant by this we cannot tell. His own contemporaries were divided in opinion; but a pretty fair commentary is furnished, in the fact that his writing was condemned by two Councils—that of the Lateran in 1215, and of Arles in 1260,—and that he has ever since been classed among the mystics—that is, the unintelligible and the unbalanced in mind.

True the prophecy has not been literally fulfilled, inasmuch as the first two dispositions are still in force, and are likely to be for many a day, but the essence of it has come to pass. Romanism has been deprived of its temporal authority, and is reduced to a picturesque form of faith; its disciples easily throw off its bondage, while its new professors never put it on. Protestantism is decomposing under the influence of doubt and criticism. The thought of brotherhood is extending. I have small faith that the time will ever come when all people will worship under one form, or will accept the same mode of believing. I cannot think that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, or that every tongue will make confession of his Lordship; but I do believe that the reign of justice and good-will shall be established. It is a great deal to hope for a time when the many will submit to the law of reason, becoming strong enough to withstand the force of authority in church or creed, and content with charity.

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We have gained much since Joachim's day. We have acquired knowledge, industry, civilization, freedom, enterprise, intelligence, the sense of mutual dependence. The bars of prejudice are being taken down. Class distinctions are being abolished. Newly discovered arts are bringing men nearer together, and weaving the ties of fraternity. All this is opportunity—opportunity that immediately precedes performance. When we see the road prepared for the Spirit, we may be sure that the Spirit itself is not far off.

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