

A

*E. R. Bass*

S E R M O N ,

DELIVERED AT MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1858.

BY

REV. THEODORE PARKER.

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PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY JAMES M. W. YERRINTON.

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NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHERS. — Mr. Parker stated previous to his discourse that the subject under consideration would be treated in two sermons. The first (the present) on A False Revival, and the second on A True Revival. The second discourse, which is immediately connected with the present, will be published on Tuesday, April 13th.

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# S E R M O N .

## A FALSE AND TRUE REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”—*MATT. ix. 36.*

Sunday before last, I spoke of the false ecclesiastic idea of God, and of its insufficiency to satisfy the wants of science and of religion. Last Sunday, I treated of the true philosophic idea of God, and its sufficiency to satisfy the wants of science and of religion. To-day, I ask your attention to some thoughts on a false and true Revival of Religion. The subject is a great one—both of present and lasting importance. I cannot dispose of it in a single sermon, so to-day I shall treat mainly of the false, and show what various deeds and doctrines are set down to the name of Religion, and what present methods are used for the revival of something under that name; while next Sunday, I hope to speak of the true, and to show what are the real religious wants of the community to-day, and the proper way of satisfying them.

If you go to the shop of an apothecary and general druggist, you find some thousand jars, vases, bottles, gallipots, drawers and boxes, all labelled with strange technical names, which you seldom hear except from doctors, druggists, and their patients. A painful and unwholesome smell pervades the place. You feel stifled, and not quite safe. On the counter, under the show glass, you notice fearful-looking knives, forceps, pincers, and other uneasy tools of polished steel. You ask the pale, unwholesome-looking young man, who is prematurely bald, and spectacled besides, but kindly and benevolent in his face, what is in all those vessels. “O, that is medicine. It is all medicine.” “But what is it good for?” “Why it is to make sick men sound, and keep well men so.” “What are these things under the glass?” “They are surgical instruments, sir, to remove teeth, limbs, and help men out of the many ills that flesh is heir to.” “Are they of any use?” “Of any use? Of course they are. You don’t think I would sell them if they were not? Life would not be safe, sir, without

these drugs and instruments.” “Then,” says the visitor, “I will have some medicine and tools. Put me up enough to do my business.” “Yes; but we have all kinds, for this is a general druggery: we have Allopathic, Homeopathic, Thompsonian, Indian, and Eclectic. There is no medicine, sir, in the four quarters of the globe, that we have not got it here. What will you have?” “O, I don’t care. It is all medicine—all good, you say. Give me some of the best.” “But,” says the thoughtful apothecary, “you must discriminate. Most of these things would kill a well man. Some are good for one disease, some for another. You must not take all the doctors’ stuff in the world, because it is called medicine. Take a pinch of this and you are a dead man; a little of that, and you will be a fool all the rest of your life. That saw and tourniquet are to amputate limbs withal. I don’t think you want to cut off one of your own legs, do you? You must consider what kind of medicine you need before you take any, and when you use it, do so with the greatest discretion.”

Well, it is with ministers’ stuff as with doctors’ stuff. There is a whole shop full of deeds and doctrines labelled “Religion;” and when a minister, in his technical way, tells a young man, or an old one, “You must have Religion, or you will perish everlastingly,” it is much as when a doctor tells the sick man, “you must have medicine, or else die.” In the one case, I want to know *what* medicine; in the other, *what* Religion. There is some little difference, I think, between oat meal and strychnine, though they are both called medicine; and there is no less difference between various things called Religion. One is bread—the bread of life; the other poison—the poison of death.

Look first a moment at some deeds which are called Religion. (I will not go out from

the Christian and Hebrew Church.) I go back three or four thousand years, and I find an old man—more than seventy years old—standing by a pile of split wood, with a brand of fire beside him; he lays hold of his little son with one hand, and grasps a large crooked knife with the other. “What are you going to do with the boy, and with that knife?” I ask. “I am going to kill and then burn him on that pile of split wood, as an offering to God.” “What do you do that for?” “Why, it is Religion. Only three days ago, God said to me, ‘Abraham, take thou thine only son, and offer him a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell thee of.’ This is one of the grandest acts of my life. Glory to God, who demands the sacrifice of my only boy!”

Next I come down two hundred years, and I find an old man sitting still on a rough seat, out of doors, with a mob of furious men close beside him. They have just killed one of their countrymen;—stoned him to death. His body lies there, life hardly extinct, the mangled flesh yet warm and quivering. “Why did you kill this man?” I ask. And seventy elders, bearded to the girdle, exclaim at once, “Why, he picked up sticks Saturday afternoon! Would you let a man live who gathered firewood on Saturday—the seventh day—when God himself rested from his work, and was refreshed? Why, it was an act of Religion to kill such a wretch. God himself told us, in good Hebrew speech, ‘that man shall die the death outside the camp. The congregation shall stone him with stones.’ Glory to God!”

I come down a little further, and I find a Hebrew fillibuster, with an army of men more savage than the Comanche Indians. He has just conquered a territory, killed thirty-one kings, burned all their cities, killing the men, the women, and the children. He smote them with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them. He left none to breathe. Temple and tower went to the ground. He butchered men by the hundred thousand. Their cities yet smoke with fire. The blackened corpses left there strew the sand; the horses they have houghed crawl around and bite the ground moistened with human blood, in the slow agonies of starvation to which they were doomed. “What is all this for?” I ask. And Joshua, the son of Nun, answers, “It is an act of Religion. We have the commandment of God. He told me in Hebrew words, ‘Hough the horses, destroy the towns, kill the men, kill the women, kill the children, kill the babes newly

born.’ These are descendants of Canaan, whom God cursed. Glory to God!” And all the fillibustering army lift up their Hebrew voices and cry, “Glory to God!” with one terrific shout.

Next, I make a long stride, and I find a knot of Roman soldiers surrounding a young man whom they have nailed to a cross. His head has fallen to one side—he is just dead. It is eighteen hundred and twenty-one years ago, last Thursday. A wealthy, educated looking priest stands by, very joyful, and I ask him, “Who is this man?” And he answers, “O, he is a miserable fellow from Nazareth in Galilee. His name was Jesus. Don’t you see it up there?” “Why did you kill him? Was he a murderer?” “A murderer! Murder was nothing to his crime.” “Was he a kidnapper? A deceitful politician, who got office and abused it for the people’s harm? Or a hypocritical priest, who thought one thing in his study, and proclaimed just the opposite in the temple?” “O no! He was an infidel. He said religion was nothing but piety and morality; or, as he called it, loving God and your neighbor as yourselves. He said man was greater than the Sabbath, more than this temple, and that Religion would save a man, without burning the blood of goats, and bulls, and sheep. Besides, he spoke against the priesthood—against us, and said we would compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when we had done it, we had made him twice as much a child of hell as ourselves.” “Was there no other way to deal with such a man?” asks the visitor. “We tried to argue him down, but it was of no use. He beat us in every argument before the accursed people, who know not the law; and the more we abused him, the more would the silly people flock after him, revere him, and love him. Why, he said we were graves, that appear not, and men stumble into them; that we devour widow’s houses, and for a pretence make long prayers. There was no answering such things; so we scourged him half to death with rods, and then nailed him up there. We have fixed him now!” “How did he live?” “Like the infidel he was; trusting in his own goodness and piety for salvation. He tried to teach the people to trust in their piety and in their good works. He told a most absurd story about that poor fool who fell among thieves, going from Jerusalem to Jericho; and then said that one of the priests went by—it was me he meant—and passed him on the other side. But I was in a great hurry. I had to

be in Jerusalem to attend a prayer meeting, and I could not attend to the man. Then he told a story of an old fellow, who kept a tavern at Samaria—nobody ever heard of him before—jogging along on his donkey, who saw the poor fellow, and turned in there, (he had nothing else to do,) set him on his own beast, and took care of him. He represented that as a good act, which was pleasing to Almighty God. Then he told a story of the last judgment, that God would take into heaven those who had been kind to poor fellows on earth, and would send the other way those who had trusted in sacrifices, prayers and the like. But he was a miserable fellow. He would have ruined the nation. Why, he told men to forgive their enemies, and to love those who hate them. It was contrary to the sacred books. Moses never did so, nor Joshua, nor Samuel, nor David. There was no such thing in all the volumes of our law." "How did he die?" "Die? He died like a dog. No whine from him. Not a word of penitence; not a tear; no confession that he was an infidel. Why, almost his last words were a miserable blaspheming prayer against us,—'Father, forgive them, (he meant us,) for they know not what they do.' Why, to crucify such a man was an act of Religion. Look here!"—And then he lifts up his garments, and on his phylactery (a piece of parchment) he has got the whole thirteenth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy written out. "Do n't you see, it commands us to treat such a man just so! Glory to God!"

I come a little further down, and in a crowded room at Corinth, some five and twenty years after,—stifling, hot, unwholesome,—I find some four score earnest, devoted-looking men and women met together. Three or four are talking gibberish, foaming at the mouth. The room is full of jabber. One is interpreting, in Greek, the noise another is making, in no language at all. They seem half-crazy. "What is all this?" I ask. "O," says an intellectual-looking man, sitting there as Chairman of the meeting, "It is Religion. These men are miraculously inspired. They speak with tongues which no man can understand except he be inspired. Sister Eunice, who lies there struck down by God, has just made a revelation in an unknown tongue, and brother Bartholomeus, with the foam on his beard, is now explaining what it means. That the world will end in a few days, and we shall be caught up to the third heavens, and shall

judge angels. It is the latter days, and is the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, that young men should see visions and old men dream dreams, and God put his spirit on all. The blood of the Crucified will wash all our sins away." After he has made this explanation, the Chairman reads a letter to the little company of men and women, from a remote city, asking for new missionaries, and telling that those who went a year before have been put to most excruciating tortures and to death; and he asks, "Who will go?" And there stand up twenty men and women, who say, "Send us! Let us go! for we count it all joy to suffer where our Lord and Master suffered before." So, in spite of the fanaticism and violence that is in them, I see there is in those rude and humble people such a spirit of Religion and self-sacrifice as the world had almost never seen.

I come down a little further, a hundred and twenty years later, to a town in Southern France, and I find a Roman magistrate has just beheaded a whole family of Christians—sons, daughters, father, mother. Friends are just removing the dead bodies, while the edile slaves shovel up the saw-dust, saturated with blood, and wash the foul spots clean from the pavement. "What have these people done?" I ask. And the Praetor answers, "O, they are some of the new sect of Atheists, called Christians. They would not worship Mars, nor offer sacrifices to Jupiter. They worshipped one Christ, who was crucified by Pontius Pilate, and who, they declare, is the actual God, and will one day judge all mankind." "But were they bad men?" "O, no, the best people in the whole town of Lyons—poor, earnest, devoted, kindly, sober people. They did no immoral act. They were the most benevolent men in the province. They left the little property they had to the poor of their company—they called it a church." "How did they die?" "They died, even the children, with the courage of a Roman soldier, but the gentleness of a Greek woman. But you know we must support the public worship of the State. We must not allow any change in Religion, else we are ruined. This is an act of Religion, which the gods command. Glory to the immortal gods!"

I come down still further to the same city of Lyons, to the anniversary of that same day—the day of the martyrdom of the celebrated martyrs of Lyons,—and I find a body of Catholic priests and bishops, with the help of the

civil magistrates, with ecclesiastic ceremonies, psalms, prayers, and Scriptures, have just tortured a young woman to death, amid the plaudits of a great crowd. They held up her baby to her before they lit the tormenting fire, and said, "Repent, and your baby shall be yours," and she said, "No, I cannot;" and they dashed its brains against the stones of the street. "What has the young mother done?" I ask. The bishops reply, "She denied the infallibility of the Pope and of the Roman Church. She declared that Mary, the blessed Virgin, was not the mother of God, the blessed Creator, and for such hideous blasphemy, we have just burned her in the name of the holy Catholic Church of Christ, on the very day of the martyrs of Lyons. It is an act of Religion. Don't look astonished. Did not God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? Did not God command Moses to stone to death a man who picked up sticks on Sunday? Did not God command Joshua to butcher millions of Canaanites? Glory to God, and His blessed mother!"

I make another step, and come a little nearer our own time—the 27th of October, 1553. I find a company of Swiss preachers and magistrates burning a Spanish doctor outside the gate of Geneva. "Has he poisoned any man?" I ask. And John Calvin,—a pale, thin man, with a very intellectual face, says, "Sir, he did worse than that—he denied the Trinity. He said Jesus Christ was not God. He declared that babies dying unsprinkled by a priest, would not be damned everlastingly. I set the magistrates on him, and we have just burned him, in the name of God and the Holy Protestant Church of Christ. Glory be to the triune God, and to the Saviour of men—the Prince of Peace!"

I come still nearer—I come down to New England. It is Tuesday, the first of June, 1660. The magistrates of Massachusetts—peaked hats on their heads, broad ruffles at their necks—have just hanged a woman on Boston Common; a handsome woman, a milliner, a wife and mother also. Her dead body is swinging in the wind, hanging from one of the branches of yonder elm,—standing still. "Why did you kill her?" I ask of the Rev. John Norton—a tall, gaunt, harsh-looking minister, on a white horse, with a scholar's eyes, and the face of a hangman,—Geneva bands on his neck, a wig on his head—the man who seemed more interested in the proceeding than any other one of the company

"Why did you do this?" "She was a Quaker. She said that magistrates had no right over the consciences of men; that God made revelations now as much as ever, and was just as near to George Fox as to Moses and Paul, and just as near to her as to Jesus Christ; that priests had no right to bind and loose; that we should call no man master on earth; that sprinkling water on a baby's face did it no good, and gave no pleasure to God. Besides, she said war was wicked, and that woman had just as much right as man; and when we bade her hold her peace, she impudently declared that she had as good a right to publish her opinions as we had to publish ours. So we hanged her by the neck, in the name of God and of the Puritan Church of New England. It is an act of Religion. Glory to God, and the vine he has planted here in the wilderness!"

I come down still further. It is the same Boston,—the month of March, 1858. Saturday afternoon, in a meeting-house, I find men and women met together for prayer and conference;—honest-looking men, and respectable — I meet them every day in the street. Most exciting speeches are made, exciting stories are told, exciting hymns are sung, fanatical prayers are put up. Half the assembly seem a little beside themselves, out of their understanding,—more out of their conscience, still more out of their affections. One says, "The Lord is in Chicago; a great revival of religion is going on there." Another says, "O, the Lord is in Boston; he is pouring out his spirit here." Appeals are made to fear. "Come to Christ! There is an eternal hell for you, if you do not come; an eternal heaven if you will. Come to Christ! Choose now; you may never have another opportunity. 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee.'" Prayers are made for individual men, now designated by description, then by name. One obnoxious minister is singled out, and set up as a mark to be prayed at, and the petitioners riddle that target as they will. One minister asks God to convert him, and if he cannot do that, to remove him out of the way, and let his influence die with him. Another asks God to go into his study this very afternoon, and confound him, so that he shall not be able to finish the sermon—which had been writ five days before; or else meet him the next day in his pulpit, and confound him so that he shall not be able to speak. Another prays that God will put a hook into that man's jaws, so that he cannot preach. Yet another, with the spirit

of commerce in him, asks God to dissuade the people from listening to this offender, and induce them to leave that house and come up and fill this. I ask a grave, decent-looking, educated minister, "What is all this?" The answer is, "Why, it is an act of Religion. The Lord is in Boston; he inspires us miraculously. He has made us all of one heart, and of one mind. He hears our prayers; he gives a hearing to our petitions; he will answer our prayers; "For the fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much." It is a Revival of Religion; it is a great Revival; it goes all over the United States; even some Unitarian ministers begin to thaw, at least, to soften. The Lord is in this house, to save the people. Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men!"

One step more I take, into surroundings a little different. By the full moon-light, under yonder great elm,—where Mary Dyer was hanged on the first of June, 1660, for being a Quaker,—to answer his question, a young woman clasps a young man's hand—"Yes, we will be one; only I fear I am not worthy; and I have loved you so long, and you did not know it." "But I began first," says the man. And then from the two hearts, now melting into one, the prayer goes up, "All thanks to thee, Father and Mother of us both, thanks for our love. O may we be faithful in our life, and in death not divided; living a Religion of piety, of holiness before thee on earth: and one also at last in heaven." Was the prayer spoken, or was it only throbbled out in their inspired hearts? I do not know, God does not care; spoken or felt, it is one to Him.

The same night, in a little chamber not far off, a lone woman lays aside her work, not quite done. "I will finish that to-morrow morning, before breakfast," she says, "t'will be ready five hours before the wedding, and I only promised it one hour before." She looks up at the great moon walking in beauty, and silencing her little chamber, with a great star or two beside her—the little stars had been put to bed long before the moon was full. She thinks of the infinite soul who watches over the slumbering earth, the wakeful moon, the great stars and the little, and her own daily life. "The moon serves thee by making beauty in the night, the sun in the day, both of them heavenly bodies," quoth she, "I only an earthly body. Can I also serve by making bonnets?" And out from the great human heart, the Divine soul answers, "Not less; each in its order;

the sun in his, the milliner in hers." She lays her down on her bed, her limbs full of weariness, her eyes full of sleep, her heart full of trust in that God, who fills the earth with his love, as the moon fills her window with its beauty.

In the next house, a mother has made her ready for sleep, but must have one look more, to bless her eyes with the dearest sacrament which mortal ever sees. So she goes noiselessly into their room, and looks on her little ones, lying there in their various sleep, and talks to herself:

"The dear Edith! how handsome she looks in her sleep! Wonder if I was ever half so fair at sixteen. And here is Willie, my first-born. What a blessing he will be, when dear husband comes home from that long voyage. Tall as his father; almost through College, now. We will go together, and hear him at Commencement. That will be a day! Here are the twin boys nestling—York and Lancaster; two little hardy roses on one stalk. Here is Baby, almost twenty-eight months old—two whole years, three months, and twenty-seven days old to-night. What a dear little blessed baby it is! Papa won't know little blossom when he comes home—no he won't. Father in Heaven! did I ever deserve such joy? Thou who givest me these lives, how shall I make them worthy of thee? How shall I myself be worthy?" And the rest of her prayer—God hears it, not I.

In the next street, hard by, are two young men. "Come," says the elder, finishing his cigar, and flinging it on the pavement, "take a glass in here, and then you will have spunk enough to go with me. What a silly fool you are! Who will ever know it? You won't be young twice. There is one of the handsomest of them now at the window." Passion burns high in the young man's heart; occasion from without leagues with desire from within; there is another son of man in his temptation. But conscience, like a sweet rose, blooms over it all, and with its fragrant beauty bids passion be still. The devil steps behind. "No, I shall not go, neither to your groggery nor to your brothel—tempt me no more!" A life is saved, and integrity not stained.

Not far off, a little company of men and women are assembled, to consult upon the welfare of mankind. "We must end slavery; we must abolish drunkenness; we must educate the people; woman must be emancipated, and made equal with man; then prostitution will end, and

many another woe. War must pass away, society be constructed anew, so that creative love shall take the place of aggressive lust, and repressive fear. The family, the community, the nation, the world, must be organized on justice, not on covetousness, fraud, and violence, as now; and, above all things, the ecclesiastic idea of religion must be improved. We must have a true theology, with a just idea of God, of man, of religion; and so direct straight the strongest faculty in man. What can we do to promote all this blessed revolution? This must be our service of God, and we must not let this generation pass away, until we have mended all this. No matter what it costs us. Think what it cost our fathers, the Christian martyrs, nay, Jesus of Nazareth, to do their work! Ministers will pray against us—it will hurt nobody but themselves. Hunkers will scold—let them; we can keep our way, and our tempers beside. A few grand lives will bless this whole age, for the nations look up and ask to be guided.

The next day, one of this company, a grocer in his shop, a little covetous, a little ambitious—most men are so—finds an opportunity offering itself for a profitable fraud, and he feels the temptation—all men do. He hesitates for a moment, but he answers, "No! there is an infinite God, and I am a Man, and that God's Law is in me. Begone, devil!" The right is victorious.

Not far off, the same day, a poor boy in yonder divinity school writes to a friend: "There are great temptations for a young man to disown himself, and bargain for place. It is the one great lure which, in this age, is constantly before our eyes." But he says, "Get thee behind me!" keeps the integrity of his soul, and becomes "utterly indifferent to the passing criticism that besets a young man who aims at a standard of life of his own." A life of self-denial, of noble manhood, of manly triumph spreads out before him, and girds him for the work of such a life.

See what a difference between these various examples that I have given, yet are they all called Religion. Some of them spring from the very highest emotions in man; some of them spring from the meanest, the cowardliest, and the most sneaking of the passions that God has given to human nature.

What an odds in the doctrines called Religion! I go to the oldest church in Boston—it is called a synagogue. There the doctrine is "salvation by circumcision and belief in the Old

Testament." The worshippers have not grown an inch since the day that somebody forged the book of Daniel. I go to the next oldest church—it is called Roman Catholic. There the doctrine is, "salvation by compliance with all the ritual of the holy Catholic Church, and belief in its doctrines." I go to the Trinitarian Protestant Church—the next oldest. There the doctrine is "salvation by baptism,—either the sprinkling of drops, or plunging into a pond or tub,—and belief in an ecclesiastic theology," which, though it certainly contains great truths, is yet filled with a mass of most heinous superstition. I go away from all three to an enlightened, thoughtful man, and ask—"What doctrines, good sir, are most important to Religion?" And he answers, "No doubt such as produce the manliest and most natural life: to me, the infinite perfection of God, Man's fitness for his duty and his destination, immortality, the religious value of daily life. Get all the truth you can, young man; have faith in your mind, your heart, your conscience, your soul. Religion is natural, whole, human life—right feeling, right thinking, right doing, right being."

What a difference in doctrines! All the sects say, "Believe in God!" But what an odds in the God they bid you believe! One is corn, the bread of life; the other is strychnine, the poison of death. In one place, God is variable, ill-natured, revengeful; he will go into a minister's study, and confound him; into a minister's pulpit, and put a book into his jaws so that he cannot preach. That is the God of Park street Theology. In another, he is the Father and Mother of all mankind, blessing the Heathen, Hebrew, Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Gentile, sinner and saint: He is to be served with a life of daily duty, the normal use of every faculty he has given.

When I hear of a Revival of Religion, I always ask, what do they mean to revive? What feeling, what thinking, what doing, what being? Is it a religion that shall kill a boy; that shall stone a man to death for picking up sticks Saturday afternoon; that shall butcher a nation; crucify a prophet; talk gibberish: torture a woman for her opinion, and that opinion a true one? Or is it a religion which will make me a better man, husband, brother, father, friend; a better minister, mechanic, president, street-sweeper, king—no matter what—a better man in any form?

Just now there is a "Revival of Religion," so



called, going on in the land. The newspapers are full of it. Crowds of men and women throng the meeting houses. They cannot get preaching enough. The poorer the article, the more they want of it. Speeches and sermons of the most extravagant character are made. Fanatical prayers are put up. Wonderful conversions are told of. The innermost secrets of men's and women's hearts are laid bare to the eye of the gossip and the pen of the newspaper reporter. The whole is said to be a miraculous outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the direct interposition of God. You look a little more closely, and you find the whole thing has been carefully got up, with the utmost pains. Look at the motive. Ecclesiastic institutions decay in England and America. This is well known. The number of church members in the United States is quite small—only three and a quarter millions. There are sixteen negro slaves to thirteen church members; the slaves increase, the church members do not. For two hundred years, the number was never so small a fraction of the whole people. The number of births increases rapidly; the number of baptisms falls off. Belief in the ecclesiastic theology is fading out of the popular consciousness. Men begin to say, "God is not so ugly and so devilish as the ministers paint him." Hear an Orthodox sermon, and then look at this, and then ask, "Is the God of the sermon, who is going to damn this whole congregation,—and is in haste to do it,—the God who made these flowers?" [pointing to the bouquet on the desk beside him.] "Look up to the heavens. Men ask that, and they say, "The minister's God is a devilish dream. The God of Nature and the God of Man is no such thing."

They doubt the eternal torment of mankind. A father takes his baby in his arms, and says, "If this baby dies this moment, or if he died the day he was born, are you, Dr. Banbaby, going to make me believe God will damn this child? I shall not believe it." Men see contradictions in the Bible; the best men, the wisest, see them the most clearly. In short, New England men, who are famed for common sense, are applying to religion that common sense which wrought so well in farming, fishing, manufactures, everything else. Jealous ministers seek to change this state of things. No doubt they are as honest as lawyers, grocers, real estate holders in State street and Summer street. They want busi-

ness kept at the old stand. They have invested in ecclesiastic corporations, and wish to keep up the stock, which is badly depreciated just now.

But what will they do? They will not mend their theology—their idea of God, Man, Religion. They will not manufacture an article suited to the demands of enlightened men. They cannot do it, with their ecclesiastic idea and method of making doctrines. The machinery will not do; and they say it is Divine machinery, and cannot be improved. But they want to force the old article they have got on the popular market. Once they could do so; for once, ministers were commonly taken from the ablest men in the country; now, well nigh from the feeblest. Once, they had the best education. Once, none but ministers had any considerable literary and scientific culture. Then, talent and culture on the Church's side, could do the ecclesiastic work. Now, it rarely happens that the minister is the best born man, or the best bred man in his parish. In some cases there are hundreds, and in many there are ten before him. A strong woman can throw the minister, in the close wrestling of debate. He cannot argue down his opponents and reason them into a belief in his terrible idea of a God who damns babies newly born. But the minister can do something else. He controls the ecclesiastic machinery, and deals directly with the religious element in man—the strongest, and perhaps, also, the most easily moved. So he appeals to religious fear, and tries to scare men into belief of his doctrines, and membership of his church. He has no effect on great sinners, fraudulent bankers, fraudulent presidents of incorporated companies, lying governors, presidents, representatives; he has much on weak men.

Attempts at Revivals are no new things—the experiment has often been tried. A few winters ago, some Unitarians tried it in Boston but they toiled all winter, and caught nothing—enclosing nothing but a few sprats and minnows, who ran out through the broad meshes of their net, before it could be hauled into their boat. Other ministers, who are the wisest and the most religious part of the valuable sect, would have nothing to do with it. Different men went in, false to their idea of theology—with the best intentions, no doubt. It was a strange spectacle, that attempt to build up the ecclesiastic Unitarian

pyramid in that way! It was a worse task than that of the Israelites in Egypt—not to make bricks without straw, but with nothing else! Those men who undertook to make a hot-house of religion, and force Christians under the Unitarian glass, were so cold in their religious temperament that any one of them would chill a whole garden of cucumbers in dog days. Strike two flints together, and you get sparks of fire; from lumps of ice, you get nothing but cold splinters. Nothing came of that. Their vanity in the beginning of winter turned into vexation of spirit in spring.

The stricter sects have often tried this experiment. It is in consistency with their theological idea. You remember the efforts made last year—the prayer meetings, conference meetings, the preaching, and the talk in the newspapers. Not much came of it. Now, circumstances are different. The commercial crisis last autumn broke great fortunes to fragments, ground little ones to powder, turned men out of business by thousands. Then, some religious men, of all denominations, full of Christian charity, set themselves to looking after the poor. The work was well done—never better. Then to prevent the expected increase of crime, by an increased attention to justice and charity. That, too, was well done—greatly to Boston's honor. But other men would improve the opportunity to make church members, and enforce belief in the ecclesiastic theology; so they set the Revival machinery in motion. That is as well known as McCormick's reaper, and need not be described. Soon as an effect is produced in New Bedford, or elsewhere, the fact is telegraphed to Boston, and other places, and the spark from one fire lights a thousand more. Men like to follow the multitude. You remember the effects of the election in Pennsylvania, in October, 1856; it turned the vote of thousands of men in the Northern States. If one company runs in battle, a whole regiment runs; if a regiment, then an army. Nay, a file of soldiers, with fife and drum, will gather a whole crowd of men and boys in the streets any day. All men are social, rude men gregarious. The means of getting up a Revival are as well known as the means for getting up a Mechanic's Fair, a country muster, a cattle show, or a political convention. They have only to advertise in the newspapers, and say, "The Rev. Mr. Great-talk is to be here to-day. He is exceedingly interesting, and has already converted men by the score or the hundred."

Then they hang out their placards at the corners of the streets. It is a business operation. It reminds me of the placards of the rival clothing dealers in North Street, formerly Ann; and Park Street Church is the Oak Hall of the ecclesiastic business in slop clothing.

There is nothing more miraculous in the one case than in the other. Last year, it did not succeed very well, for business was good, and men with full pockets were not to be scared with talk about hell. Now, the commercial crisis makes it easy to act on men's fears. The panic in State Street, which ruined the warehouses, fills the meeting-houses to-day. If the black death raged in New Orleans, the yellow fever in Cincinnati, the plague in Philadelphia, the cholera in New York, the small pox in Boston, the Revival would be immensely greater than now. A Jesuit priest once said: "Seasons of pestilence are the harvest of ministers. Then men are susceptible to fear." Besides, you know what the newspapers have done. Last year, the newspapers disgusted the public—the sensible part of the public—with the obscene details of a most unfortunate trial, for indecent and improper conduct. This year, the same newspapers are crowded with gossip about the Revival. The same motive was in either case. If they could turn a penny by the Revival, they did it; if by adultery, they did that. They cared not from what quarter came the clean money.

Now, we are always to expect some extravagance in the action of a force so strong as this. Some good will be done by this movement. Let us do justice. 1. There are wicked men, who are only to be roused by fear. Some will be converted. The dread of hell is stronger than fear of the gallows. Some will be scared out of their ugly vice and crime. Certainly, that is a good work. But it is only the men who commit the unpopular, small vices, that are converted. Such as do the heavy wickedness, those men are never converted, until they are too old for any sin except hypocrisy. Ask Mr. Polk, ask Mr. Clay, if you can reach into the other world, and they will tell you they understood that trick as well as all others. 2. Then there are weak men, who are not wicked, but who can be easily drawn into vice—gambling, drunkenness, licentiousness—some of them will be checked in their course, and become sober men, outwardly decorous. 3. Then there are unsettled men and women, who want a master to put his invasive, aggressive will on

them, and say they shall, or they shall not. They will find a master. It is true, they will shrink, and shrivel, and dry up. But they want a master, and finding one, they will grow no more, and be tormented no more. Ceasing to think, they will cease to doubt; and where they have made a solitude, they will call it the peace of Christ.

1. But the evil very far surpasses the good. Many men, well born, well educated, will turn off with disgust from real religion. They will become more selfish, more worldly, proud, heartless, hostile to every effort for human progress,—with no faith in God, none in man, none in immortality, none in conscience,—their lives devoted to the lower law. Many of them will be church members, for the actual Atheist of to-day is cunninger than ever before, and entrenches himself within the church. There is no fortress like a pew against the ecclesiastic artillery. Such a revival will make more men of this stamp. They are the greatest obstacles to the community's progress. It is not drunkards, it is not thieves, it is not common brawlers, who most hinder the development of mankind. It is the sleek, comfortable men, outwardly decorous, but inwardly as rotten as a grave that is filled with the contents of a fever hospital.

2. Then, others who were brought into the churches full of zeal, full of resolution, they will be cursed by the theology they accept, and will be stunted in their mental, moral, affectional and religious growth—most of all in their religious. For with the idea of God, that he is an ugly devil, of man, that he is a sinful worm, and of religion, that it is an unnatural belief in what reason, conscience, heart and soul cry out against, what true, manly piety can there be? Fear takes the place of religion, and that ugly carrion crow drives off all the handsome birds of paradise, bringing the olive-branch in their beaks.

To me, in the Revival itself, there is much that is encouraging. I shall speak of it next Sunday. In the conduct of it, there is much profoundly melancholy. The effect of the misconduct on the people is most deplorable. What an idea of God is offered to man? Can any one love such a God? Surely not. I do not wonder men and women go mad. The idea of Christ—what blasphemy against that noble man, who said, Religion is love of God and love of man! What an idea of religion here, and of heaven hereafter! My friends, piety is not delirium. It does not expose to

the world the innermost sanctuary of man's consciousness, and make common talk out of what is too sacred for any eye but God's, and if it turn a theatre into a house of prayer, it does not turn that prayer into noise and rant, and theatric fun.

The effect on the morality of the people is not less bad. Honest industry, forgiveness, benevolence,—these are virtues not thought of in a Revival. I do not hear any prayer for temperance, any prayer for education, any prayer for the emancipation of slaves, for the elevation of women, for honesty, for industry, for brotherly love; any prayers against envy, suspicion, bigotry, superstition, spiritual pride, malice and all uncharitableness. The newspapers tell us fifty thousand are converted in a week. That is a great story, but it may be true. The Revival may spread all over the land. It will make church members—not good husbands, good wives, daughters, uncles, aunts; not good shoemakers, farmers, lawyers, mechanics, merchants, laborers. It will not oppose the rum trade, nor the trade in coolies, nor the trade in African or American slaves. It will not open a school for black people south of Mason and Dixon's line. It will not break a chain, or alter a vote against the best institution in America or the world—not one. Convert the National Administration, the Supreme Court, the Senate House; nay, convert the whole administration and the Democratic party to this Religion, and they take a south-side view of all political wickedness. They spread slavery into Kansas; they go filibustering against Mexico, against Cuba; they restore the African slave trade. Suppose you could convert all the merchants, all the mechanics, all the laborers of Boston, and admit them to the churches that are getting up this Revival, you do not add one ounce to the virtue of the city, not one cent's worth of charity to the whole town. You weaken its intelligence, its enterprise; you deaden the piety and morality of the people. The churches need a Revival. No institution in America is more corrupt than her churches. No thirty thousand men and women are so bigoted and narrow as the thirty thousand ministers. The churches—they are astern of all other craft that keeps the intellectual sea. The people mean to have a Revival of Religion, just as the Italians and the French in their revolution, meant liberty, equal rights, democracy. The people mean a Revival of Religion; but the ministers will turn it to a Revival of the ecclesiastic Theology—the doc

trine of the dark ages, which we ought to have cast behind us centuries ago.

A real Revival of Religion — it was never more needed. Why are men and women so excited now? Why do they go to the meeting houses, and listen to doctrines that insult the common sense of mankind? They are not satisfied with their religious condition. They feel their want. "They are as sheep having no shepherd." This movement shows how strong is the religious faculty in man. In the name of Democracy, politicians use the deep, patriotic feeling of the people to destroy the best institutions of America and the world; and in the name of God, ministers use this mightiest religious feeling to impose on us things yet more disastrous. Let you and me remember that Religion is wholeness, not mutilation; that it is life, and not death; that it is service with every limb of this body, every

faculty of this spirit; that we are not to take the world on halves with God, or on sevenths, giving him only the lesser fraction, and taking the larger ourselves: it is to spread over and consecrate the whole life, and make it divine.

Let you and me remember this. How much can we do, — a single man, a single noble woman, — with that life of natural Religion! He who goes through a land and scatters blown roses may be tracked next day by their withered petals that strew the ground; but he who goes through it and scatters rose seed, a hundred years after leaves behind him a land full of fragrance and beauty for his monument, and as a heritage for his daughters and his sons. So let you and me walk through life that we shall sow the seeds of piety and of morality, to spring up fair as these blossoms at my side, and rich as the bread which is food for all the nations of mankind.