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## American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1866.

### FAITH THE MASTER, CRITICISM THE SERVANT.

The strong, the useful, and the happy character, is that in which faith in supernatural verities is alive and vigorous. The disposition to take nothing whatever for granted, to allow that nothing is established in the range of human thought, to deny that God is, that he has ever miraculously interfered in the creation or history of the world, or that he has ever spoken authoritatively and intelligibly to man in his Word, however it may be honored as "philosophy," "free thought," "progress," or the like; however young students in theology may find some conflict with it unavoidable, and however it may loom up in the theological controversies of England and the Continent, is yet a morbid development, a mental weakness, a fever of the brain and nerves, a struggle of the dark and corrupt side of human nature against the "God whom they like not to retain in their knowledge."

The rationalist or negatively critical spirit does good service, as we have already taught, in demolishing error, in crushing and dissipating superstition, in clearing the truth of traditional encumbrances. Sadducees may be necessary to hold Pharisees in check. Stanleys and Colensos and Westminster Reviews may be necessary evils, in the country of Pusey and Newman and Father Ignatius. Comte may have a part to perform in overthrowing the Mariolatry of France. And the rising unbelief of the educated Hindu youth, melancholy as it is, may the more speedily secure the overthrow of the giant and hoary systems of superstition, which curse the hundred and fifty millions of their countrymen.

But the chill that follows a fever, or the exhaustion that follows unnatural excitement, is no sign of health. Skepticism, that destroys superstition, is as great, perhaps a greater, foe of the truth, than the superstition itself. The Sadducees furnished no known convert to Christ's ministry; the "strictest sect" of the Pharisees furnished the greatest example, teacher and defender of the faith, in the annals of Christianity. The ardor and efficiency of Paul arose from the completeness of the surrender of his mind and heart to the saving truths of the Gospel. He believed, therefore he spoke. (2 Cor. iv. 13.) It is the Pauls, the Augustines, the Anselms, the Calvins, the Edwardses, that we would hold up for examples of Christian character and intellect, and not the Pelagiuses, the Abelards and the whole modern tribe of prying, analyzing, anatomizing critics, who, for the most part, can get no better subject of investigation than the *caput mortuum*—the dead system of Christianity, and have no adequate idea of the life-principle which alone gives it reality and value.

The character of Anselm is one which, for inward beauty and harmony, may well be held up as a model to the young student of theology, and to doubting souls in the walks of science, so numerous in this age of criticism. In him, the critical and the believing faculties were united in due proportion and subordination. He was a thinker, the first to open the great processes of Christian speculation in the eleventh century; but in him was exemplified that union of the scientific and the believing modes of thought, which, after seven centuries, our own age seems incapable of realizing. Rooted and grounded as he was in love, he felt no painful necessity to appeal to reason for proofs of his faith.

He was not seeking, says Neander, by dint of thought, to find his way out from an inward solism to regain the lost certainty and repose of faith. The object matter of faith was to him immediately certain; his Christian consciousness was raised above all doubt. The experience of the heart was to him the surest evidence of reality. But since he united to this sincere and undoubting faith a mind profoundly inquisitive and speculative, he felt constrained to account to himself, by a rational knowledge, for that which, in itself, was to him the most certain of all things. In Anselm, to quote another, faith condescended to knowledge, not because faith was insufficient, but because knowledge was, in the contemplative mind, a necessary fruit of faith. He could not understand unless he first believed.

In what marked contrast with the unquiet, endless rationalizing of our age, is this enviable condition of Anselm! We push our speculative efforts from a dire necessity to vindicate to ourselves, or, indeed, to save our faith. Our age, our Christian age, looks with a lenient eye upon

speculation exalting itself at the expense of faith. Multitudes of Christian thinkers consider it a great point gained, if they can barely save their faith amid the clamorous demands of modern speculation. Robertson, of Brighton, saved as by fire; DeWette, dying with the faintly expressed hope that he had not lost his faith, on his lips; Bushnell, walking on the border lines of doubt, and speculating away to a vanishing point, the vital elements of the atonement, to satisfy the demands of the mere natural understanding—are types of a too prevalent class of mind, who must find in Abelard, the great dialectician and opponent of Anselm, rather than in Anselm himself, their prototype. Consciously or not, like Abelard, they make, or feel it to be a first necessity to satisfy the demands of the speculative reason. Faith cannot be comfortably exercised until that, to a greater or less extent, is done. Theological seminaries have not been wanting in evangelical denominations, where the whole teaching has been influenced by the dictum that *nothing can be believed which cannot be understood*. Anselm could not understand unless he first believed. He gave thanks to God for his faith, and declared that his studies had showed him that, if he refused to believe God, he could not know him.

"Every Christian," says he, "must ever hold fast the same faith *without doubting*, and while he loves it, and lives according to it, seek humbly to discover, so far as he may be able, the reasons why it is so. If he is able to discover them, let him give God thanks. If he is not able, let him bow his head in reverence; for self-confident human reason will sooner break its own horn than succeed in overturning this rock." The errors of mere speculators he ascribes to the fact that they put the *intellectus* (knowledge) before the *fides* (faith.) When such persons would dispute on matters of which they had had no experience, Anselm said it was as if a bat, or an owl, should contend respecting the beams of the sun at noonday, with eagles which gaze directly at the sun itself. "He who believes not, will not experience; and he who has not experienced will not understand, for as high as actual experience is above the mere hearing of a thing, so high is his knowledge, who has the experience of faith, above his, who barely knows by report. Not only can no one rise to a higher stage of knowledge without faith, and keeping the Divine commandments, but sometimes the very understanding bestowed is withdrawn, and faith itself destroyed because a good conscience has been neglected."

These last lines are a melancholy and a true picture of the disasters which have resulted from a self-surrender to the spirit of mere criticism. We should be warned against the disposition unduly to exalt this tendency; which is a very good servant but a very bad master. We should properly estimate the supreme importance of a believing spirit; we should guard and cherish it as the prime ornament and necessity of the Christian character. We should aspire to believe, as an achievement worthy of the loftiest ambition. Spirit of life and true light! breathe into our hearts, and raise the Church once more out of the pettiness of rationalism, into the heroism, the grandeur, the robust and manly vigor of faith.

\* This is equivalent to Abelard's saying: non credendum nisi prius intellectum.

### IS SUFFRAGE A REWARD OF MERIT?

In one view, the proposal to bestow suffrage on the colored race now before Congress, is one of the most solemn that could be entertained by a legislative body. The Senators and Representatives of the people are deliberating, whether they will bestow one of the most precious of rights and gravest of responsibilities, upon millions of men, who have never before enjoyed or felt them. Will they admit to a share in the government of this greatest of Republics—this most prosperous, most enterprising and most promising of nationalities—these so lately denied the commonest rights of humanity? Shall the victims of centuries of oppression, reckoned as but a few removed above the brute by their haughty masters, now be allowed to march side by side with these masters to the ballot-box, and deposit a vote of equal political importance with their own? It is a measure as serious, one would think, as that of setting them suddenly and simultaneously free. It is politically a new creation; it would be the emerging, out of nothingness, of a new element of political power. It would be an historic act, that will mark the Thirty-ninth Congress, as the Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery distinguished the Thirty-eighth.

On the other hand, what, with all its seeming anomalies, is this measure, but the

substantial repetition of a process going on under existing laws, day after day, without exciting comment or remonstrance? The State authorities are, all the while, enfranchising multitudes upon multitudes of men, who had been denied all political rights up to that time. There is a process continually going on, by which political elements are being created on the largest side. It would be wonderful, nay, even startling, but that it has become commonplace with us. It is part of our policy; it is thoroughly and necessarily American. The great gift of elective franchise is actually thrust upon the immigrant; he takes it in with the breath of American air. Is any question asked as to the degree of ignorance and debasement which marked his former condition? Is heathenism, or Mohammedanism, or Popery, or Mormonism made the slightest barrier to the attainment of the right to share in the government of this Protestant country? Do not duellists, drunkards, gamblers, libertines, prize-fighters, political assassins, red republicans, socialists, infidels, atheists, blasphemers, defaulters, secessionists, adventurers, worthless fellows, block-heads, possess just as much right and wield as much power at the ballot-box, as the most intelligent, virtuous, pious, and substantial citizens?

In this view of the case, it seems a mere waste of time for Senators and Representatives to deliberate gravely and for weeks upon the question of extending this right; to pause as if they were asked to do something anomalous and foreign to the spirit of our institutions and our policy; to begin to weigh the value of a franchise which has all along been "dirt cheap" in America. It seems to us too late now to raise the question of qualification for the exercise of this right, unless, indeed, we intend to apply it with entire impartiality in the future, which would be a great gain to the country.

But if we do raise the question now, candid men everywhere will admit that the colored race in America, native born, lovers of liberty, loyal to the heart's core, Christian and Protestant as they are, and fired with an unparalleled ardor for learning, and for advancement, possess qualifications fully equal, and, in some respects, far superior, to those of the foreign population, so largely Popish or infidel, stolidly ignorant and servile or restless and licentious, that are thrown upon our shores, and speedily and indiscriminately made into voters.

The Government hastened, immediately upon the dissolution of the rebel armies, not so much to restore, as to recognize as intact, the right of the entire rebel population to exercise its voting power. It admitted those who had scarcely laid away their military trappings, to share in the Government which they had been laboring with all their might to overthrow. The blackest, hatefullest treason that the world ever saw, is, in the judgment of the Executive, no disqualification for the right of suffrage. Herein, indeed, we believe that even the large and loose American spirit was exceeded, not to say affronted. It is truly American to bestow suffrage, unquestioned, upon those who have fled from oppression and who have come to find freedom and happiness on our shores; but those who have spurned these privileges, and have striven madly in open and desperate warfare, for four years, to lay the fabric of our nationality in ruins—we believe the American heart demands that such should be regarded as more remote from us than aliens. We believe the instinct of public safety and the sentiment of public justice demand, that the active rebels of the South should be debarred from the privileges of citizenship, for twenty-one years. They do not deserve it at all; their conduct has shown that they are not fit to be trusted with such power.

But if they have regained this undeserved, this forfeited privilege; if even they are not disqualified, where, in the name of candor and common sense, shall we commence to discriminate? What loyal man, what sufferer for the salvation of his country, what soldier, or what true and tried friend of the soldier, what peaceable citizen, whose antecedents and whose whole behaviour assure us of his undying attachment to the essential principles of our Government, however humble his position or sorrowful his past history, can or dare be denied a similar privilege? What are Legislators and Senators and a whole intelligent people about to abandon all other conditions of citizenship, and gravely to adhere to that of the color of a man's skin alone? Is this to be the grand and final test of citizenship in the great Republic? Are mental and moral distinctions to be coolly ignored, and the degree of coloring matter in the cells of the epidermis, instead,

to be gravely enacted into the sole condition of suffrage? Shall a black and traitorous heart, under a white skin, be solemnly protected in the exercise of this right, by constitutional provisions, which deny it to a true and noble nature under a dark skin? enormity of political pharisaism! O, vain washing of the outside of the cup and platter, while the inward part is full of ravening and wickedness! O, mere straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel! Let us abandon it, before the sevenfold woe of the Redeemer and Friend of all men overtake and crush us.

### THE REFORMER AND HIS HELPERS.

We have said that the religious community thoroughly comprehended the character and aims of the author of the recent crusade against the sanctity of the Sabbath. They estimate at their proper value all his assumptions of regard for the interests of the city and the welfare of the working man. The professions of philanthropy which he makes, while attempting to justify Sunday newspapers, and the running of Sunday cars, are of too flimsy a texture to deceive persons, who, for any time, have been acquainted with our public men.

And yet, it seems, there are some, claiming to be regarded as Christian people among us, some professed ministers of Christ, who are willing to rally under the banner of this pseudo-reformer, and who somewhat ostentatiously offer what influence they have, to commend him and his schemes to the people, and to break down the entire influence and work of the evangelical clergy and Church. They are willing, nay, would prefer, to put their flocks and the moral interests of the city at the mercy of a dissipated politician, rather than leave them, under the influence of intelligent and truly pious evangelical teaching. They come to the defence of this ungodly schemer against the evangelical clergy, and put on an air of injured innocence in his behalf, which must make him laugh in his sleeve. Can any thing be more refreshing than the *naivete* of the following defence, volunteered by a Swedenborgian preacher, in an anti-Sabbath sermon some week or two ago?

"I would not recommend the leaguering together of men, whose duty and profession it is to teach and exemplify the Gospel of Christ, to injure an upright, orderly, and good citizen in his business or reputation, because such citizen does not accept their view of a controverted question."

With what a deep sense of gratitude must "the citizen" have received for publication this emphatic indication of his character! And how small must the evangelical clergy of the city feel under the rebuke of the distinguished Swedenborgian! Hear what he thinks of the Sabbath:—

"It is not committing sin, then, to work, or dance, or play, on the first day of the week—the Christian Sabbath; to travel on foot, in a private carriage, or in the street car; to row a boat, stroll through the woods and fields, ride into the country, or visit your friends; to converse pleasantly upon common topics; to read a newspaper or print and publish one; or to do any other thing that is innocent in itself, whereby the mind and body are refreshed and strengthened."

Still another helper has our Sabbath hating reformer secured, in the somewhat dusty and dormant ranks of the Unitarians. Little as this denomination is known, or cared to be known, among us, in the work of supporting or extending Christian institutions, it fails not to come out of its hibernation, and to seize an opportunity like the present, to show where it stands, when those institutions are in danger. It is plainly enough heard now, joining in ridicule, and lending a hand when the vile, the infidel, the covetous seek to sweep those institutions out of their path.

In a recent discourse on the Sabbath, Dr. Furness throws open the day to secular uses in the broadest style. He says:—

"The day is to be held subordinate and subsidiary to human uses, and nothing which is not wrong in itself, wrong on any day, is to be forbidden on any certain day merely for the sake of the day."

One of the strongest arguments for the divinity and perpetual obligation of the day is got over, *per se*, by a flat rejection of authority of the Scripture account of creation:—

"The reason given in the Law of Moses for consecrating the seventh day to rest, is a reason which cannot possibly stand in the light of present knowledge, namely, that God rested on that day. It is utterly out of the power of any tolerably well-informed man to think of God so, as a being liable to fatigue and taking rest. Such a conception of God could only have been entertained in that early age."

To such a shallow infidel device is this "Christian" opponent of the Sabbath driven! As if it could in no proper sense be said, that God rested from the work of creation! Is he not done creating this world yet? And can there be anything so

infinitely tender on the part of God to his creatures, as thus to give them, in the cycles of his own being, a glorious example for their lesser lives?

We have also from the lips of this "eloquent divine," the somewhat hackneyed plea of recreation for the masses, urged to a point where its advocates invariably get into a serious dilemma. Dr. Furness walks straight into it, and, as the reader will see, sticks fast there, without much show of discontent:—

"No restriction should be put upon people's moving to and fro, from one part of the city to another, or from town to country, and from country to town. Every facility of locomotion enjoyed on other days should be at hand on the first day. But this, it will be objected, will deprive a considerable class, those who labor on railways and in passenger cars, of the day of rest. Every thing should be done and much may be done to obviate this consequence and to secure as perfectly as possible to all classes their due share of rest."

"Much may be done," that is the most which this advocate of Sunday recreation by carriage, rail, steamboat, or pleasure-boat, can offer for the relief of overtaken beasts and men, whom his philanthropy condemns to seven days labor in the week. We will put Theodore Parker, the flower of Boston Unitarianism, against "that eloquent Unitarian divine," of Philadelphia, on the matter of Sabbath observance. Theodor Parker, on the verge of the grave in Italy, shrank back from the festive, secular, unhallowed Sabbath of that land, and declared his preference for the Sabbath of New England.

The Press makes quite a parade of these new allies. Perhaps it really congratulates itself, that in the great Christian community of Philadelphia, with its splendid array of ministerial talent and character and reputation, he has secured the support of a solitary disciple of the fanciful Swedenborg, and the solitary head of a feeble flock of aesthetic freethinkers. Perhaps, after all, it fully comprehends the situation, and needs no hint of ours as to the value of its followers. No one need be mistaken as to where the heart of the Christian public on this question really is. The great Union Prayer-meetings of the past fortnight, which almost spontaneously extended themselves beyond the week of prayer, and which have filled to repletion, day after day, the largest churches of our city, have responded to no subject so quickly and so cordially as this of the sanctification of the Sabbath. It has been the popular theme of remark and of prayer, and as such, perhaps, as all other causes put together, has rallied these thousands of worshippers to the place of prayer.

It has led to the formation of a new and powerful organization—the SABBATH UNION OF PHILADELPHIA, with a citizen of National reputation—Jay Cooke—at its head. We believe that, under God, the Reformer and his allies will find themselves utterly mistaken as to the character of our people, will be disappointed, disgraced, and overthrown.

### A BOLD DECLARATION.

Our Methodist brethren are this year celebrating their centenary, and as servants of Christ, zealous and true, have a right to be, they are very cheery about it. They expect to make "a good thing of it," in the way of collections for educational and missionary operations. But it seems to us their godly mirth sometimes runs into a reckless and grotesque capering. Witness the following assertion from an able article in the N. Y. Christian Advocate on Rationalism:—"Only the incoming of Methodism saved New England from the fate of Germany." We have heard much of the services of Methodism as a pioneer church, and as adapted to the neglected masses. We have now to learn, in this hundredth year of its existence, that it has come to the rescue of the cultivated, reflective mind of New England, and has saved it from a terrible crisis in its speculative theology, or has saved the masses of old Puritan New England from sinking into the rationalism of the schools.

We do not believe it. The orthodoxy of New England, has, under God, been able to take care of itself. It has had its battles to fight, like every other form of truth; and it has fought, and is fighting them now. We do not think a critical examination of the history of these conflicts will show, that Arminianism has ever sent it any considerable reinforcements. We do not believe it has ever proved itself incapable of maintaining, among the people of New England, generally, a sincere regard for the great verities of revealed truth. A strange boast truly, that Methodism has saved New England from being thoroughly revolutionized in the sphere of speculative theology, when Yale, and Dartmouth, and Amherst, and Williams, and Bowdoin, and

Middlebury and Vermont Colleges, have been the seats of sound learning, pure theology and precious revivals for generations and for centuries; when Andover and Yale, and Bangor, and East Windsor Seminaries have taught and defended, with consummate ability, the same general system of orthodox and scriptural theology, while Methodism has had its one College and 200 students, at Middletown, for less than thirty-five years, and its one Biblical Institute in New Hampshire for less than twenty years.

For our part, we have regarded the Arminian theology, with its denial of the doctrines of grace and its exaltation of free will, as having far more affinity with rationalism than Calvinism has. It is certain that the Arminianism which has stuck to the Church of England, is more to blame for the present rationalist movement in the body, than is the Calvinism of the thirty-nine articles. And whatever present fears we have for New England, are mostly in connection with the Arminian tendencies appearing among her clergy, and those who profess to represent them.

### A LOYAL VISITOR FROM CHARLESTON.

We had the pleasure of welcoming to our office a truly loyal Charlestonian, a native and now a resident of that city. Welcome for his own sake, he was none the less so, for reporting the formation of a church of our branch among the loyal citizens of the place. It was formed soon after the fall of the rebel armies, and now numbers about twenty members, with a congregation of three hundred, and a Sabbath-school of one hundred and thirty scholars. The only serious drawback to their success is the want of a building, which our friend, the pastor, hopes to secure with the aid of the friends of the extension of loyal churches and of our denomination in the South. It will not diminish the interest of our people to know that this enterprise is in progress among that class of the population which furnished the heroic Captain Robert Small, and that the pastor is Rev. E. J. Adams, formerly of the Lombard Street Central Church of this city.

### DANCING AND SLAVERY.

The Presbyterian Standard well hits off the inconsistency of Southern reformers who would cleanse the outside of the cup and platter, when the inward part is full of ravening and wickedness; "these things ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." Referring to the account of the meeting of the late Southern Assembly at Macon, and to Dr. Ross' movements there it says:—

It seems, from the same paper from which the Doctor's speech has been extracted, that he introduced in the Assembly, at Macon, "an able and original paper on the subject of dancing and social recreations, which he accompanied with remarks that commanded the attention of the house, and which, after a spirited little running debate, was referred to the committee on bills and overtures, and made a special order of the day." We are glad the Doctor has taken hold of this matter, and hope that appropriate action was taken on his paper. Dancing, &c., are bad enough. The only wonder we have, is, that one who could see no evil in buying and selling human beings, is so strenuous about the censurable practices he condemns in his paper, and that such practices, just now, should need any special treatment in that region.

### THE REVIVAL IN OUR CITY.

Again the Spirit of Prayer is poured out in our city. The masses of our Christian population are thronging every day to our largest churches in a way to remind us of the solemn time of 1858. All denominations cordially unite in the services and a delightful, earnest, practical spirit pervades the meetings auguring the best results. A third week of prayer has, almost by spontaneous agreement, been entered upon, and the prospects are that we shall have a month of prayer, instead of a week, as originally intended. We trust the hoped-for blessing is already descending upon God's people.

Evangelical Churches advertising in Saturday's Press:—

1st Congregational, Frankford Road.  
2d Congregational, 11th and Wood.  
Central Congregational, 18th and Mount Vernon.  
French Evangelical, 7th and Spruce.  
15th Presbyterian, 15th and Lombard.  
1st Ref. Dutch, 7th and Spring Garden.  
3d Reformed Dutch, 10th and Filbert.  
Church of the Intercessor, Spring Garden Street.

Spirit rappers, Swedenborgians, Universalists, and Second Adventists, are in the list, but no N. S., United, or Reformed Presbyterians, no Methodists and no Baptists.