

belief in ultimate triumph on God Himself. It was his faith in God, in God as reached through and in Christ, which sustained him with an untroubled calm through all the dark and trying hours of that struggle. All his anti-slavery poems breathe this spirit. He was no "come-outer," who flung up all faith in Christianity because so many of its adherents were subservient to the expediencies of the hour. His faith was steadfast. This kept him from the harsh and bitter denunciation, the intemperate and unjust identification of the system of slavery with those who had inherited it as a patrimony of evil. The words of Mr. Wasson are as true as they are pertinent: "We have in vain searched these poems to find one trace of base wrath or of any degenerate and selfish passion. He is angry and sins not. The sun goes down and rises again upon wrath, and neither sets nor rises upon aught freer from meanness or egoism. All the fires of his heart were for justice and mercy, for God and humanity; and they who are most scathed by them owe him no hatred in return."\*

If from Whittier's career as reformer we turn to his works, we shall find these hardly second to those of any American writer in point of serviceableness to the ministry. Many have forgotten, if they ever knew, that his prose writing almost equals in amount that of his poetry. His prose belongs, most of it, to his early career, that of the editor. His essays, now upon aspects of New England life, now upon prominent historical characters or unknown heroes, who were witnesses for some great truth; here a scathing review of Mr. Carlyle "*On the Nigger Question*," and there a defence of Quakerism, are all characteristic of the man. It would be a mistake to claim for them the charm of style which belongs to Holmes or Lowell; and yet he will take a high place among our prose writers. He has preserved much that is of permanent historic value, specially the characteristic features of our New England life, which is fast passing into oblivion. The editor also of an edition of "*John Woolman's Journal*," he has made this book, which charmed so deeply the gentle Elia, attractive to all readers of his words of introduction. If, however, the preacher would acquaint himself with the story of the great anti-slavery struggle, he must turn to the third volume of Mr. Whittier's prose and read his discussions of the questions involved. In our anti-slavery literature it will be found among our standard authorities.

It is, however, Whittier's poetry which enshrines him in the affectionate memory of the American people, and to that, during the remainder of this paper, we turn. In the Riverside edition of Whittier's poetry, the four volumes are arranged under the titles, "Narrative and Legendary," "Poems of Nature," "Reminiscent and Religious," "Anti-Slavery," "Labor and Reform," "Personal," "Tent on the Beach." This classification is doubtless useful as a guide to study of the poet; but it is only by a somewhat arbitrary rule that any one class may be singled out as religious, such as are exclusively devoted to religious themes, for the reader of Whittier

\* *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. xiii., p. 384.