

THE CHURCH.

BY C. P. CRANCH.

[It strikes us that we have met with the name of C. P. Cranch before—perhaps among the letters of the ever-to-be-admired Theodore Parker, for he (Mr. Cranch) seems to have taken a part in the transcendental movement that stirred up Boston 40 years ago, but we had little idea of the power that slumbered in his brain till we read in the *Index* (Aug. 15, 1878) a prose article "On Matter and Spirit," but more especially a poem on what seemed an unpromising subject—The Church. The poem, as given in the *Index*, consists of forty-one stanzas, and is of surprising excellence. We very much regret that the space at our command does not allow us to reproduce more than *eleven* of these stanzas: but, if they please any of our readers half as much as they delighted us, he will not fail to send for the publication we have indicated and judge for himself. The *Index*, we need hardly say, is always worth reading, standing, as it does, among the leading liberal journals, whether in the Old World or the New.]

What didst thou for the studious sage* who saw
Through Nature's veils the great organic force, —
Who sought and found the all-prevailing law
That holds the rolling planets in their course?
When didst thou fail to check the flowing source
Of truth whose waters needs must inundate
The theologic dikes that guarded thy estate?

Is there a daring thought thou hast not crushed?
Is there a generous faith thou hast not cursed?
Is there a whisper, howe'er low and hushed,
Breathed for the future, but thou wast the first
To silence with thy tortures,—thou the worst
Of antichrists, and cunningest of foes
That ever against God and man's great progress rose?

Yet life was in thee once. Thy earlier youth
Was flushed with blossoms of a heavenly bloom.
Thy blight began, when o'er God's common truth
And man's nobility did thine assume
The dread prerogative of life and doom;
The creeds which served as swaddling-bands were bound
Like grave-clothes round the limbs laid living underground.

When man grows wiser than his creed allows,
And nobler than the church he has outgrown:
When that which was his old familiar house
No longer is a home, but all alone,
Alone with God, he dares to lift the stone
From off the skylight between heaven and him.—
Then shines a grander day, then fade the spectres grim.

And never yet was growth, save when it broke
The letter of the dead scholastic form.
The bark drops off, and leaves the expanding oak.
To stretch with giant arms through sun and storm.
The idols that upon his breast lay warm,
The sage throws down, and breaks their hollow shrine,
And follows the great hand that points to light divine.

But thou O Church! didst steal the mother's mask,
The counterfeit of heaven,—so to unfold
Thy flock around thee. None looked near, to ask,
"Art thou our mother, truly?" None so bold
As left the veil, and show how hard and cold
Those eyes of tyranny, that mouth of guile,
That low and narrow brow, the witchcraft of that smile.—

* Galileo.

That subtle snile, deluding while it warned;
That arrogant, inquisitorial nod;
That hand that stabbed, like Herod, the new-formed
The childlike life which drew its breath from God,
And, for that star by which the Magi trod
The road to Bethlehem, the Good Shepherd's home,
Lit lurid idol-fires on thy seven hills of Rome.

But thou who claim'st the keys of God's own heaven,
And who wouldst fain usurp the keys of earth,—
Thou, leagued with priests and tyrants who had given
Their hands, and pledged their oaths to blight the birth
Of thine own children's rights,—for scorn and mirth
One day shalt stand, thy juggling falsehoods named,
Thy plots and wiles unmasked, thy heaven-high titles shamed!

Look to the proud tiara on thy brow!
Its gems shall crush thee down like leaden weights.
Thy alchemy is dead; and wouldst thou now
Thunder anathemas against the States
Whose powers are Time's irrefragable fates?
Look to thy glories! They must shrink away,—
With meaner pomp must fall, and sink into decay.

Lo, thou art numbered with the things that were,
Soon to be laid upon the dusty shelves
Of antiquaries,—once so strong and fair,
Now classed with spells of magic, midnight elves,
And all half-lies, that pass away themselves
When once a people rises to the light
Of primal truths and comprehends its heaven-born right.

Toil on; but little canst thou do to-day.
The sun is risen. The daylight dims thy shrines.
The age outstrips thee, marching on its way,
And overflowing all thy boundary lines.
How art thou fallen, O star! How lurid shines
Thy taper underneath the glowing sky!
How feeble grows thy voice, how lusterless thine eye!

CASE OF CHASE AGAINST COMSTOCK.

Not only should every physician and druggist, but every person of progressive thought in the land, take a more than common interest in the trial and termination of this suit. It is destined to be a historical case, one that will test the legal authority of the deputy of a powerful Christian association, and one that will place Comstock and his society upon the pedestal of public odium for all time. Organized effort is being made to sustain Mrs. Chase in her righteous demand for retributive justice. Grand juries have exculpated her, the New York Medical Society has endorsed her, and her syringes are rapidly receiving public approval. This action, under the management of Moody B. Smith and Wm. A. Brach, will be pressed to trial fast as the legal mills can grind. The certain result of this case will be a stunning blow at bigotry and persecution, and a triumphant victory for liberalized opinion and personal rights. A powerful Christian combination is to be fought through the person of this carrion-seeking Comstock, and the prosecution will call for more money than Mrs. Chase can afford after the great loss she has sustained. All who deem it their duty to contribute substantial sympathy to this wronged woman, and who wish to further the cause of right in helping her secure redress can forward remittances to Sara B. Chase, A. M., M. D., 56 West Thirty-third street, New York, or at least subscribe for her paper, the *Physiologist and Family Physician*.

S. H. PRESTON.