

dual or a crowd, an audience say of slave-owners and their sympathisers. The one addresses them as men. He knows their sentiments, but he keeps his knowledge to himself, suspecting that if he had been brought up with the same environment, his sentiments would probably be not unlike theirs, and his aim is not to denounce but to deliver them. Accordingly, he lays the foundations of his subtle argument in appeals to that which is best in man; perhaps throws his address into the form of a parable, like the great Teacher, whose teaching is the most perfect example of sweetness and light; enounces great moral principles to which the heart of humanity always responds; incidentally shows the curse of slavery, and that the curse falls on owner and trader as well as on slave; rouses their enthusiasm by dwelling on their fathers' fights for freedom; and gets them into a temper in which sacrifice is possible and almost easy. He receives a hearing, and is welcome to come again. Good seed is sown, and perhaps one or two resolve to forsake all and follow him. But the other calls this temporizing, and takes an apparently braver course. He is all righteous, and the godless crowd before him must be told in plain language what he thinks of them and their sin. So he gives it to them red-hot, and in five minutes they give him brickbats, or a coat of tar and feathers. Subsequently, they get their ablest ministers to write treatises to prove that slavery is a divine institution. Herein we may see the difference between wisdom and fanaticism, between authoritative statement and controversy.

One would imagine that there could be no mistaking Emerson's meaning, especially when the title of the essay is considered, and the context of the paragraph quoted. One would think that the philosopher who advises all men to speak to-day what they think, in words hard as cannon-balls, and to-morrow—should they see cause to change their view—to speak the opposite in words equally hard, would be the last man to be charged with 'the basest and most unworthy prudence.' But here is the style in which his editor comments:—

'We have quoted this last paragraph only that we may express our utter dissent from it, except under the very widest limitations. Every day we are confronted with sentiments and opinions which we can not honestly assume to be identical with our own. Could Elijah honestly tell the priests of Baal that hi

God and theirs was the same? Could Luther blandly assure Eck and Tetzel that he agreed exactly, or in any degree even, with them in the matter of indulgences? Could Milton say to Salmasius that both of them were of one mind in regard to the great act of judgment executed by the people of England upon Charles the First? Could Emerson and Brigham Young—assuming that both were honest and sincere in their opinions—honestly and sincerely assure each other that there was no difference between them? Should I, who abhor assassination, assure a Nihilist that my views respecting the slaying of the Czar of Russia differed in nowise from his own? It may be, and often is, a matter of the highest and best wisdom to refrain from expressing one's sentiments, for there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. One is not bound of necessity to assail the dogma of the Real Presence when standing under the dome of St. Peter's, or to denounce Mohammed as a false prophet before the portals of the temple at Mecca. But, if a man will or must speak at all, only the basest and most unworthy prudence will sanction his speaking other than the truth. There are times and emergencies when the best and highest prudence must give way to something higher and better; times when this half virtue would be a whole crime. It was imprudent for John the Baptist to denounce Herod for having taken to himself his brother's wife; for Leonidas with his three hundred to hold the pass of Thermopylæ; for Luther to nail up his eighty-five theses on the doors of the Wittenberg Cathedral, and to go to Worms; for John Wesley to persist in open-air preaching; for Garrison to denounce slavery in Boston.'

Was ever mortal so smothered under mighty names? Was there ever such a *douche* of indignant commonplaces more utterly beside the mark?

When Mr. Guernsey takes the rôle of narrator instead of critic, he is more satisfactory. We learn that Emerson belongs to what has been styled the Boston Brahmin caste. 'For eight generations there had been no time when one or more of his forefathers, on the paternal or maternal side, was not a minister of the Gospel.' Ralph was one of four brothers, on all of whom the ancestral type was strongly impressed. At the age of fourteen years he entered Harvard, and graduated at seventeen. Fifty or sixty years ago, most of the students at the New England and Scottish Universities were boys. Now, they are men, and in the United States, in several universities, holidays are given at election times, to allow the students to go home and record their votes. In 1826, Emerson, at the age of 22, was 'approved to preach by the Middlesex Association; and three years after, he was called to the pastorate of the Second Church (Unitarian) of Boston.

Referring our readers to the volume itself for details of his life and works, we confine ourselves to two points, which we touch upon for special reasons. First, the cause of his abandonment of the sacred office. The cause was simply a difference of opinion between him and