

ARTICLE VII.

PROFESSOR PARK AS A THEOLOGICAL
PREACHER.

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PROFESSOR PARK has been designated "The great professor." But his sermons sometimes indicated a range of thought and subtlety of speculation that have not appeared in his other published works, probably not in his lectures. As a teacher of theology, he would not be under obligation to go beyond the creeds of the denomination to which he belonged. Theology is a fairly well-rounded science, and may be taught from a text-book as well as arithmetic or geology. A system of lectures need not necessarily contain private, original speculations of the lecturer. He may encourage his pupils to make excursions into adjacent fields of thought, while he confines his positive instructions to the well-established doctrines of the Christian faith.

Professor Park as a lecturer presented his views with great clearness, discriminated point from point in Christian doctrine with great acuteness, conducted an argument with remarkable logical skill, and left the impression that his conclusions could be avoided only by beginning with new premises. But he was not ambitious to develop a theology of his own: his aim was to establish, with accuracy and definiteness, his positions on ground already traversed. He was, however, very positive in his views, and might almost be called a partisan theologian. Early in his occupancy of his theological professorship, he avowed himself a high Hopkinsian, and probably would at any time have accepted that designation. His controversy with Dr. Hodge showed that he

was a most determined advocate of the New England view of sin and human ability. He accepted, also, the Hopkinsian doctrines concerning the means of grace and "unregenerate doings." Of the composite scheme which is now called the *new theology*, he did not, so far as I know, publicly express an opinion. That part of it which is really new has come into notice since he retired from official labor. That part of it which consists of the doctrines rejected by Edwards and Hopkins met with his opposition from first to last. The rejection of the authority of the Bible, the rejection of the doctrine of divine revelations evidenced by accompanying supernatural interpositions, the adoption of a rationalistic view of inspiration, the acceptance of the doctrine that human nature is a development from brute nature, the acceptance of the doctrine that the human species has existed for countless ages on the earth, must inevitably modify the traditional orthodox theology. Professor Park never adjusted his scheme of teaching to these views. A scheme of theology, often called by its adherents new, now somewhat widely adopted under the name of liberalism, which, perhaps, vaguely admits more or less of the above-noticed sentiments, but consists substantially of Pelagianism and Arminianism with tolerance at least of Sabellian speculations, and reliance for final salvation on the attribute of divine benevolence,—*this* new theology is the simple opposite of Professor Park's lifelong teaching. He is reported to have said, humorously of course, "It is not respectable not to be a Calvinist"; he certainly answered the question "What in one word is Arminianism?" with the one word "Folly."

While it may be said, then, that he made no attempt to excite attention by novelties or by peculiar opinions, it is true that in his sermons he gave free play to his intellect, and disclosed his personal feelings and his tendencies of mind more fully than he did in his more scholastic argu-

mentations. Whatever his works may show when published in a body, we look now to his sermons for the exhibition of his personal peculiarities. In them he lingers at times over profound and moving themes in a way that indicates a kinship of mind with the deep things of the spiritual life. He seems to have been fascinated by the truths that lie half-hidden from human vision, and to have had pleasure in the thought that there is a reserve of knowledge for the future. It is the purpose of this article to notice a few of Professor Park's sentiments which lie outside the system which he officially represented.

First, we notice some things that indicate the drift of his thoughts as religious rather than theological. Though a partisan, he recognized the substantial truthfulness of all the Christian creeds. He was accustomed to say, that with explanations he and his opponents would agree. Whatever words of criticism he might apply to the beliefs of others, whatever epithets like *absurd* and *impossible* he might apply to their statements, he was persuaded that belief itself, belief in God and his revelation, is the chief thing; that the one faith delivered to the saints may be firmly held by those who differ widely as to the minor details of doctrine. Those who have seen him at the communion-table or at devotional meetings, or have heard his address to the divine throne on occasions of special interest, have felt sure that he stood upon the eternal bedrock—the Rock of Ages—and was unconscious, for the time, of the superficial contentions that might be going on around him. His attitude toward that which is mysterious in life and in the divine government is indicative of character through its contrast with other marked qualities. One of the most prominent traits of his mind was clearness. He insisted on exactness of view and of statement. One who had been his pupil in the department of homiletics, said, on his transfer to the chair of theology, "I would rather have

his instruction in theology than that of any other man in the country. His mind is as clear as daylight." Yet he knew when to stop as well as when to go forward. He paused before the mysterious as calmly and contentedly as he rested on revealed truths. He knew that the ways of God transcend those of men, and he found assurance that he was embracing a divine truth in this, that the thing which he was called to contemplate surpassed his comprehension. He had no disposition to force his way into that which is reserved for Deity. He well knew the weakness of humanity, and saw that its highest attainment is to wonder, love, and adore. His vision was as far-reaching as that of most men; his glances were as penetrating as those of other inquirers after truth; but the distinctness of his apprehensions gave him the fuller assurance that an impenetrable wall limits our earthly knowledge. He not only submitted to this truth, he welcomed it, considered it an important part of the lot of man on earth, he held it to be wise for the children of God to wait, to expect, to adjust their sentiments to the things already known, and not to be impatient to force an entrance into the secret chamber of the Most High. His language was, "The mind was made for mysteries," and he believed it accomplished its mission better in accepting the divine overrulings than in restless and feverish questionings.

As to the unity of the human race, his sentiment partook more of feeling than of definitely enunciated theory. He believed in a moral unity. The Hopkinsian doctrine that the individuals of the race are not born in sin and guilt has been criticised by strict Calvinists. But that doctrine does not really change the practical estimate of human sinfulness. It does, however, transfer its origin from the physical to the moral world. It makes the fall of Adam, not the fall of the race, but the determining fact in accord with which the moral constitution of the race was fixed.

Adam was in the image of God, and lost that image by disobedience; whereupon his posterity are born in the image of their apostate parent. This view Professor Park inculcated in his class-room, but he has set forth the inherent forces of humanity which lead to sin, in a sermon entitled "The System of Moral Influences in which Men are Placed," with such expositions as should go far towards vindicating for him (a vindication not at all needed) a Calvinistic standing. He speaks of influences and counter-influences which pervade nature and control human conduct, with a fullness of illustration that makes all nature seem one living creature. His view of the reciprocity of all the elements of creation might almost satisfy a Hegelian. Especially throughout the human race are mutual influences at work. "No man liveth to himself. A single word of a friend may transform for good or ill the character of a sympathetic circle." "For two thousand years there has been a school of philosophers so intimately connected with each other that they have been called a scholastic body, and Aristotle has been its vital head, and both truths and errors have flowed from that head through all the members of that body." The diffusive power of evil is as manifest as the diffusive power of good. "To taste the forbidden fruit was the act of a moment, but the disasters that followed that brief rebellion have diffused themselves through all the race through all time."

This system of mutual and reciprocal influences, Professor Park believed, illustrates the sovereignty and the justice and the mercy of God. It enables us to hold that all sin is actual individual transgression; it does not deny that parents and children may be swept away together in their guilt by a penal judgment; it admits that innocent children may suffer with guilty parents, the children being taken to rest with Him who on earth took little children in his arms; it allows that guilty parents may for a time

be spared because God would not afflict with them their innocent offspring, would not afflict even unoffending domestic animals; it permits us to hope that children may bring their parents to penitence and salvation, as in innumerable instances parent have brought their children. Thus the moral world is a system of influences radiating in many directions, issuing in good and evil. With special interest are to be noticed the manifestations of kindness, the exercise of mercy, in the divine overruling. "And all the instances in which his unoffending creatures have interposed between his justice and its erring victims are symbols—for the earth is full of symbols, and the history of our race is a history of symbols—of that illustrious mediation whereby the Lamb of God took away the sins of the world. He so connected himself with all who believe in him, that, if punitive justice alight upon them, it must cover him also. He steps between the uplifted sword and its predestined object, and, if it strike them, it must first pierce him. Therefore is the sword returned into the scabbard, and peace cometh unto the elect of God."

The remarks thus far made relate to the natural tendencies of Professor Park's mind in his contemplation of religious themes, but he made his individuality felt also in the popular presentations of topics that came within the range of his professional work. The perdition of the race and the scheme of salvation furnished subjects for independent thought. He had *his own* views of sin, justice, and punishment; atonement and grace called forth his profoundest contemplations.

On the doctrines relating to condemnation, he did not limit himself to the New England theology, though he adhered to that scheme in a general way. His views were more comprehensive than that scheme required, and he did not permit himself to be bound by its philosophical statements. Some parts of his variation from its merely doc-

trinal positions may be accounted for by the distinction which he so eloquently set forth in his famous sermon on the Theology of the Intellect, and that of the Feelings; but at times he introduced new considerations which that system did not contain. The New England scheme, as held by those who would give it its simplest form, permits a somewhat attenuated conception of sin, justice, and punishment. It teaches, all sin consists in sinning, sinning is voluntary transgression of law, and the law is, Thou shalt prefer the greater good to the less; sin is, therefore, the choice of the less good. It was not possible for Professor Park to confine himself within this range of thought. He did not measure sin by the difference between the actual good of a choice and the possible good, but he looked upon it as loathsome, debasing, defiling. He cherished a sympathy with those who look upon sin with abhorrence. He used to speak reverentially of President Edwards, as, of all men, the one to whom sin was the most repulsive. His conception of the divine view of it was, not that it is a matter for which excuses are to be made, but a matter to be promptly and utterly condemned. It was not the theoretically partial good of sin that attracted his attention, but its destructiveness, its hostility to God and humanity, the disintegrating corruption that it works in nature. He also took a comprehensive view of justice, did not drop distributive justice from his theology. Dr. N. W. Taylor maintained that the disposition to promote the general good is the only attribute of justice required of a divine Ruler and Judge. Park believed that this attribute is directly manifested in retribution. It is true that he accepted the distinction between distributive and general justice, found aid in explaining the efficacy of the atonement by means of the distinction. Still he did not define justice as benevolence, but made it a particular manifestation of benevolence. The attribute, contemplated by itself, was to

him a majestic force working out the retributions of the moral world; it marked and signalized the immutable distinction between right and wrong; it acted out its nature and fulfilled its aim in rewarding righteousness, and especially in punishing iniquity as ill-deserving. As the righteous Lord loveth judgment, so his justice, of its own force, follows the judgment and gives reality to its decisions. A scheme of salvation may indeed modify the award for guilt, but it cannot modify the nature of justice or make void its distributive demands.

His doctrine of punishment was in harmony with that of justice. He did not incline to the doctrine that punishment is to be justified only as a means of reform or as a deterrent from crime. He had no thought that the decisions of justice were futile, or that threats accomplished their aim by their moral influence. He believed, if threats were necessary, their fulfillment was necessary—that God does not work through false impressions. He believed that the elements of punishment are embodied in our nature. The physical sufferings that follow sin are punitive, and in the conscience God has laid the foundation of retribution. He has made man his own tormentor. The inevitable remorse that follows guilt shows that God has not aimed at reform simply, but has ordained a requital for ill-desert. The question is not, Shall remorse be let loose as an avenging demon to prey upon guilt? but the question is, How shall it be induced to cease from its ravages? In consonance with this view he had no hesitation in affirming the doctrine of eternal punishment. He felt that the eternity of punishment is in harmony with the nature of things. What can limit it? How shall it cease? Distress and woe is the state into which the sinning man falls, and he can escape only by entering another state. But when can the guilty say, I am guilty no longer? How shall punishment work out a consciousness of innocence?

Anthropological theology might be divided into these two parts: *Theologia de Morte* and *Theologia de Salute*. Professor Park's views of the former we have briefly noticed, but he was specially attracted to the latter. Atonement was the theme that awakened his profoundest interest. He gave it a large place in his lectures, and reverted to it often in sermons and essays. It is evident that he meditated upon it, and presented it before his own mind, in all the forms in which it is capable of being expressed. In his speculations he reached out quite beyond the bounds which New England theology has set. He undoubtedly considered that view a truthful one and, practically, an adequate doctrinal statement, but his feelings concerning the atonement and his conceptions of it carried him quite beyond the limits of that theory. That school of theologians teaches that the atonement makes it safe for God, under certain conditions, to forgive sin. They do not teach that it is in any way an offset to sin, but that it produces such an effect upon the minds of moral beings that God can, with safety to his government, exercise his sovereignty in its pardon and in the remission of its penalty. But Professor Park made very free use of the words sacrifice, substitution, propitiation, expiation, and kindred terms. If it should be said that he simply intended to teach that the objects thus designated were the means by which God manifested his disapprobation of wrong-doing, then the means of the atonement, rather than the end, attracted his attention, and the forgiveness of sin would consequently be ascribed to the expiation, rather than to mere divine sovereignty. But without attempting to explain his relation to any theory, we may notice, separately, some of the ideas which he connected with the doctrine.

In the first place, he removed the atonement from among those things that are expedients, or convenient resorts, or means to ends, by making it the ultimate aim of the divine

dealings with men. He accepted the doctrine that the purpose of God's work in the entire range of the universe is the manifestation of his own glory. The part which human history contributes to this end is concentrated in, and issues from, the atonement. Human affairs are so ordered that their interworkings and their trend make progress toward, and reach forward to, God's glory; and the ultimate object in the current of human affairs, that which on the farther side of all earthly operations touches the divine glory, in which all forces in the current of events concentrate, is the atonement. Hence the atonement is that for which men were created, and is a greater work than creation. The dark mysteries of evil, the destructive realities of sin, are overbalanced by it, and are wisely permitted, because of its rectifying energy and its adaptation to display the divine skill. The wisdom that is competent to educe good from evil is beyond our comprehension; but we know that God is wise, and that he has set sin and redemption over against each other, and that he preferred the counterworking of the two to the absence of the two from his system of government. Hence it is that in the atonement we find the explanation of the divine works; the converging lines of the divine government center in it. The hidden things into which the angels desire to look are embraced in it, and even many of the enigmas of the natural world, it is believed, will find their solution here. But we turn to notice some of the special items that entered into his view of the doctrine.

He made much of the idea of sacrifice. He thought there were corresponding deeds between the parties made at one in the scheme of reconciliation. The mercy of the Father calls forth the gratitude of the erring child; the rebellious subject expresses the desire to make compensation for the injury he has done. He expresses by symbol a willingness to make cost to himself in reparation of

wrong. It is not the office of the Ruler to forget, but to rectify, the disgrace put upon his authority. Hence sacrifice is in place. The Levitical sacrifices, so Professor Park held, were typical of the one great sacrifice by which God and man are brought into harmony. As the slain lamb expiated the guilt of him for whom it was offered, so he who was nailed to the cross expiated the guilt of a sinning world. He believed that the divine sacrifice proved to the world the justice of God in justifying men, because it was a propitiation in response to which wrath against sin might be turned away. A favorite hymn, which he often read in public, was that of Cowper, beginning, "There is a fountain filled with blood." Congregations have been awed by it as his voice interpreted the depth of its sentiment. He did not believe that salvation comes to man through admiration of Christ or through imitation of him, but through faith in his blood. He did not believe that Christ's mission was designed to convince men of the goodness of God, but to open the way of access to him.

Still more did the professor present in varied lights the idea of substitution;—and the term was not to be explained as figurative. His teaching was that Christ took the sinner's place in suffering the penalty of a broken law, and in being made subject to the inflictions of the Ruler who executes the law. He did not, indeed, hold that Christ was personally punished, but that he endured the penalty due to the sinner, and that his sufferings were an exponent of the wrath of God. He opposed any exposition of the Twenty-second Psalm which made it other than the Son's cry of agony when he was forsaken by the Father. One of the most eloquent of his utterances is in consonance with what he termed a most remarkable expression: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." No one who heard from the pulpit these words will ever forget them: "We long to know whether there was no check to the anthems of the

angels when they heard the sound of the drawing of the sword of God in heaven, and he lifted it up against the man that was his fellow, and said, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'" Professor Park did not hesitate to accept the doctrine that the earth was cursed for man's sake, and that the race is under a curse because of transgression, and that Christ became a curse for us, and that by his stripes we are healed. Nor did Christ take our place simply to bear our penalty: he is our representative to plead our cause and keep open for us the way of life. "The vicarious chastisement was not merely piacular, it was propitiatory likewise." He did not rest with affirming that Christ's sufferings were an adequate expression of God's disapproval of sin: he saw that they presented new motives for its pardon,—they not only satisfied justice, they prompted to the exercise of grace. Some have held that the atonement was addressed to men, but the theological preacher says: "The atonement addresses not men only, not the created universe only, but the Creator." "The atonement is a prayer from the Son to the Father." "In the efficacy of his death he is an Intercessor for us. The atonement is a plea in our behalf; the eloquence is continued even yet, and in its importunity our Redeemer is our Advocate, rehearsing the argument of his death for our salvation."

In his contemplations upon the atonement, Professor Park made much of the mysterious pains of Christ. Our Lord was not sustained by a Stoic philosophy, or by the consciousness of innocence, when he was on the cross or when he contemplated his approaching death. His agonies were inexplicable by human considerations, and were beyond the range of human sympathy. Their efficacy was not, therefore, in their moral influence upon men, nor was it by the demonstration of any doctrinal truth. Their power in the scheme of redemption could be known only

to the Divine Mind. Their effect upon us could be known only as effect not traceable to its source through a causal efficiency. The pains of our Lord are thus known to us through themselves alone; their hidden springs are beyond our range of vision. The atonement is as much unknown to us in its primal energies as are the forces of nature. Professor Park loved to linger over considerations like these. They had a fascination for him, an attraction like that which the scientist feels in studying the forces of nature at once known and unknown. He gazed upon the redeeming forces, and traced them to God, as the naturalist traces electricity and life to what he calls the Unknown. He accepted the fact that the working out of our redemption produced, as one of its elements, suffering of an innocent being, the grounds of which elude our research.

He also saw the cross to be the basis of a kingdom. He speaks of Christ as going from the cross to a throne. The school of theologians to which he belonged has considered the atonement an expedient by which obstacles to the pardon of sin are removed, and has held that God takes advantage of this result for the exercise of mercy towards the guilty. He accepted all this, but did not stop here. He took cognizance of the retroactive effect of the atonement upon him who accomplished it. He considered this a part of the scheme of a perfected salvation. Our Lord's sufferings made him perfect as the Captain of our salvation. His redemptive work made it fit that he should receive glory and honor and power and dominion through all the Universe; especially that those saved by his blood should worship at his feet. Accordingly there is a Mediatorial throne, and he who sits upon it not only gathers under his sway, as loving subjects, those whom he has ransomed, but his word fixes the destiny of mankind. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and

before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." The theological *preacher* has given abundant evidence that he considered all this embraced in the redemptive scheme.

There is one effect which he attributed to the atonement, on which he dwelt with special emphasis, which he considered not only inexplicable, but almost contrary to nature. He held that it delivers a man from himself, that is, from remorse of conscience. How this should be possible he did not profess to know; yet it must be true, if one is to be happy in heaven. Conscience is not under the control of the will. It is God's representative, he accuses us through it, he threatens and executes punishment by it; so the guilty are the victims of a torture inflicted by a power within them,—a power whose workings they cannot modify. How, then, can even a penitent sinner be at rest? If he is penitent, he remembers his sin; if he remembers his sin, he is oppressed with his guilt; his sense of guilt is a sense of ill-desert. How, then, can he find release from self-condemnation and woe? Professor Park held that, in some mysterious way, the atonement will be found to appease the conscience and quench its remorse. In some way the redemptive work of Christ will so bring us into communion with him, so make us partakers of his merits, that we shall triumph over our iniquities, and find our blessedness in the grace that has made them instruments of the divine glory.

Professor Park looked upon grace as a scheme or system forming a constituent part of the divine government. He often uses the term as the equivalent of mercy, as setting forth a form in which love manifests itself; but he also speaks of it as a stupendous system of which the death of Christ is the keystone. It becomes, therefore, a force in the moral world as steady as the force of gravity in the

natural world. It works, self-moved, in accord with its own laws, towards the salvation of men. Of itself, unmodified in its operations, it would effect the salvation of men, as the unmodified operation of the law embodying the penalty for sin would result in their destruction. As the salvation of men is the chief means of the glory of God, grace is the most exalted of the forces that appear in the divine works. Viewed by itself, it is the gem, the pearl, of the divine attributes; judged by its results, it is peerless in its majesty and glory. The elements of power which it combines in its development, the atonement through Christ, the influences of the Holy Spirit, make it the crowning, the supreme, divine force of the world. That it fails to save all men is due, not to its lack of competence, but to the failure among men to comply with the conditions of its operation. Humanity itself, in a world of grace, is not a race in ruins, but in triumph; and the lost fragments incur their destruction by their failure to merge themselves in that body of humanity of which Christ is the Head.

This fragmentary article does not claim to have presented Professor Park with any degree of fullness. To describe his learning, his logical acumen, his mastery of language, his power in systematizing thought, his eloquence, his wit, his humor, would require a volume from the hand of an intimate acquaintance. But one who has seen something of his personal work, and read his published sermons, may notice some of the manifestations of his outreaching energy, some of the disclosures of internal force that result from purely spontaneous action. He was a man of genius. His instincts moved him on occasions of special animation and interest; then the logical processes of his mind gave way to insight. His glances at truth shot out beyond the limits of the system of thought which he had set himself to construct. His tendencies of mind were towards theology, and he had a most wonderful ca-

capacity to diffuse his own sentiments through the minds of an audience. There were certain themes with which his mind seemed to have a special kinship. Virtue, the satisfaction of law, mediation in a moral system, and equivalents in the awards of justice were themes on which his mind dwelt lingeringly, to which it returned again and again, and which unfolded themselves as a scroll written over by the divine hand. Hence it was not strange that in preparing his sermons, with an audience before him in imagination, he should give his mind free play, and give expression to sentiments, to convictions not involved in his systematic teachings. It is not to be inferred that the theology which he preached was inconsistent with that of the lecture-room, but that it was more widely applied, that it brought to light heart-yearnings, and forms of faith that were not subject to logical inference.

The volume of sermons published in 1885 may be adduced in evidence of these statements. They are sermons that need the speaker's voice if their hidden powers are to be disclosed; but a careful, prolonged, and sympathetic study will bring to view something of the man, and some of the more subtle elements of his theology.