

**AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THE
MEMORY OF WILLIAM ELLERY
CHANNING, D. D.: A SERMON
PREACHED AT WEST ROXBURY,
OCTOBER 9TH, 1842**

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An Humble Tribute to the Memory of William Ellery Channing, D. D.: A Sermon Preached at West Roxbury, October 9th, 1842 by Theodore Parker

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THEODORE PARKER

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AN

HUMBLE TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D. D.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT WEST ROXBURY, OCTOBER 9th, 1842,

By THEODORE PARKER,

D

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN ROXBURY.

PRINTED BY REQUEST.

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PREFACE.

It is with reluctance and hesitation that I send this Sermon to the press. None can feel more strongly than I its imperfections and unsatisfactory character. In consenting to its publication, I have yielded to the solicitation of my hearers and friends, and the pressure of other duties does not allow leisure to supply its deficiencies.

WEST ROXBURY, OCT. 12, 1842.

DISCOURSE.

2 KINGS II. 12.

AND ELISHA SAW IT AND HE SAID : MY FATHER, MY FATHER,
THE CHARIOT OF ISRAEL AND THE HORSEMEN THEREOF.

IN the singular mythical story related in the second chapter of the second book of the Kings, it is said that Elijah the Prophet, was separated from the world of living mortals, and carried up to the heavens in a fiery chariot, with fiery horses, in the midst of a whirlwind, Elisha, when he saw a man of such power and usefulness as the good Prophet, so suddenly snatched from the earth, exclaimed, "My Father! my Father! the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof." Since we met on the last Sabbath, intelligence has reached us of the death of the great and good Dr. CHANNING. I can in nowise allow that event to pass without notice in this place. However, I must say, it is with the greatest diffidence that I venture to speak of him. I feel unworthy of the theme; wholly unable to do justice to so great and good a man.

But it is useless to waste your time in professions of inability, which the discourse, poor and imperfect as it is, will itself carry on its face.

The facts of his life, most relevant to this occasion, may be stated in a few words. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, on the seventh of April, 1780; graduated at Harvard University, with the first honors of his class, in 1798; was settled in the ministry in 1803, and died at Bennington, Vermont, the second day of this present month.

He was known to few of this audience by face; fewer still have heard his voice. But his influence was a stranger to none of us all. His words of wisdom, piety and love, have touched our hearts, and that long ago, and often. If there are amongst us any who have read no line of his works, and doubtless there are such in every audience, still, the tones of his golden harp have been repeated by others, and echoed back even to their ears, by both the Pulpit and the Press. The sun warms the air of caverns where it never shines.

A great man, of wide reputation and deep influence, has fallen in the midst of us. It is speaking with moderation to say, that no man, of our century, who writes the English tongue, had so much weight with the wise and pious men who speak it. The evening before an election, any political brawler, with confidence and a voice, can collect the "Freemen," and make the mob fling up their caps and shout huzzas, which in the next year shall be turned to hissing, if not execration. Such

men are thought to have influence ; they have it, as boys to raise clouds of dust in a summer day. But here one has gone back to the sky who touched the mind of wise men, the heart of good men, the soul of men pious and Christian, deepening what is deepest, and appealing to what is most divine.

Of all our writers, there was none whose words found the class of readers which he addressed. He spoke on the loftiest themes — Man, Christ, God, Duty, Life, Heaven. His word reached the best of men. At this day his noiseless influence on the soul of his countrymen was wide, deep and beautiful. How could it be otherwise ? Let those that knew him say. He was of no party in Politics ; all must have smarted under his rebuke ; each might have been blessed by his sublime Ideal, and the wise and moderate method he took to reach it. He was of no Clan or Coterie in Social Life. The instructed man, accomplished with the learning and science of the times, saw in him an equal, to say the least ; the poorest of the ignorant found here a brother, who never scorned the affinity which bound him to the humblest of his race. He was of no sect in Religion ; he loved Piety, and honored a Divine Life, wherever he saw their light, and did not think living water impure because it flowed into an urn of different form from his own. All denominations of Theology — there is but one of Religion — have been blessed by him. His writings found their way, where no other modern books can go ; into the hearts of men of all parties, politi-