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American Religious Leaders

HENRY BOYNTON SMITH

BY

LEWIS F. STEARNS, D. D.

LATE PROFESSOR IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, MAINE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1893

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Company.

PREFACE.

THIS book was but just finished and placed in the hands of its publishers, when the earthly work of its author was completed, and his heavenly service began.

It is left to me to express his thanks to Mrs. Henry B. Smith for the free use which she allowed him to make of the memoir and the works of her husband. His thanks would also be given to the publishers of these works, Messrs. A. C. Armstrong & Son, and Charles Scribner's Sons.

I would add my personal gratitude to the publishers of this volume for their unfailing courtesy ; to my sister, Mrs. John S. Sewall, for the help which here, as in all the work of my life, she has given to me ; and to Professor Francis B. Denio, my husband's valued friend, for the preparation of the index.

ELIZABETH M. STEARNS.

BANGOR, ME., *April* 25, 1892.

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HENRY BOYNTON SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION.

THE number of theologians in any particular age is seldom great. Many men make attainments, more or less extensive, in theological scholarship; many teach theology, or write about it. But such men are not necessarily, or even generally, theologians in the highest meaning of the term. Their knowledge is too often second-hand, their system merely traditional, their conception of the nature and purpose of the sacred science inadequate, and their influence upon their times small, if not actually null. The true theologian appears but rarely. He is a man who has verified the Christian revelation in his own experience and systematized its facts and truths in his thought, who, filled with the conviction of the supreme importance of his science, proclaims it to the world as the key to the great problems of human life and destiny, as one of the most potent instruments in the accomplishment of God's work of redemption. To him theology is truly, in Bacon's phrase, "the haven and Sabbath

of all men's contemplations." But it is far more than this; it is the source of all that is highest in human thought and endeavor. Such a man comes to his age with a message; men hear him gladly, and accept him as their leader.

Among the half dozen American theologians worthy of the name, whom the nineteenth century has produced, the man who is to be described in these pages deserves a high place. In his hands theology was not a scholastic system but a living power. He did much to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer whom he served. He left an enduring impress upon the Christianity of his times and country. His influence, instead of waning with the passing of the years since his too early death, has steadily increased. He has won his place as one of "the choice and master spirits of this age."

What was the secret of this theologian's life? What influences, divine and human, wrought together to give it its power? What was the nature of the work this man did? These questions this book will attempt to answer.

Henry Boynton Smith was born in Portland, in the State — then the District — of Maine, on the twenty-first of November, 1815. His grandfather on his father's side was the Rev. John Smith, who during a long ministerial career faithfully served a number of churches in New England and the West. His father, Henry Smith, was a prosperous merchant of Portland, a man of unblemished character and cultivated tastes. On the maternal side

he sprang from two families of local prominence, the Kings and the Southgates, the former best known through its distinguished representative, Rufus King, a leading statesman of the time of Washington. His mother, Arixene Southgate, was one of a number of sisters, "renowned for beauty and grace,"¹ and is said fully to have maintained the reputation of her family in these respects. To Henry Smith and his wife were born five sons. Of these Henry Boynton was the third, the oldest of the three who survived the period of infancy.

When Henry was five years old his beautiful mother, as lovely in her Christian character as in her person, died of consumption. As the end drew near, her faith grew brighter. We are told that "her habitual reserve gave way to rapturous expressions of love to Christ and hope in Him."² At her request her children were led to her bedside, and there in solemn consecration she committed them to God. To those who knew the theologian in his later life, and are aware how strong and personal was his loyalty to Christ, this parental consecration to the Saviour, under circumstances so tender and sacred, is most significant. The mark upon the boy's memory could scarcely have been permanent, but who will doubt that the mother's prayers were answered? Nor is it too much

¹ Hon. William Willis, the historian of Portland. Quoted by Mrs. Smith, *Henry Boynton Smith, His Life and Work*, p. 5. For the sake of brevity the latter will hereafter be referred to as "Memoir."

² *Memoir*, p. 5 *seq.*

to say that in this act of maternal faith the foundations of Henry B. Smith's theology were laid.

A few years afterward another mother brought into the home an affection not inferior to that lavished by the first, — an affection fully reciprocated by the children, then and throughout their later life. She, too, was a woman of devoted piety, and made it her aim to bring up her young charges for Christ.

Henry's childhood, so far as it has been recorded, seems to have been an uneventful and happy one. He was a boy of delicate physique, attractive person, and winning ways. He early showed the fine mental endowment that was the foundation of his later successes as a scholar and thinker. When scarcely out of babyhood he had taught himself to read, and henceforth books were his passion. In the cultivated atmosphere of his home, and under favoring influences in school and social life, his intellect grew apace. Yet he was no mere bookworm. His disposition was a sunny one. He loved outdoor life and sports. He was a favorite with young and old. "Everybody loves him," his father wrote. "He makes warm and attached friends wherever he goes." And speaking of his intellectual attainments, the father added with the prevision of a prophet, "I think he will, by and by, be a professor in some theological or literary institution; that he will be a maker of books, I have no doubt."¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 9.

While the religious influence at home was that of the warmest evangelical piety, in his church relations the boy came into contact with a different type of religion. The family attended the "First Parish Church," then under the ministrations of the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, D. D. This church favored the liberal or Unitarian faith. The great controversy between the Orthodox or Trinitarian Congregationalists and the Unitarians had begun in 1815, the year of Henry's birth. During his childhood it was in full swing. In Portland, as in so many other parts of New England, the majority of the intellectual and cultivated people accepted the liberal doctrine. Dr. Nichols was one of the best specimens of Unitarianism, cultured, earnest, zealous in his presentation of the ethical element in Christianity, betraying his difference from the orthodox ministers by his silence respecting the distinctively Christian doctrines rather than by any direct attack upon the orthodox system. One had, however, but to contrast his preaching, in its tone and effects, with that of his neighbor, Dr. Edward Payson, the saintly pastor of the Second Church, then at the height of his remarkable career as a preacher and religious teacher, to realize how great was the divergence between the two types of religion.

The eager mind of the boy readily imbibed the influences at work in the church. In spite of the faithful training at home, he came to regard much that belongs to orthodox Christianity as irrational. This experience of his boyhood cannot be too

carefully noted, if we are to understand his later career. It was undoubtedly an important factor in the preparation for his predestined work. The distinguishing features of his piety and his theology, especially their earnest evangelical tone and the personal loyalty to the divine Saviour, were due in no small degree to the fact that he had tried the so-called liberal Christianity and found it insufficient to satisfy his spiritual needs. He always spoke with respect of Unitarianism. Some of his most valued friends, in later as in earlier life, were Unitarians. He knew how to estimate at its highest all that is good in the system, and to distinguish the system from the men who profess it. But he never hesitated to express his sense of its inadequacy. He regarded Unitarianism as incapable of performing, truly and fully, the work which God has assigned to the Christian church.

In an article prepared many years later, when he was occupying the chair of systematic theology in Union Seminary, he wrote as follows, undoubtedly speaking out of his own early knowledge of the liberal system: —

“The Unitarianism of thirty or forty years ago was generally, in speculation, upon the basis of the philosophy of common sense and of natural ethics. While allowing, as did most of its prominent representatives; a specific historical revelation, recorded in the Scriptures, yet they subjected its teachings to the criticism and standard of what they called human reason and morality, without any very accurate definition of what was meant by reason,

or of the metes and bounds of moral science. The truths of natural religion and the maxims of duty were recognized; and the main effort was to find these more clearly and fully in the Bible. The tendency was rational and moral, rather than strictly religious; and it was aided; though not initiated by some New England speculations as to the nature of virtue and the natural ability of man to fulfill the moral law, taken out of their proper connections and limitations in the orthodox system. That God is one, and one Person; that . . . 'it is very good to be good, and very amiable to be amiable, and very happy to be happy,' and that man can and ought to be virtuous, and if he is not, that he ought to be punished more or less; that if he sins a good God will naturally and readily forgive him if he will only repent, and that he ought to repent; these, and kindred positions, were held and preached, perhaps as earnestly and eloquently as they could be. That Christ was a kind of second God, that he is to be obeyed and loved, and that in some way his life and death had some important connection with our being reconciled to God, was not denied. But at the same time the resurrection of Christ was more fondly dwelt upon than his death, and next to the Dignity of Human Nature, and God as Father, the Resurrection has perhaps been the most favorite and inspiring theme of the most eloquent Unitarian discourses. But the Trinity, it was declared, especially in the Athanasian Creed, involved, if not mathematical, yet absolute contradictions; the Incarnation implied a union of entirely opposite and inconsistent qualities, and led to as gross absurdities as the doctrine of transubstantiation; the Atonement was utterly contradictory to the first principles of that justice which the orthodox said that it

satisfied ; total depravity did dishonor to both God and man ; and Regeneration consisted in moral improvement, and not in a mysterious new birth of the human soul in the divine likeness.”¹

That this picture was drawn from the life is manifest.

In 1830 Henry entered Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine. This institution, founded shortly after the beginning of the century, had already won the high reputation which it has ever since maintained. Its faculty was composed of men of marked ability, and its graduates were occupying some of the highest positions in the state and country. At Bowdoin young Smith immediately became a marked man. Here, as elsewhere, his personal attractions, his wit, and his fondness for society, as well as his intellectual ability, gained him many friends. There are indications that his especial temptations were due to his social temperament and love of fun. While he took a high rank in all departments of study, he showed an especial aptitude for philosophy. It was characteristic of him that from the first he thought for himself. Of his metaphysical essays he wrote “that the professor could not understand them, neither could he himself, yet he felt that there was a truth at the bottom.”²

It was during his senior year that the great crisis of his life came. The most important event in any

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 281 seq.

² *Memoir*, p. 13 ; cf. also p. 57.

man's career is his conversion. But this was pre-eminently true in the case of Henry B. Smith. Not only his spiritual life, but his whole intellectual and professional character were determined by the profound religious experience through which he passed at this time. Bowdoin College had shared in the indifference to religion that prevailed throughout the country during the early part of the century, and that was particularly marked in our American colleges. The History of Bowdoin College speaks of a time, in 1810, when the heart of President Appleton was cheered by the admission of a single Christian student, there being then no professed Christians in the college. A new and better era seemed to dawn when, in 1812, Frederic Southgate, Henry B. Smith's uncle, was appointed tutor. "Many for years could recall the affectionate counsel and earnest exhortation to a life of purity and devotion which fell from his lips even in the class-room." But this devout man was soon removed from earth by the enemy of his family, pulmonary consumption. The year 1816 was marked by a revival of religion, and from that time the religious state of the college steadily improved.¹ In 1834 was a period of unusual interest in religious things. It was at this time that God's grace found young Smith and brought him out of death into life.

The great change is thus described by his class-

¹ *History of Bowdoin College*, by Professors Cleaveland and Packard, p. 16 *seq.*

mate, the Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D. D., afterwards the distinguished missionary to Turkey and President of Robert College in Constantinople: —

“I regard Smith’s conversion as a remarkable one, the most remarkable event in college in my day. Longfellow (the poet, who was then professor in Bowdoin) had great influence over him, not by any propagandism, but by the ‘sweetness and light’ of his character. ‘Little Smith’ (we had a great big Smith in the class) was brilliant and witty in conversation. He was in danger from convivial habits. We ‘pious fellows’ saw his danger. He was made a special subject of prayer in our little circles. I think it was Daniel R. Goodwin (afterwards the professor and president) who more than any other arrested his course and saved him from the danger he was in. How our hearts beat when we saw Smith come into the Sunday morning prayer-meeting with a serious look. He had surely not come for fun. Cole, Woodford, and myself had a consultation. Let us not rush upon Smith. Let us warn Beach and a few others to let him entirely alone. If the Spirit of God has hold of him, there will be a real and earnest conflict; but we will give ourselves unto prayer. He came to me, I did not go to him. I did not wish to raise the spirit of debate in him and thus spoil the work. Prayer and sovereignty bothered him, but I have a strong impression that his knowledge of sin made him cling to an almighty divine Redeemer with such a grasp that the God-man became a sudden fact to him, and he forgot all about his Unitarianism. It was — sin and salvation; I a sinner, He is set forth as my Redeemer; my allegiance is henceforth to Him. Smith’s views were so clear, genuine, honest, pervasive, that there seemed little opportunity

for conflict or for doubt. He stepped at once into the Christian ranks as though he had always been there. He was transformed in the spirit and temper of his mind. It was wonderful, almost incredible, but a most undeniable fact. If our colleges could have a few such conversions now, it would change their character.”¹

In his letters written at this time he gives a full account of the experience through which he passed. Under date of April 6, 1834, he says : —

“ My difficulties have been as many as there are evil thoughts in my heart. . . . The revival here has operated wonderfully ; no excitement, no threatening ; calmness, love, and peace are prevalent. . . . I feel a want of faith, of full confidence in my Redeemer, and yet I know how lovely is his character, and how worthy of supreme love. I will not falter.”²

On April 9 he wrote again : —

“ My determination to seek religion was formed solely in consequence of my complete persuasion of its reasonableness. I did not feel my need of it.”³

But as he sought, the sense of need came.

“ I went to work, performing my duty so far as I knew, praying for light and love, having God before me always, and his approbation my motive of thought and action, feeling full reliance upon Christ for pardon, and having my soul lifted up as it were into his presence. . . . I talked with Professor Upham about the Trinity. Of one thing I feel assured, that I need an infinite Saviour. Farther than that may the Lord in his mercy and

¹ Letter to the author. ² *Memoir*, p. 14. ³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

wisdom guide me. My prejudices were fixed in regard to this point, as well as to the innate sinfulness of man. On the latter point I am convinced. As to the former, I know nothing but that Christ is my Redeemer and has atoned for my sins.”¹

On April 20 he says : —

“ I have been, I do believe, gradually obtaining clearer views of Scripture, of God, of Christ, and of myself. I have had many times of disquiet, of temptation ; many great conflicts with my heart, more knowledge of its wickedness, more necessity of relying upon my Saviour. I am determined to set my standard of Christian character high, and, trusting in God for his ever-ready assistance, to go forward and do all my duty.”²

That this was the language of mere religious conventionalism, no one who knew the man could for a moment believe. It was all most intensely real and true to him. His “conversion” was an experience which transformed his whole inner and outward being, making of him another man. Primarily it was not a change of doctrinal views, but a new spiritual life. The change in doctrine was the result of the spiritual transformation with its revelation of a realm of facts previously unknown. In the article on Unitarianism already referred to he said, “ This matter of religion, after all, is not a matter of formulas or of reflection ; it is the soul’s deepest experience in relation to its profoundest wants and needs.” And then he went on to declare, that when a man

¹ *Memoir*, p. 15 seq.

² *Ibid.*

“comes to know sin in all its power, and to feel its just condemnation by a holy God, and when he receives the Lord Jesus as the one only sacrifice for sins, and believes himself to be pardoned and justified only for his sake, so that he can truly say that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; then, and then only, the last vestige of Unitarianism is driven from his soul, for he is vitally united to Christ, and lives the life he lives in the flesh by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself to die for us.”¹

There can be no doubt that in these deliberate words he spoke out of the deep experience through which he himself had passed. Nor can the facts be too strongly emphasized. The men who have written on Henry B. Smith's theology have, with scarcely an exception, found the peculiarity of his system in the fact that it centres in Christ. To use his own phrase, the genetic principle is “Incarnation in order to Redemption.” To explain the stress he lays upon this central Christian truth, we must go back to this wonderful experience through which he passed while a student in Bowdoin College, this spiritual transformation which revolutionized his life. In it he first obtained the personal, saving knowledge of the living Christ as his Lord and Saviour. His mother's prayers were answered, and her consecration was confirmed by his own free choice. In the new knowledge that thus dawned upon him, this personal discovery of the Saviour, the power of his old theory of life was broken. His

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 285 seq.

Unitarianism became not only insufficient but untrue; and he who previously had given Christ a secondary place in his thought, now set him upon the throne. All through his after life the peculiarity of the man was his personal loyalty and devotion to the "infinite Saviour." He could no more help making Him the centre of his doctrine than of his religious and moral life.

In the following September he graduated from college, receiving one of the highest appointments in his class. In an old letter which has been wafted down to us across the nearly three-score years since that Brunswick Commencement Day, the occasion is thus described by a girl of sixteen, the sister of one of his college intimates, afterwards the wife of a beloved and trusted ministerial associate: —

"G. took me to ride around the village in the morning, and at ten o'clock we went into the meeting-house, where we stayed till half past three. The exercises commenced at half past eleven. We got a very good seat, where we could see by *standing* all the time. Some I did like very much, and others I thought were not much above mediocrity. There were four orations; those I believe were of equal standing, the first in the class. The best piece of writing, and in fact the most interesting speaker was, in my humble estimation, Henry B. Smith of Saccarappa, son of Henry Smith, formerly of Portland. He was very good indeed. He was said to be the finest writer in college. The subject of the Oration was, 'Character of Erroneous Belief, and its Influence on the Conduct.'"¹

¹ Anna Prentiss, afterwards the wife of the Rev. Jonathan F. Stearns, D. D.

It can hardly be doubted that this theme was chosen with reference to the remarkable religious experience of the previous spring.

It was not strange that the young man, when confronted by the necessity of choosing a profession, was drawn toward the Christian ministry. There was, as has been noticed, ministerial blood in his veins; and in his heart there was a burning love for his new-found Master, which could attain no better expression than in working for Him in the calling that above all others affords opportunities for distinctively Christian labor. Nor is it doubtful that his scholarly tastes, and especially his metaphysical predilections tended to turn him in the same direction. For this was a time of revived theological interest among the orthodox churches in America, when especial attention was being directed to Christian doctrine and the underlying philosophical questions. The church offered a field for the exercise of gifts like his such as would hardly be the case to-day.

So Henry turned his steps, in October after his graduation, towards Andover Seminary. This institution then stood first among the theological schools of the country. Its chair of systematic theology was filled by the able, orthodox, and cautious Dr. Leonard Woods, whom Smith years afterwards characterized as "emphatically the 'judicious' divine of the later New England theology;" and to whom he gave the high praise of having "educated a generation of preachers who had neither crotchets

nor airy whims.”¹ He was then at the height of his power and influence. The department of sacred literature was manned by the scholarly and brilliant Moses Stuart, the father of exegetical studies in America, of whom Smith also wrote: “And Moses Stuart, too, with all his versatility, became a rich blessing to the churches by training their preachers in the more thorough study of the whole truth, as revealed with open face in the inspired Word.”² Both of these men had distinguished themselves some years before in the Unitarian controversy, and the whole spirit of the institution was well suited to the needs of the young man so lately released from Unitarian trammels. Working side by side with Woods and Stuart in the Faculty was Thomas Harvey Skinner, the professor of sacred rhetoric, then fresh from a remarkable career as minister and pastor in Philadelphia, a man of saintly character, afterwards for many years to be Smith’s beloved colleague in Union Seminary.³

The student threw himself into his new tasks with all the ardor of his nature. But he had yet to learn that his bodily powers were not sufficient to satisfy the demands of his aspiring spirit. God, too, had lessons to teach him by his mistakes and failures. It was not to be expected that he would

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 258.

² *Ibid.*

³ The professor of church history was Dr. Ralph Emerson, and the instructor in Hebrew Daniel Talcott Smith (afterwards Daniel Smith Talcott, professor in Bangor Theological Seminary).

be prepared for the great work in store for him without severe discipline. Such men as he are worth that divine moulding and training which come only through suffering. Hitherto his life had been for the most part a happy and careless one. Now he was to learn the uses of adversity. He had been in Andover scarcely a month when he wrote the following significant words : —

“This night I have devoted to the cause of self-improvement; to the completion of plans I have been projecting for my intellectual and religious advancement. I have been variously hindered, by the want of resolute self-determination, perhaps, as much as by anything, from maturing and enforcing those projects. . . . The deprivation of the sleep of one night is of little avail in its effects upon my body, compared with the advantages which a strict system of intellectual and religious discipline, such as I now mean to frame, and while I am *in time*, go on toward completing, will inevitably bring to my mind and heart. Therefore, to-night is my own, with that intent.”¹

But if to-night is one's own, that is not always the case with to-morrow. It was hard to understand then, as it is now, and harder then than it is now when the laws of health are better understood, that the body cannot always be made the willing instrument of the spirit in its high ambitions. All through his life Smith had that “fiery soul” of which Dryden speaks, —

¹ *Memoir*, p. 20 *seq.*

“ Which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o’er-informed the tenement of clay.”

At the last overwork brought about his death. Now it brought defeat and illness. “ Suddenly came the terrible prostrating stroke, and he was laid low.”¹

He returned home sick and disheartened, and months passed before he was able to resume his work. From the human point of view it was a dead loss. It is only when we can look at it from the higher side and see in it a part of the divine discipline by which this choice instrument of God was fitted for the important tasks he was destined to accomplish, that we can discern the real meaning of it all.

The next autumn he once more took up his theological studies, this time not at Andover but at the Theological Seminary in Bangor, in his native State. This institution had for about twenty years been performing its beneficent work for Maine and the church at large. Though not so amply endowed and equipped as Andover, and enjoying a much more modest reputation, it was educating and sending forth some of the most efficient Christian workmen who have since labored in the home and foreign fields. At this time the Seminary, which had been organized upon the model of the schools of divinity among the English Dissenters, embraced a classical as well as a theo-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 20.

logical department. The senior professor was the devout, wise, and indefatigable Enoch Pond, a pupil of Dr. Emmons, who after having done good service as a pastor in Massachusetts, and having played a very important and useful part in the Unitarian controversy as editor of the "Spirit of the Pilgrims," had come, when more than forty years of age, to Bangor, where he spent a second lifetime of invaluable labor in the service of the Seminary, which owes not only its influence but even its existence to his faithful efforts.

In Bangor Smith found many of his college classmates and friends. And here a few months later he made the acquaintance of the accomplished Leonard Woods, Jr., the son of his Andover teacher, who had just been elected professor of sacred literature. Dr. Woods was at this time in the prime of his young manhood, a scholar of high attainments, of courtly manners, and attractive personal qualities, a man of whom great things were expected. Afterwards he was called to the presidency of Bowdoin College, and filled that office for nearly thirty years. He was strongly influenced by the Tractarian movement in the English Church, and came to be suspected of leanings towards Romanism. For this and other reasons he was led to withdraw more and more from public life. That infirmity of scholars which makes them indulge their receptivity at the expense of their productive powers, rendering them critical, fastidious, and timid about their own compositions, until they lose

the power of original literary work, grew upon him and prevented him from fulfilling the promise of his brilliant youth. At this time, however, his reputation was very high, and no one had yet read his horoscope. He exerted an immediate and very strong, certainly on the whole a beneficent, influence on young Smith, who was drawn to him both by his scholarship and his spirituality. The teacher reciprocated the pupil's affection, recognizing his ability and promise, and wisely stimulating and guiding him in his work. Dr. Woods possessed German scholarship, in days when this accomplishment was rare, and had done good service a few years before by the translation of Knapp's *Theology*. Undoubtedly he had much to do with arousing in Smith the enthusiasm for German literature and thought which was destined to exert such an important influence upon his later life. He was at this time the editor of the "Literary and Theological Review," published in New York, one of the earliest periodicals of its kind in this country, to which, as we shall soon see, he invited the contributions of his young friend.

It was during this happy year in Bangor that Henry made his first attempt in the field of literature. It was in the form of a contribution to the "Maine Monthly Magazine," a periodical which seems to have had but an ephemeral existence. His own copy, preserved in a bound volume of his earlier essays, bears the indorsement, in the well-known somewhat angular handwriting of his later

years, "My First Article. H. B. S. Bangor." The production would not be worth mentioning, except as it marks the beginning of a notable literary career. A firm of publishers in Boston had undertaken the publication of a series of "Scientific Tracts," which had for their object "to aid in self-education." Among these was one entitled an "Outline of Philosophy," by Lieutenant Roswell Park, at this time an officer in the army, but afterwards a clergyman and the president of Racine College in Wisconsin. It was the first work of a young man of twenty eight or nine, somewhat pretentious and not very wise, who without Lord Bacon's genius followed his example in taking "all knowledge for his province." The essay proposed no less a task than to define and briefly explain "all the various branches of knowledge." In carrying out this design the author followed an original but far from satisfactory plan, according to which the departments of human knowledge are classified under such strange and cacophonous names as "Bibliotics, Cosmics, Perichronics, Epistatics, Prostheotics, Diagraphics," and the like. The scheme appears in pictorial form on the frontispiece of the tract, where a widely branching tree runs out into limbs and twigs adorned with the singular designations just mentioned. The subdivisions of the plan and the accompanying definitions left much to be desired in the way of distinctness and logical exactitude.

Smith seems to have undertaken the criticism of

this tract rather in frolic than sober earnest. "The other day," he says, writing to his parents, "I sat down and reviewed one of the 'Scientific Tracts' as severely as I could, for a more unscientific production I never saw."¹ It was indeed fair game, and the young critic attacked it without mercy. His work shows some promise of his future excellence, but on the whole it is crude and unsatisfactory. It displays in some degree, indeed, the keenness of analysis, the clearness of definition, the comprehensiveness of thought, the impatience of pretense, which characterized his later writings. But this is the most that can be said. He has already in his hand the sharp and delicately tempered sword which he afterwards learned to wield with so much skill and dexterity, but for the present he is doing only slashing work. A single passage may be quoted as showing the later writer, in imperfect adumbration, it is true, but unmistakably:—

"A scientific classification of human knowledge—what a boundless field does the mere utterance of the phrase open to our view. Man in all his relations—science in all its departments—nature in all its modifications, are to be examined and arranged. The relations of one science to another, and of each science to all others, of art to art, of mind to matter, of man to man, and of man to his Maker, are each and all to be duly arranged, to be brought into a complete system, where all the parts shall be accurately adjusted, and the relative importance of each exactly estimated. A syn-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 24.

optical arrangement of all that men now know, or ever have known — and an arrangement, too, made on such principles that all which men ever will know may harmonize with the system — to the completion of such a work what mind is adequate! He who would do it must be able to grasp the principles of all science and all art; philosophy and history must be as familiar to him as language to a prattler; he must be able clearly to see, and accurately to describe, the points of junction of one science with another, and the precise line of separation. Only a philosopher, in the truest and largest signification of that word, could succeed in such an attempt.”¹

During the same summer he wrote another article, which appeared anonymously in Professor Woods’s “Literary and Theological Review” for December, 1836, under the title “Moral Reform Societies.” In this he struck a higher key, and gives decided evidence of the power which made him in after years so able and effective a writer. It was not, like the other, thrown off in the exuberance of a leisure hour, when the day’s work of the theological student was done, but was the result of deep conviction and mature thought. Alike in matter and form it is a great advance upon the previous effort. He is no longer engaged in a guerrilla raid against a foe with whom it was play to fight, but advances in regular order of battle against principles which he believes inimical to the Christian system to which he has devoted his life.

To understand the essay, we must recall the fact

¹ *Maine Monthly Magazine*, vol. i. p. 83.

that this period was one of great social and religious ferment. The watchword of the times was reform. The persuasion had taken possession of men's minds that all the ills of society could be cured by the organized power of public opinion and the persevering use of counteracting moral agencies. In the fourth decade of the century the reform movement effloresced into all sorts of societies and institutions for the combating of the prevalent vices and abuses, — Temperance Societies, Anti-slavery Societies, Peace Societies, communistic and socialistic enterprises. The reformers who urged the claims of these various "isms" truly and ardently believed that a social millennium was imminent, and that it was to be brought about by their favorite methods. Ralph Waldo Emerson has satirized these movements in his essay on the New England Reformers. The transcendental philosopher, though not wholly alien in his own spirit to these much vaunted schemes for reform, with that shrewd Yankee wit of his which often stood him in good stead when his philosophy failed him, divined their defects and exposed them unsparingly.

To a man like Henry B. Smith, who had learned through his own profound experience that there is but one remedy for human sin and evil, and this the divine Saviour's redemptive grace, these movements could not but appear fraught with danger. With that clear intellectual vision which always looked through to the heart of a subject, that philosophical temper which made him ever on the

watch for underlying principles, and that deep spirituality by which he was constantly in vital contact with the things unseen and eternal that lie within and behind the evil and the good of this life, he detected the fundamental error of these methods, at a time when the Christian world was only partially aware of the peril they involved.

The special phase of moral reform attacked by the theological student was that represented by a society having for its object the suppression of licentiousness, and aiming to accomplish this end by united action, especially on the part of women, and the general diffusion of information respecting the nature and evil of this form of vice. It was a difficult subject for so young a man to handle, but he did it with admirable delicacy and an earnestness of tone that could not but carry conviction with it. He met the charge that it is a false modesty which leads pure women to shrink from listening to the details of vice.

“Better, far better, that delicacy should be overwrought into fastidiousness, than that it should degenerate into shamelessness. When this delicate reserve is once lost, it can never be regained. Its place may be supplanted, but it cannot be supplied, by the duties which Moral Reform Societies impose. . . . In conclusion we would ask, whether Paul adopted this principle of Moral Reform, when he gave the injunction, ‘but fornication and all uncleanness, — let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints’ ?”¹

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iii. p. 620.

He showed that the principle of combined action, working through organized public opinion, is powerless to reach the real root of the evil.

“He, then, who directs his main efforts to the rectification of public opinion, in the hope, thereby, of rectifying the public heart, is like some sage watch-owner, who strives to keep time with the sun by reiterated changes of the minute and hour hands of his disordered time-piece, instead of searching among the dusty wheels and broken cogs of the internal work, for the true cause of disarrangement — and the true place for rectification.”¹

He declared that public opinion, to be worth our dependence, “must be based upon Christian principles.”

“It must issue from the purified heart, as the rich sap oozes from the tree, forming its golden clusters of gum in spontaneous exuberance. Thus are we led back to a fundamental principle of the Bible, that moral reform can prosper, only as far as it is preceded by a radical change in the dispositions of the heart. ‘In religion alone,’ says Schlegel, ‘are to be found the remedies and safeguards, the emancipation and consolidation of the whole civilized world.’”²

He argued with convincing logic that “the system of exposure, so fearlessly advocated as efficacious for the prevention and removal of this evil,” could only result in promoting the vice it was intended to extirpate. And throughout the essay he calls attention to the true method of meeting such deep-

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iii p. 628.

² *Ibid.* p. 629.

rooted evil, namely, by bringing to bear upon it the power of Christ.

“It is the office of our holy religion to rectify the internal cause of the malady. Its fitting symbol would be a perfected therapeutic science, which should act from within upon the whole system, revivifying it by supernatural remedies, and cleansing the fountains of uncleanness. Thus will it act in the abodes of pollution and infamy, which but for it must be the abodes of hopeless ruin. It enters not to expose but to save. The hearts which public opinion cannot reach, which the fear of disgrace cannot move, the religion of Jesus will melt. . . . In the deep recesses of pollution, and the vile haunts of depravity, will the power of Christ be most strikingly manifested, and his glories most conspicuously displayed.”¹

He closes with the words : —

“The preaching of this gospel then, and not the might of public opinion, of combined action, is the great means to be employed, both for the reformation of the vile, and the preservation of the virtuous.”²

The style is admirable, the argument well sustained throughout, the tone of earnest conviction unmistakable. There are still evidences of inexperience in the literary workmanship, but the master-hand is already manifest, and there need be no fear that it will not gain consummate skill at last. How deeply he was moved by the composition of this article is shown by an extract from a letter written to his friend Goodwin, July 10, 1836 : —

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iii. p. 635.

² *Ibid.* p. 636.

“ My heart burns when I think how men in such enterprises turn away from the spirit of the Bible, and found their plans upon anything rather than the principles of Christianity. The whole philosophy of radicalism is opposed to the philosophy of the Bible. In the highest point of view every form of immorality is but a development of the devil’s agency, and the prince of evil can only be opposed by the spirit of grace. Or if we leave the highest ‘ standpoint ’ and come to fact — what does the history of the world show ? The entire inefficacy of mere moral means to moralize men. Religion is the only thing that can promote morality. The Spirit of God is the only means which can make men better. As a *general truth*, as the only true *general principle*, if we are to adopt and act upon any general principle, *regeneration* alone can make men *morally* better.”¹

Here is the theologian already engaged in his high work. The “ inefficacy of mere moral means to moralize men ” — that is the fact of his own experience made the foundation of his doctrine.

But the course at the theological seminary was cut short by a flattering offer, which the student accepted with alacrity. Professor Newman of Bowdoin College was intending to leave his post for the coming year, and the authorities proposed to Mr. Smith to assume, during the professor’s absence, the duties of tutor in Greek and of librarian. There was no hurry about entering the ministry. At Brunswick there would be opportunities for study not to be rejected, especially for the study of

¹ *Memoir*, p. 24.

German, of which, influenced undoubtedly by the example and advice of his Bangor instructor and friend, Dr. Woods, he desired to become master. Accordingly, in the autumn we find him pleasantly settled in the college town, in the midst of his old surroundings, among dear friends, and engaged in congenial occupation. The change was destined to have an important influence upon his life. Without breaking up his plans for the ministry, it directly furthered his preparation for the especial work Providence had in store for him. It gave him, also, an opportunity to digest his theological acquisitions, and quietly to ponder those deep questions which a student of divinity is compelled to face in the early years of his course, and with which, in the pressure of his studies, he often finds little time to deal.

He threw himself into the college work with his wonted earnestness. In the class-room he was occupied with his Greek, than which there could not be a better discipline for his work as a theological teacher. In the afternoons he read German, and thus prepared himself for the European life, which, all unknown to him, lay before him. He also started a metaphysical club among the students, in which his favorite themes were discussed, and where we find him studying Cousin with his young charges. Now, as at all times, he won the affection of all with whom he was thrown in contact. The students regarded him with esteem mingled with some awe; for he was already a marked man. One who was

a student in the college at that time¹ describes him as “a slight, pale-faced man of acknowledged power.” All believed that he would be a leader in the Christian world.

Meanwhile, the aim of his life, to become a minister of the gospel, was not forgotten. He kept in touch with his future work by preaching in the villages around Brunswick, at Harpswell by the sea — where his pupil in the college, Elijah Kellogg, the well-known writer of books for the young, was afterwards so many years the pastor — and elsewhere. Under date of October 24, 1836, he wrote to his parents : —

“I feel that I need something of this kind, some strong external call, to keep my heart interested as it ought to be in the great work of saving souls. And if I can, once a week, be called to this, by preaching the great truths of the gospel, I shall thus, in a degree, ward off that secular disposition, which must result from the absence of direct efforts in the service of my Master.”²

Just before going to Bowdoin as tutor, he had written to his friend Goodwin : —

“In the ministry of reconciliation I have a growing interest. Its motives move me more, its doctrines feed me more, and I love more to dwell upon them. I think, by the grace of God, that I am enabled to understand more of the spirituality of its truth, to bring my mind by self-denial into nearer harmony with its spirit.”³

¹ The Rev. Stephen H. Hayes, now of Boston.

² *Memoir*, p. 30 *seq.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 29.

It was a time of deep spiritual exercises. In the place where he had first come to a personal knowledge of the Saviour he dedicated himself in renewed loyalty to Him. On his twenty-first birthday (November 21) he wrote to his parents : —

“In Jesus Christ I would place all my trust and all my hope. To Him my heart turns. In Him is my hope and my strength. My body, soul, and spirit, my life, health, and strength, my time, acquisitions, and powers of mind are given to Him in solemn trust.”¹

He thought, too, much and deeply upon theological subjects. In the quiet of his tutor's room in New College he was shaping the system of divinity which he was many years later to teach to his students in New York. It is with a feeling that they must have been antedated a dozen years, that one comes across these words in a letter to Goodwin, written also on that memorable twenty-first birthday : —

“I cannot find truth in any one systematic view of it. I cannot find religious truth in the Old School or the New. I find it only in the doctrine of redemption. My object is to make and harmonize a system which shall make Christ the central point of all important religious truth and doctrine. Such, I am convinced, is the Biblical scheme. Does any human scheme correspond to this? Such a system, too, would be a practical system ; it would, at any rate, require that all preaching should be made in reference to Christ, of course in reference to redemption and sanctification, and Christ as the cause of both.”²

¹ *Memoir*, p. 31.

² *Ibid.* p. 32.

These are indeed significant words. They contain in the germ the Andover address and the later theological system.

But these happy months were not to last. Another great trial was before him. As the year wore on, his health once more gave signs of failure. The summer was one of feebleness and discouragement. His eyes, the student's most precious possession, became gravely disordered. "These and other causes," says his wife, "brought him to a depth of physical and mental depression which became threatening to life itself. A year's trip to Europe was recommended and decided upon, as the best, if not the only restorative."¹ Again God was disciplining him for the coming work.

He sailed for Europe late in the autumn of the year 1837. Before setting out, he sent to his friend Dr. Woods an article for the "Literary and Theological Review" on the recently published *Mental Philosophy* of his Bowdoin instructor, Professor Thomas C. Upham. References to his intention to perform this task appear in his correspondence as early as the previous April. It was undertaken at the request of Professor Upham himself. The latter was for many years the teacher of mental and moral philosophy at Bowdoin, and deserves honorable mention as one of the pioneers in the introduction of the principles and methods of the Scottish philosophy, in the place of the system of Locke, which hitherto had maintained almost exclusive

¹ *Memoir*, p. 35.

sway in our American institutions of learning.¹ He became afterwards still better known by his works on the higher Christian life, in which he advanced a somewhat mystical view of Christian experience, in general agreeing with the teachings of Madame Guyon, whose biography he wrote.

The review of Upham's *Mental Philosophy* was published in December, 1837. It is an altogether noteworthy production, coming from so young a man. Few marks of the pain and depression under which it was written are apparent. It has the tone of one who feels himself master of his subject. Unlike the two articles already mentioned, it appears under the author's name: — "By Henry B. Smith, Tutor in Bowdoin College."² Though the work, as already stated, was undertaken at Professor Upham's desire, it is, while altogether modest, thoroughly independent. In truth, the pupil had outgrown the teacher. At this time a new claimant for the place once occupied by the system of Locke had appeared, threatening wholly to supplant the rising Scotch philosophy. The writings of Coleridge, which some years before had been introduced to American thinkers by the gifted President Marsh of Burlington, had already familiarized many with the spiritual

¹ President Porter says of him: "Professor Upham drew from Stewart and Brown, taking his terminology from Brown, but was on many points independent and original." Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philos.* Amer. ed. vol. ii. p. 453.

² *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 622.

philosophy of Germany. A further impulse in the same direction had been given by Caleb S. Henry's translation of Cousin's Lectures, published in 1834. The intellectual commerce between America and the Continent of Europe had already become active, and the works of the German and French philosophers were beginning to be read in the original.

Mention has been made of the fact that the Bowdoin tutor had been studying German and reading Cousin with his students. The article on Upham furnishes internal evidence that he had also become acquainted with Coleridge. A new philosophical horizon, much broader than that of his teacher, was opening before him. In April, 1837, he had written to his college friend, Benjamin Tappan : —

“ I have had several very interesting conferences with him (Professor Upham), upon the general theories and principles of mental philosophy, and find him more inclined to the spiritual school, more comfortable, *e. g.*, to Cousin's principles, than I had supposed, and he says that in his new work he has done them more justice than before.”¹

It is evident that Smith himself was ready to do the spiritual philosophy full justice.

He begins the review with a statement of the task of philosophy, and of the difference between philosophy and metaphysics : —

“ To discover principles, to adjust them, and to apply them, are the great objects of philosophy. . . . It is the

¹ *Memoir*, p. 35.

scientia scientiarum — the science of ultimate truths. . . . In all the workings of mind and matter, principles and laws (laws are but principles developed) are *involved*. Philosophy would *evolve* them, and construct a system by which their movements and relations, their interdependence, interactions, and counteractions may be explained; and all phenomena be made as harmonious in our conceptions as they are in their own workings. Such a philosophy is the want of the human soul; though oft baffled in its search, man will still seek again. The mind is constantly striving after those laws by which it may bind universal nature fast to the throne of God.”¹

It is characteristic of his mind that he is seeking the reconciliation of differences, the harmonizing of conflicting principles. In later life he was to be preëminently a *mediating* theologian; and, remembering who were his teachers and friends in Germany, one might be tempted to think that it was from them he received this mental tendency. But here, before the European journey, it is evidently a deep-seated trait.

“All who know the difficulty in political philosophy of reconciling law with liberty, and in theology of harmonizing sovereignty and free agency; see in one science the deepest problem in universal science. Whether this object be of possible attainment or not, it is still incontrovertible that nature (*natura naturans*, and *natura naturata*) is harmonious in its workings: — that there is no impassable gulf, no perplexing jar, between the infinite and the finite; that matter and mind, and all their laws, are in entire unison. With Jehovah immanent in

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 621 seq.

all his works it cannot be otherwise. And upon no other than the divine ear can the myriad sounds which rise from the universe strike in one unbroken strain of melody.”¹

In distinguishing between metaphysics and mental philosophy, he utters an earnest word in favor of the former discipline, then little cultivated in this country: —

“There are those who recoil from metaphysics, and speak of it as if it were aridity personified. But the mind does seek, instinctively seek, to ascertain those eternal principles by which God governs his universe; it does want to evoke into distinct consciousness all that God has put within it; and all who have studied philosophy know the vast influence of developed principles upon the development both of individual and of national character; and the intimate alliance of metaphysics with ethics, politics, and theology.”²

He then enters upon a clear, able, and very interesting analysis of Professor Upham's work, which may be passed lightly over here, where the object is to learn of Smith rather than of Upham. In the main he agrees with his teacher in the division and definition of the mental powers, giving his reasons with force and discrimination. There is some appreciative discussion of the problem of externality, in which he distinguishes carefully between the ideas of externality and resistance, and points out the error into which some philosophers have fallen by confusing the two.

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 622 seq. ² *Ibid.* p. 624 seq.

“To suppose that because *outness* is given in *connection with resistance*, it is therefore a part of it, is a mistake less ludicrous, but showing no less want of analysis, than the belief of the New Zealanders that hats were congenital appendages of the first Europeans whom they saw.”¹

He accepts with satisfaction Professor Upham's account of the necessary ideas, and it is significant of the tendencies of his philosophical thought, that while his former teacher calls the faculty which originates these ideas “original suggestion,” Smith would prefer to denominate it “The Reason.” The following is also worthy of notice as indicative of the drift of his mind:—

“Under the head of *a priori* reasoning one *a priori* argument for the existence of God is well stated and its validity acknowledged. An argument which has received the sanction of such minds as Cudworth, Howe, Clark, Fénelon, and Cousin ought certainly not to be lightly condemned.”²

But Smith was already more the theologian than the philosopher. It was the great Christian facts that had possession of his soul, and it was his ambition to apply them to the needs of the world about him, whether those needs were intellectual or moral. Philosophy he valued as an instrument by which the truths of theology might be harmonized, shown to be reasonable, and brought into relation to the other spheres of knowledge. Therefore he

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 635.

² *Ibid.* p. 638.

desired the reconciliation of philosophy and Christianity.

“Philosophy and religion have long been aliens, exchanging only angry or contemptuous glances; and the former has full oft insidiously plotted against our holy faith. The Christian philosopher has always sighed for a union, which has never been consummated. . . . Philosophy has claimed an independence of theology, and many reflecting minds have made it their idol. We ask not that the scholastic philosophy, with its submersion of philosophy in theology, return; but the Christian must take it as a canon of criticism, that no philosophy shall advance principles inconsistent with, or subversive of, Biblical truth and Biblical facts.”¹

All this was to be wrought out in its completeness a dozen years later in the Andover address.

With these views of the relation of philosophy and theology, Smith welcomed the proof, given by Professor Upham in his treatise, that philosophy teaches the depravity of man, and thus as an independent witness corroborates the truth of the Bible. Intellect and heart are both disordered.

“We see as through a glass darkly; the pure, face to face. How many *reconciling* truths in philosophy and religion might otherwise be discerned, which we now see not at all, or darkly see? In the intellect, what confusion! In the heart, what perversion! And can mental philosophy not see it? It is as the representation of chaos in Haydn’s Oratorio of the Creation. Can the ear not hear it? It is the angry lashing and foam of the

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 647.

deluge. Can the eye not see it? It is in ourselves. Can we not read it?"¹

The remainder of the review is occupied with a criticism of Professor Upham's doctrine respecting the seat of moral character, in which the reviewer differs widely from the author. This part of the work is performed with entire independence, yet with great modesty and respect for the opinion of the older man. Here, too, the interest is quite as much theological as philosophical. The young man "feels constrained to differ more fully, because he believes some important doctrinal views to be implicated"² in the solution of the problem. For some years theological circles in New England had been stirred by controversy over the respective merits of the "Taste" and the "Exercise" schemes. According to the latter, which was maintained by the followers of Hopkins and Emmons, all moral character is to be found in the volitions or voluntary exercises of the soul. This was the "New School" theology of New England. According to the "Taste" scheme, which was advocated by such men as Burton, Smalley, and Woods of Andover, the seat of moral character is the heart or the sensibilities. This view came to be distinctive of the "Old School" in New England theology, — to be carefully distinguished, however, from the Old School party in the Presbyterian Church, who held to the older Calvinism of Westminster in its stricter

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 648.

² *Ibid.* p. 650.

form. Smith advocated the Taste scheme in opposition to the Exercise scheme. He believed that there is a moral character which precedes choice, and of which the choice is but the expression. This moral character is seated in the affections.

“Those affections which are the direct objects of law, which theologians and the Bible generally group under the word Heart, have in and of themselves a moral character. . . . The affections are a fount of moral character, separate altogether from deliberate volition.”¹

He quotes as fundamental the proposition of Edwards, “that the essence of the virtue and vice of the dispositions of the heart, and acts of the will, lies not in their cause but in their *nature*.”²

“By the spontaneous, the unguarded emotions of the soul, we know best our own character; and it is not that the agent determines the character of the affection, but that the affection determines the character of the agent.”³

It follows that a man's moral character is not the result of his free choice. It is character that makes choice, not choice that makes character. Freedom therefore consists in working out without hindrance the character already existing in the affections. He asks: —

“Is selfishness any the less wrong because it is instinctive and spontaneous? This affection is certainly a man's own — we cannot get behind it, till we get behind the man. We, moral, responsible, accountable agents,

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 653.

² *Ibid.* p. 655 *seq.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 656.

oppose self to God ; and because we do this spontaneously, do we not sin ? In such spontaneous acts man's highest freedom is exhibited ; and if philosophy cannot explain how, then, man is accountable, it is because philosophy has not reached as far as fact, and does not know all wisdom." ¹

It is worth noting how distinctly theology is here placed above philosophy. He goes on to say :

“ God has not left it to philosophy to give man a moral nature, and to tell him just what constitutes a moral character. Some Italian villagers once hissed an eclipse because it did not equal their expectations. An equal presumption, if not an equal ignorance, is manifested by such as complain of a deficiency in man's accountableness until they have given him more power than God ever saw fit to impart.” ²

This is strong language, but it is the language of conviction. We may differ from it, but we cannot but respect it. It was not on mere traditional grounds that Smith was a determinist, but because he believed that determinism is truer to the facts, at least the spiritual facts of the fallen human soul, than the doctrine of free-will. In his later teaching he gave a larger place to the will in determining the seat of moral character. In the “immanent preferences” of the will, which include the affections and are to be distinguished from the executive volitions, he finds the true seat of virtue and vice. His doctrine of freedom, however, remained unchanged. He was never willing to admit the exist-

¹ *Lit. and Theol. Rev.* vol. iv. p. 657. ² *Ibid.* p. 657 seq.

ence of the "power of contrary choice." Although he modified some of Jonathan Edwards's definitions, and improved upon some of his distinctions, yet throughout his theological career he continued true to the substance of the *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will*, a moderate but decided determinist. It was this fact that gave such firmness and consistency to his Calvinism.

The review of Upham was his last original published work for many years. It was, as has been stated, written in the midst of great pain. "My state being such," he wrote to Professor Woods, under date of October 30, 1837, "you may wonder that I undertook the article; but I felt myself bound to Professor Upham, and thought that, for a last act of imprudence, I might by the 'categorical imperative' force myself into a state of sufficient excitement to write something which might not be wholly skipped over by your readers."¹ It stands now as a proof of the mental maturity of its author, then but a boy of twenty-two. In literary style and finish it shows a decided advance upon his earlier articles. The review attracted no little attention, and from this time forth there was a widespread expectation that young Smith would make his mark in the world of literature and thought.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 37.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE LARGER WORLD.

IF we may believe that "every man's life," to use the striking title of one of Horace Bushnell's sermons, is "a plan of God," we cannot but see a special providential purpose in the circumstances that led to Henry B. Smith's visit to Europe. He was now ripe for such a journey. Although he had not completed his theological course, he had matured his theological system. In philosophy, as has just been seen, he had made remarkable progress for one so young. He had attained such fixed principles in character and intellect that there was little danger of injury from the influences, adverse to his spiritual life and his Christian beliefs, which he was to encounter. That he might be fitted for his work as a teacher of theology, he needed just the deepening and enlargement certain to be produced by contact with European modes of thought. In those days comparatively few American students of theology were able to avail themselves of the advantages of foreign travel and study. It was a kind dealing of Providence which brought upon the young tutor at Bowdoin the failure of health, at the time so utterly discouraging, and thus opened the

door for what was to prove one of the most important agencies in his preparation for the work of his life.

“He spent the winter of 1837–8,” says his wife, “in Paris, in a weary, almost desperate struggle with disease and despondency.”¹ A letter, written at this time to his friend Cyrus Hamlin, and not used by Mrs. Smith in the Memoir of her husband, gives such an insight into his state and occupations that it may not be amiss to give it nearly in full.

PARIS, *January* 20, 1838.

MY DEAR FRIEND HAMLIN, — I received about a week since the letter which you were so kind as to write me soon after I left you; and I assure you that I thanked you most heartily for it. It is no common pleasure at this distance to receive a letter from a friend, especially an *old* friend. And when I have so much to attach me to any one, as I have to you — where there are so many old and grateful tho'ts mingling with every recollection, so much of literary communion and Christian sympathy in College and in Seminary times — why should n't it be a great pleasure to receive a letter from you? I recollect the deeds and words of my friends here more than ever; for it is one of my principal means of keeping up an intercourse with them. The last meeting you and I had together in your room (for that on board the steamboat was rather an appendix to it) I have often thought of, and thought of it as perhaps the very last, though from your letter I see that this *may* not be. But I would desire to have our *personal* intercourse end as it then did — when it must end. Prayer

¹ *Memoir*, p. 39.

is the only expression, the real voice of the full heart, whether it be full of sorrow, of joy, of pain, or of penitence. And after we have talked long of those we loved best, of ourselves, our friendship, and while the thought that we should never see one another again was uppermost, and the feeling that we must part at once was pressing, — what was there like prayer for our souls? Should we never meet again, it will always be a pleasure to think that we thus parted. And is it not pleasant to review the whole course of our friendship? It has never known abatement. It began when very different feelings might have sprung up; it has strengthened every year, and strengthened too in proportion to our knowledge of one another's character. Is not that something to be grateful for?

As for myself, a physical constitution has not been given me adequate to bear out the high objects which I have proposed to myself, and which with a stronger frame I might have accomplished. Yet be it so; be it that submission be my chief duty, and that in a humble sphere, and in a routine of lesser duties, my life is to be passed, this is all well; it is all right. And I have so much to be grateful for that I will not repine because my body will not let my mind work for some more permanent fruits than those which the responsibilities of a single parish impose. These I shall assume gladly, and rejoice to bear even the humblest part in the great work to which we both are consecrated. I think that I shall this year regain my health, but my constitution is now such that I can never endure protracted mental exertion. And I hope that it will be for my spiritual benefit that some of my hopes and desires have thus been disappointed and crushed. Perhaps, most probably, 't was a

wrong ambition that has tempted me ; and that God in mercy has checked me before I fell through pride. If health be granted me, and if I may hope for some years of domestic happiness . . . this will be indeed a blessing, more of a one than I once dared hope could ever be mine. . . . So much of my sheet has thus been occupied with personal matters — the concerns of the *ego*, that I have little time or room for the *non-ego*, of which there is a great deal about me of which I should like to tell you, and of which you would like to hear. Mr. Baird, stationed here, is a Christian full of love, and doing much good ; as much as any one can do. This is a city emphatically of this world ; everything speaks of the present, the things of time and sense, mammon, pleasure ; hardly anything to remind you of another. Even in the churches the appeal is still to the senses. Seed is sowing. Mr. B. has a little meeting at his house every Saturday evening for the exposition of the Scriptures, which is truly delightful. But this subsists only at the mercy of the government, and not because there is a *practical* conviction that all may hold and declare their opinions. There is a law which forbids the meeting of more than twenty persons without the consent of the government, and that law may yet break up this assembly. Toleration is declared in the Charta ; but it is not really understood. Toleration, *as long as there is no change*, is the real policy which is adopted. Let any *movement* begin, and the myrmidons are ready to suppress it. All that Louis Philippe is anxious for is *security, quiet*, at whatever cost. And there is now no public man of whom he need be afraid. Mr. Kirk of Albany is here, and I feel myself warmed by his religious enthusiasm.

Is it not strange that the characteristic buildings of

three great capitals should have been this winter destroyed by fire? In Petersburg the king is everything, and his palace has gone; in Paris theatres represent the people best, and the Italian Opera is still smoking; and in London the Exchange has perished. I am in daily attendance upon the "courses" of the great literati — they are all public. Magendie, Richerand in Medicine; Orfila, a splendid lecturer on Chemistry; Jouffroy, a really great man, on Psychology, with something of the English sobriety united to the German profundity. St. Marc Gerardin on French poetry; Geoffrey St. Hilaire on Zoölogy; Biot, the finest-looking man of them all, on Astronomy; and many others. The facilities for a student are here boundless, but alas, I cannot be a student; and though all the libraries are open, I dare not stay in them. De Sacy has just published a history of the Druses, which I have not seen. But the book which is at present making the greatest sensation is "Le Livre du Peuple" by La Mennais, that Catholic priest of whom you may recollect much was said two or three years since. In this work he has gone much farther than even in his "Paroles d'un Croyant." He has almost shaken off Papacy, though 't is said that he still holds on to the Pope. 'Tis a very eloquent work — very full of feeling and deep emotion, rather eloquent than logical. He takes the democratic theory of rights and modifies it only by the principles of Christianity. All evil is entirely the work of man, is to be remedied by man; and the perfectibility of the race is attainable even in this life. 'Tis just the work to excite the French; it revives the dogmas of Rousseau, adds a principle which the people will forget, and then is sent abroad. . . .

Becker is to edit some newly discovered MSS. of St.

Chrysostom; and some newly found letters of Petrarch will soon be published. *Voilà.*

Good-by, my dear friend. May God bless and keep you through his Son Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Most truly and affectionately yours in Christian love,
H. B. S.

This winter in Paris was one of new impressions and fruitful thought. He watched closely, as the foregoing letter shows, the workings of Roman Catholicism. At this time the thoughts of many Protestants, who were not wholly satisfied with the traditional ecclesiastical forms and the prevalent theology, were turned towards the old church. The Oxford movement had already begun in England, and the "Tracts for the Times" were being rapidly issued from the press. Tract Number Ninety had not yet appeared and Newman was still in the Anglican Church. There were many who thought the religious problem was to be solved, if not by a return to the Church of Rome, at least by renewed recourse to the teachings and forms of the Christian church of the early centuries. There is more than one evidence in his letters that Smith was attracted by the Roman Catholic rites. Thus, writing from the famous cemetery of Père la Chaise he says: —

"I witnessed the burial of one of the sisters of charity, and the Catholic forms were certainly impressive; the chants, the crucifix held at the head of the grave, the pall spread over it and sprinkled with water by all the mourners, each in turn, and the priests themselves throwing the first earth upon the coffin. To this place Silves-

tre de Sacy has been recently consigned. I was present at St. Sulpice during the whole of the ceremonies there. To the sound of the muffled drums, and the deep bass of the musical instruments, and the resounding chantings of the priests, and the voices of an immense throng, were the funeral rites performed. And attended by many an armed soldier, by the great in science, art, literature, and politics, all in full array, and by the plumed hearse and the pomp of a long procession, was his body borne to its kindred dust. And attended, as we may hope, by angels, was his spirit carried to the God who gave it." ¹

It is hard for those who have been brought up in a later generation, when for American Protestants the question of the relation to Roman Catholicism has been practically settled, to understand how strong was the attraction at this time presented by the Church of Rome to many of the most devout and thoughtful of our young men who went abroad for purposes of study and culture, and who came in contact with the strong movement Romewards in England and on the Continent. Mention has been made of the effect produced upon Smith's teacher and dear friend, Leonard Woods, Jr., whose whole career may be said in a sense to have been ruined by his dallying with Tractarianism. It was characteristic of Smith that he examined the subject for himself, disentangled the sophistries with which it was surrounded, and came clearly and positively to the conviction that Rome has no help to offer to the seeking mind of the Protestant Christian, and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 44.

that the Roman system is inimical to the highest interests of modern society. He saw distinctly, also, that it is not compatible with the free institutions of a republic. Many years after, he wrote:—

“The Roman Catholic system is the most comprehensive, subtle, self-consistent, flexible, and inflexible polity which the mind of man ever wrought out for purposes of spiritual and temporal authority. . . . And its systematic power is rivaled only by its zeal, and its zeal is not greater than its adaptedness to almost all moods and classes of mind. It awes by its power those whom it cannot enchant by its flatteries; it is harmless to the submissive, meek to the inquiring, and intolerant to every adversary. It appeals to all the senses in its varied rites; it charms the understanding by the consistency of its system; and it subdues reason itself by its claim to infallibility. . . . Rome does not know how to reconcile Christianity with popular rights, nor reason with revelation. It cannot do this on the basis of its system. It has said something about these things, but it has not discussed them. It can enforce duties, but it cannot recognize rights. It does not know man as man. Nor does it know, nor is it able to satisfy, the highest spiritual wants of man. It is not fitted to grapple with the great social problems of modern life.”¹

This is the language of a man who has carefully studied the system he so vigorously criticises.

It is interesting, too, to note the development of his æsthetic nature at this time. In the somewhat bare and severe surroundings of a New England life, this element in his mind had attained only a

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 80–83.

partial growth. But those who trace his mental evolution in his earlier years, as well as those who knew him intimately in later life, and were privileged to see something of the love for beauty which underlay his apparently cold exterior, are aware that he was endowed with a strongly marked æsthetic tendency. It is to be perceived in his fervid style, which, especially in his younger days, runs readily into poetical expression; in his love for poetry, throughout life a notable characteristic; in his keen appreciation of beauty in literature and the fine arts. One who realized so clearly the things unseen and eternal, to whom the verities of Christianity were to such a remarkable extent unveiled facts, and who dwelt with such loving appreciation upon the beauty of holiness, could hardly fail to be attracted towards beauty in art, especially in its higher and more spiritual forms. This reserved and thoughtful student had a heart of fire; the more one studies his life, the more one is impressed with the fact. He wrote in February to his friend Prentiss:—

“Here in studying the works of painters and sculptors a new development of the mind is experienced; and the love of beauty and the knowledge of what is beautiful grow within you.”¹

A few days later he writes to the unnamed friend who was the recipient of his most sacred confidences:—

“In the works of the mighty masters of the arts there

¹ *Memoir*, p. 40.

is a source of *fathomless* delight, and precisely because it is *fathomless* it never deceives, it always endures. I cannot comprehend them at once; I cannot pass over them in general terms; I cannot be satisfied with a partial inspection. They are the development of something which I feel to be stirring in my own soul; they are the outward expressions of the ideal which is given to every human being. And as I look upon them I feel that my own soul is smitten with the love of beauty, and that here is *described* all which I have vainly sought to express. I acknowledge these to be my masters, and I bow before them. I do not comprehend them, but as far as I understand I only admire; and I feel that there is something which I have not learned which they knew, that they had studied and developed their nature more than I have; and that it is possible for me, having the same nature, to develop it until it can understand and appreciate those whom the cultivated minds of all ages have ever honored.”¹

This was like the man, to be unsatisfied with mere admiration, and to wish to develop his own mind until he could understand. What follows is equally of a piece with his whole make-up and disposition. The young man in the Salon Carré of the Louvre is thinking, as he looks upon the masterpieces of art, of the people to whom he hopes to minister in plain New England.

“And such is the harmony between all the arts, that I likewise feel that I am preparing myself to be a better preacher, if God grant me life and health to fill that most important station, and give me grace, too, that I

¹ *Memoir*, p. 41.

be worthy of it, — that I am preparing myself to be a better preacher by the study of statuary and paintings. These speak to and kindle the same souls to which I am to speak, which I am to try to arouse ; they touch chords in the same hearts and minds which I am to endeavor to persuade.”¹

The contrast between the Paris gallery and the bare box-meeting-house in New England, where he expected to preach the gospel of the crucified Saviour, seems almost grotesque. Yet in this ardent mind, afire with love to God and his fellow-men, there was no discrepancy between them ; both were instruments to be used in the attainment of the one great end, the winning of souls for the Master.

Thus he spent the winter in the French capital, contending with ill health and despondency, but gaining invaluable experience. In the early spring of 1838 he turned his face towards Germany, and in April arrived in Halle, where the next year was spent in study.

To the American student of theology who enters a German university a new world of thought is opened. If this is true to-day, it was far more the case a half century ago. Our intellectual commerce with Germany has been carried on so long that we have appropriated much that is best in the scholarship of the Fatherland, while Germany has far less that is original to offer than of old. There is still an immense gain to be derived from the knowledge of the language, the access to the literature, the

¹ *Memoir*, p. 41.

stimulus from the atmosphere of scholarship, the attainment of new points of view, which can be secured by study in a German university. But there are not a few signs that the time is rapidly approaching when the advantages thus offered will be counterbalanced by the opportunities for advanced study in our own higher institutions of learning. In 1838, however, the case was altogether different. The few students from America who then visited the German universities were able to make attainments utterly denied to those who remained at home. The theological scholarship of the United States was in its infancy. Some profound thinking had been done by the theologians of the New England school in certain departments of systematic divinity. The same men had cultivated with success a few branches of mental and moral philosophy. But for the most part the larger field of theological scholarship had just begun to be worked. A few men, like Stuart in Andover, Hodge in Princeton, and Robinson, who the year before had been appointed to a chair in Union, had done something toward unlocking the treasures of German theological learning; but for the most part these treasures were known only by vague rumor, which did not carefully distinguish between the good and the evil in them.

The divine providence that appears in so marked a way throughout Henry B. Smith's life — as it does in every Christian life, if one will but look for its manifestations — brought him to Germany at a

time of great theological activity. The power of rationalism, which during the later years of the previous century and the earlier years of the present had reigned almost without a rival in the churches and the universities, as well as among the people, had been broken. The Napoleonic wars, with the deep sufferings and privations that came in their train, turned the thoughts of the people back to God. Rationalism had shown its utter insufficiency to meet the deeper needs of human souls. Nevertheless, while its dominion had been overthrown, it still continued to exist and to exert a baneful influence in theology and religion. The meagre and superficial "popular philosophy" underlying rationalism had given place to the great philosophical systems which followed each other in quick succession from Kant to Hegel. These — at least after Kant — were prevailingly pantheistic, and were dangerous to Christianity just in proportion to the friendliness of the guise in which they approached it. The dominant system was that of Hegel, which knew so well how to express itself in the phraseology of orthodoxy as almost to deceive the elect themselves. Confronting the rationalistic and pantheistic parties was the revived evangelical Christianity. For a score of years it had been gaining in power and influence until the victory seemed to be within its grasp. It owed its most potent theological impulse to Schleiermacher, who, though far from being orthodox in the technical sense of the term, had done more than any other

theologian to turn the tide against unbelief by vindicating the rights of Christian experience and directing men's thoughts once more to the great central truth of Christianity, redemption by Christ. Already those remarkable men who are commonly called the *Vermittlungstheologen* — with whose spirit Smith himself had so much in common — had begun their fruitful work in systematic theology, endeavoring to mediate between the Christianity of the Bible and the cultured thought of the time.

A new and startling turn had been given to affairs when, three years before Smith's arrival, D. F. Strauss, a young *Privatdocent* at Tübingen, had published his "Leben Jesu," in which he denied the supernatural character of the Gospels, reduced their histories to myths, explained away their doctrines in accordance with the principles of the Hegelian "Left," and rejected the Christian view of the Saviour's person.¹

When the young American came to Halle everything was in a ferment of excitement. The rationalists, the Hegelians of the "Right," and the Christian theologians of the school of Schleiermacher had almost forgotten their differences in the presence of the unexpected and formidable attack from the side of the new school of historical criticism.

¹ Baur, and the so-called "Tübingen School," had not yet risen into prominence, though the former had already published his work on the Pastoral Epistles, in which the germs of his famous critical theory of the New Testament are to be found.

The theological mind was strained to its utmost tension. Probably at no period during the century has there been such a crisis. To the Christian men who had done so much to bring back Germany from its rationalistic death into a new life of faith, and who were earnestly engaged in the effort to express the great permanent truths of Christianity in forms which might commend them to the best thought of their generation, it was a time of disappointment, not to say of consternation.

Into the midst of this excitement came the ardent but clear-headed Yankee student of theology, ready to receive every new impression and to welcome every helpful phase of thought. To a man of different stamp the result might have been harmful. But his faith was too deep and real to be very seriously shaken by the destructive influences at work about him. He had passed through the rationalistic phase of thought in his early life, and had overcome it in his conversion. It was not likely that he would succumb to the pantheistic philosophy, or to the new assaults of historical criticism upon Christianity. Yet there is evidence that he did not escape without some conflicts. Years afterwards, as a pupil of his relates, in an address made to one of his classes at a meeting of a social nature, he said: —

“When I went to Germany I passed through an intense struggle with rationalistic doubt and unbelief. But in the midst of it all there came before me a vision of Christ, so distinct, so sweet, of Christ as a Person, a

living, divine and human Saviour, that all shadows were driven away, and I never doubted more. This vision of Christ we all must have. No man can be a true and living Christian until he has had this vision of a living Christ.”¹

It was because he carried Christ with him as a present, personal, living power, that no shaking of his faith could be more than temporary. After he had been in Germany for six months, — it was on November 21, his birthday, — he wrote to his parents : —

“Christ has been with me in many an hour of trouble and trial and fear, and always in love and with rich consolation. And I trust that this day He has enabled me to come still nearer to Him, and to confide myself to his watch and care, and to throw myself upon Him in simple faith, and that in the midst of the temptations which surround me to doubt and disbelieve, He will always keep me near to Himself. There are great temptations, for rarely does one meet with that simple, childlike faith, that full reverence for the word of God, and simple belief in his promises, which are so much the characteristic of American piety. More blasting to piety, and fatal to simple experimental religion than all the Biblical criticism of the Rationalists, is the philosophical spirit which is now so rife in Germany, and which, from a higher point than English infidelity has ever taken, threatens to absorb religion in philosophy, and to raise philosophy above Christianity. But, in the midst of all, I keep my heart and mind steadfastly fixed upon Christ,

¹ The Rev. Henry H. Jessup, D. D., the distinguished missionary to Beirut, in the *New York Evangelist* for May 17, 1877.

upon God manifest in the flesh ; let Him be taken away, and all is darkness ; but so long as with faith I can see the Lord, so long must religion be the basis of my philosophy ; so long have I something to which, in all my doubts, I can hold fast, and in all storms anchor my faith and my hopes.”¹

He was particularly favored in gaining at the first, and holding through all his stay in Germany, — and indeed throughout the remainder of his life, — the friendship of the man who, above all others in Europe, was best fitted to be his personal and theological mentor. Professor August Tholuck was at this time thirty-nine years old, and at the height of his usefulness and influence at Halle. The son of a goldsmith in Breslau, he had passed his early life in eager search for knowledge in the face of many obstacles, and while still a boy had made extraordinary attainments, especially in the oriental languages. During childhood and youth he had been surrounded by rationalistic influences, to which he yielded with scarcely a question ; but when in his eighteenth year he had entered the service of the eccentric but pious orientalist, Von Dietz, in Berlin, and later still, when after becoming a student in the university of that city he had come under the influence of the devoted and humble servant of Christ, Baron Von Kottwitz, he had been brought by a profound and genuine experience to the acceptance of the gospel of the crucified Saviour in its simplicity and power. In 1820,

¹ *Memoir*, p. 58 seq.

when just of age, he became *Privatdocent* in the University of Berlin, where the chairs of the theological faculty were occupied by such men as Neander, Schleiermacher, and Marheineke, while Hegel was the head of the faculty of philosophy. Two years later he had published his "Lehre von der Sünde," in which he narrated the deep experiences by which he had passed from death unto life, an epoch-making book that did much to break the power of rationalism, and that was followed a little later by the Commentary on the Romans, scarcely less influential in bringing about the triumph of evangelical Christianity.

In 1826 Tholuck had been transferred to Halle by the Prussian minister Von Altenstein, for the express purpose of redeeming that university from the rationalism in which it was sunken. Here he was received with contempt and riotous demonstrations by the students, and with ill-concealed aversion by the faculty of theology, which included such representative rationalists as Gesenius, Wegscheider, and Niemeyer. Stormy times had followed. But with undaunted faith, and that love which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things, Tholuck had gone quietly on his way, until the whole character of the university had been changed, and the cause of rationalism had become completely lost.

Few teachers of theology have ever exerted such a beneficent influence over their students. He had a burning passion for souls. He rejoiced to

come into the closest relations with his pupils, to win their confidence, to lead them to the Saviour, and to turn the current of their lives towards high and holy things. Generations of students, not only Germans but English and Americans, found in him their spiritual guide. Eleven years before, the young American theologian, Charles Hodge, — “that most amiable of all Britons, the lovely Mr. Hodge,” as Tholuck called him in his quaint English,¹ — had come under his influence, and received indelible impressions. With good right the Halle professor bore the honorable title of the “*Studentenvater*.”

Smith entered into the closest personal friendship with this remarkable man. No one could have been better fitted to be his guide through the perplexities of German theology. Tholuck guarded the great essential facts and truths of the Christian system with uncompromising jealousy. But he was very tolerant concerning what seemed to him the non-essentials, — so tolerant as in later times to draw upon himself the reproach of heresy from the side of the more conservative Germans. If any narrowness had found its way into the American’s modes of theological thought, as the result of the reaction from his early Unitarianism and his later education in the somewhat provincial forms of the New England theology, Tholuck was just the man to help him, while in no wise shaking his belief in the vital realities and doctrines of Chris-

¹ Tholuck’s *Leben*, by Witte, vol. ii. p. 134.

tianity. In some respects the older man's experience had been not unlike that of the younger. The two could thoroughly sympathize. Tholuck stimulated all Smith's scholarly tendencies, and proved a wise and helpful guide in the philosophical studies upon which the latter entered with ardor.

Smith has given a picture of his intercourse with the Halle professor, which shows most vividly the relation that existed between them and the beneficent influence it exerted upon the pupil. Writing from Wildbad Gastein the next summer, while traveling with Tholuck, he says, under date of August 25: —

“You cannot think what a joy it has been to me to make this journey in company with Professor Tholuck; it was, I believe, the very best thing that could have been done for me. He has such a boundless store of knowledge, he is so kind and so Christian, he has such a lovely and exalted character, and withal, I may say, he has taken such an affectionate interest in me, that language fails to express my gratitude and my admiration. . . . As we kneel together to pray, his prayers are so simple and fervent; as we talk upon religious experience, his feelings are so deep, his faith so childlike and sincere; as we discuss questions in philosophy and theology, his knowledge is so extensive, and his philosophy so Christian; or as we talk upon men and manners, his remarks are so just, his criticisms so acute, and his detection of the humorous so rapid, that, take him all in all, I have never met, and do not expect again to meet, such a man. . . . Among all the mercies for which, in this sep-

aration from home and friends, I have to thank God, the greatest is that I have found in him such a friend.”¹

Tholuck fully returned his affection. In 1846 he wrote, referring to the journey just spoken of: “In a great turning-point of my life you were my companion and the friend of my heart; that unites us by indissoluble bonds.”² Dr. Cyrus Hamlin says: —

“In 1867 I had a very pleasant and quiet interview with Tholuck at Amsterdam. His American friends, Smith and Prentiss, were of course referred to by him with his usual and well-known admiration and affection. He lost no occasion of expressing it. The sure way to enter at once into Tholuck’s best graces was to mention Smith and Prentiss. ‘What sort of a place is Maine,’ he once exclaimed, ‘to produce such young men as these?’”³

Scarcely less important — though it must be placed upon a distinctly lower level — was his friendship with Professor Ulrici, whose philosophical writings have been helpful to so many students of theology, especially his great work in proof of the truth of theism, “Gott und die Welt.” With him Smith took up his abode and entered into intimate relations with the philosopher and his friendly wife. “I love them very much, and they also love me,”⁴ was his naïve testimony, when he had lived with them several months.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 52 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 126. The allusion is to the fact stated on p. 40, that on this journey Tholuck became acquainted with his future wife.

³ *Christian Mirror*, April, 1882.

⁴ *Memoir*, p. 52.

According to his own testimony his principal studies at Halle were theology and metaphysics. He writes, May 12, 1838 : —

“I *am* getting into the German metaphysics, for I cannot keep out of them. Whatever may be said against the German philosophy, it must still be acknowledged, that in philosophy itself this people has made astonishing progress ; that in the investigation of the fundamental questions of metaphysics they are far before any other nation.”¹

Later in the year, November 24, he gives a specimen of his days of study : —

“Got up at seven, committed my verses, read a psalm in Hebrew ; from eight to nine, heard a lecture on psychology by Professor Erdmann (one of the best lecturers on philosophy in Germany) ; nine to ten, in Schleiermacher’s “*Glaubenslehre* ;” ten to eleven, heard Tholuck on Christian Morals ; eleven to twelve, walked with a student ; twelve to one, read some in Schelling ; one to two, heard Tholuck on Theological Encyclopædia ; two to three, dinner ; three to four, read Goethe’s “*Torquato Tasso*,” with the young Englishman (Creak), who boards here ; four to five, heard Ulrici on Religionsphilosophie ; five to six, a delightful walk with Professor Tholuck ; six to half-past seven, concert of sacred music of Bach, Handel (from the Messiah), etc. ; half-past seven to eight, went to see a student ; eight to nine, tea ; nine to ten, read Faust with Madame Ulrici, . . . and now I am writing to you.”²

This, however, was after his health had begun to improve ; otherwise the consequences might have

¹ *Memoir*, p. 49.

² *Ibid.* p. 59.

been serious. In the early summer he had consulted Jüngken, the celebrated oculist of Berlin, who spoke favorably of his symptoms, but advised him to spend the vacation in rest and travel. Accordingly, in July he set out with Tholuck as his companion. The journey, previously mentioned, was in many respects a memorable one. On it Tholuck made the acquaintance of the wife of his later years, the accomplished Baroness Mathilde von Gemmingen, who seems to have been first greatly drawn to him by a sermon which she heard him preach in Kissingen, and which Smith describes in his letters. If Smith also did not find a wife, — for this the good Lord seems already to have made provision, — he found what was to be an important element in the happy home-life of the coming years, namely, his lost health. He returned to Halle with new strength and courage for his work.¹

A glimpse has already been given of the way in which the autumn was passed at Halle. It was a time of hard study and great intellectual progress. The ambition for learning was burning bright within him. Here in the German university there was everything to stimulate it. From early childhood it had burned with an inextinguishable flame. He wrote on his birthday to that "friend" to whom his best letters were addressed: —

"I don't know when boyhood left me, or how; but it

¹ A very interesting account of this journey is given in Witte's delightful *Leben Tholucks*, vol. ii. p. 337 seq.

is gone. Some things that I had as a boy are still left me, — that quenchless desire to *know*, that love of *truth*! And, through God's grace, I trust it has received another form, that I seek it in another way, that He has led me in Him and in Christ to seek the truth, and there only; that is the high destiny of man, — to *know the truth*; but woe to him who seeks it out of Christ and God, and who has not learned that only he whose heart is pure can know the truth. One can learn *facts* enough out of Christ and God, but this is not truth; at best, it is only its *form*. I cannot tell you what a deep and intense longing I have to *know*; nor what a deep and unwavering certainty, in the midst of all doubts and fears and shortcomings I have, that it is possible to *know*, in the fullest and highest sense of the word.”¹

A part of the Christmas holidays was spent at Berlin, where he came into contact with the distinguished men of that noted university and city. Here he met Neander, that giant in learning and child in faith; Hengstenberg, the uncompromising foe of every form of infidelity, already exerting the commanding influence he maintained for so many years, and dealing fierce blows in his lecture-room and the “*Kirchenzeitung*” against the enemies of what he believed to be the cause of Christ; Twisten, the successor of Schleiermacher, whose *Theology* Smith was afterward to translate in part. Here he came under the lovely and loving influence of the Baron von Kottwitz, the Patriarch of Tholuck's “*Guido and Julius*,” the St. John of Berlin, who had been instrumental during the preva-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 57.

lence of rationalism and afterwards, in bringing so many souls to Christ. Here he made the acquaintance of Madame Hegel, the widow of the famous philosopher, who since his death had gathered about her a school of his followers, among whom his works were ardently studied and his memory cherished. Here, too, he met Professor Robinson, the first American theological teacher whose merits were recognized in Germany, afterwards to be Smith's beloved colleague and friend in New York.

Vacation over, we find him once more in Halle, where the remainder of the winter semester was passed. But in the spring he bade farewell to his friends in the provincial university town and migrated to the Prussian capital. Here he spent the second year of his European life, in surroundings even more stimulating than those of Halle. The letters of this period are full of vivid descriptions of his teachers and his life in Berlin. Here, as in Halle, every hour was filled.

“My lectures are : 8-9, Logic with Gabler, five times a week ; 9-10, Jewish History, Hengstenberg, five times ; 10-11, Job, Hengstenberg, five times ; 11-12, Neander, Acts, six times ; 12-1, History of Christian Doctrines, Neander, three times a week ; 4-5, Criticism of Hegelian Philosophy with Trendelenberg, four times ; a lecture on John twice a week ; Homiletics, once ; History of German Philosophy, twice a week ; Twisten, Introduction to Christian Morals, once a week, and one or two others ; one in Goethe and Schiller, twice a week.”¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 65.

This is working with a vengeance! Our modern students of theology who frequent the German universities know how to estimate it. But he finds time for visiting and for music. He even declares that he has "determined to take exercise regularly." Surely among these slow-going German people there are more than twenty-four hours in a day.

With Neander and Hengstenberg he enters into cordial personal relations. The former, "the excellent, the learned Neander, the father of a new era in church history, the best exegetical lecturer in Germany,"¹ especially attracts him, and gives him a method in church history which he was afterwards to follow as a professor in New York. Yet his eyes are not closed to the good man's defects: —

"Neander makes love to almost every party except that of Hengstenberg, and of Strauss, the author of that terrible 'Life of Jesus,' and the German philosophy, which he cannot endure."²

Trendelenberg, too, is making a deep impression upon him in philosophy, teaching him those clear and profound methods of criticism which appear in the "Logische Untersuchungen." No American or Englishman of his generation understood Hegel better than did Henry B. Smith, and there is good evidence that Trendelenberg had much to do in helping him to that understanding. It is a notable fact, worth pondering in these days when a revived Hegelianism, or Neo-Hegelianism, is being taught in so many of our American institutions of learn-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 67.

² *Ibid.* p. 69.

ing, that our clear-headed philosopher and theologian, in spite of the temptations, so strong at this time, to become a follower of Hegel, never allowed himself to be deceived in the slightest degree as to the true nature of this system.

Perhaps even more than in Halle there were temptations here to his Christian faith. But the Christ who was enshrined in his heart preserved him from them. He wrote on August 11, 1839: —

“As to the unfavorable influence of German philosophy, I cannot, of course, judge of myself how much I have changed; but I have not the conviction that study has had any other effect than that of making my views more deeply grounded, and of developing them more clearly. If I thought that my heart were losing ground, that I were losing my simple reverence for the Scriptures, and my simple faith in experimental religion, I would not, could not hesitate, — I would come right home.”¹

And again, four days later, in a letter to his parents, he says: —

“As to one point, of which I wrote you formerly, the influence of German theology upon my mind and heart, I trust that my Heavenly Father, who by his grace has hitherto guided and preserved me, will still be with me, and keep my heart and mind in the knowledge and love of the truth as it is in Jesus.”²

The months passed quickly, filled with indefatigable study, and diversified by pleasant vacation journeys, on which, as usual, he won hosts of new

¹ *Memoir*, p. 74.

² *Ibid.* p. 75.

friends. Early in April, 1840, the memorable two years in Germany were brought to a close. These years did not lay the foundation either of character or of scholarship, but unquestionably they were of untold importance in the confirmation and shaping of both. Without them Smith's life-work would have been far less effective and beneficent. He would have been as true and faithful a man; he would undoubtedly have made great attainments in scholarship, for he would have found enough in books to satisfy his love of learning; he might have made an excellent teacher, and a wise and effective leader in the Christian church; but for the work God had marked out for him this European life was essential. While it did not shake his faith in any of the great Christian facts and truths that were so dear to him, it saved him from holding them in a narrow spirit; it gave him that clear and intelligent view of the truth of evangelical Christianity, in comparison with every other system, which throughout life was characteristic of him; it gave to his personal piety that geniality which the New England orthodoxy of his youth lacked, and which is so marked a feature in the religion of the more evangelical Germans; it gave to his scholarship a breadth and depth which could not possibly have been attained at home; it fitted him to meet the questions and solve the doubts of the young men of the next generation as no other training could have done; it gave him those wise and far-seeing views of ecclesiastical policy which were so remarkable a

feature in his after labors for the denomination with which he was connected and for the church at large ; it gave him the preparation he needed for his important career as a theological writer, editor, and critic. There are some who may see in all this nothing but chance. Those, however, who believe as he believed, with some open vision of the things unseen, and judge earthly events from his point of view, will not fail to see in all the clear evidence of that gracious providence which not only makes all things work together for good to them that love God, but elects the Master's instruments for the important tasks in his kingdom, and shapes and prepares them for their work.

So he left Berlin, "full of pain at quitting so many near and dear friends." "Never shall I forget," he continues (April 8, 1840), "the parting blessing of Neander and of Kottwitz, the fervently expressed wishes of Hengstenberg, and then Mrs. Hegel, — it almost unmanned me as I last clasped her hand and received her dearest wishes for my happiness. But if I begin to speak of the kindness of my friends, I shall never stop." ¹

From Berlin he went to Hamburg, and thence by packet to London. In May he set sail for New York, where he arrived on the 1st day of July, 1840, after a voyage of more than six weeks.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 84.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK.

WHEN Henry B. Smith returned from his stay abroad he was less than twenty-five years old. Probably no man of his age in America was better equipped for the highest and best work as a teacher of Christian truth, in either the professor's chair or the pulpit. Naturally of the finest parts, deeply and sincerely devoted to Christ, clear-headed and wise, thoroughly trained, acquainted with the best thought of his own country, and a master of German theology and philosophy, he seemed all ready to take a high place and to exert an immediate and extensive influence for good. Yet this rarely qualified man was compelled to wait nearly two years and a half before he could obtain any permanent foothold in the busy world to whose well-being he had so much to contribute, and then only as the pastor of a country church, with a salary hardly large enough to justify his entering upon a family life.

It was not because he was not sufficiently known, for already his reputation was established. The professors at Andover greeted him as an equal, when he visited them shortly after his return ; and listened to him as a superior, as he answered their

eager questions respecting German theology and philosophy. The cautious and judicious Woods, the learned Stuart, the gifted Edwards, and the brilliant young Park, — who was destined through life to be in a sense his rival, — all vied with each other in showing honor to the character and attainments of their visitor. At Brunswick he was met with a similar welcome and respect by the old friends connected with Bowdoin College. Professor Henry of the University of New York, the enthusiastic American exponent of Cousin's philosophy, sought to obtain his help in the stalwart fight he was carrying on with the theological giants of the "Princeton Review." The Unitarians, now fairly launched upon the sea of Transcendentalism, gayly invited this young German scholar to become their shipmate in their voyage into that vague and hazy new world whither their intuitions were wafting them. Ripley engaged him to translate Twes-ten's Dogmatics for his "Specimens of Standard Foreign Literature," and even asked him to write for the "Dial," which Smith aptly describes as "a new publication, in which all sorts of conglomerations, hopes, and prophecies appear, full of the future and of imaginings."¹ Channing, Parker, Brownson, Clarke, appear among the friends with whom he freely moves in Boston, and with whom he discusses German philosophy.

And yet, in spite of all this, the door was long shut, and when it did open, it was but a wicket

¹ *Memoir*, p. 91.

gate. His friend Dr. Park, writing of his settlement at West Amesbury, says : —

“When he received this call I was residing in Germany; and when I stated to a Professor of Philosophy at Halle that Mr. Smith was intending to be ordained as a country pastor, the professor expressed his astonishment; first, that so accomplished a scholar should not be invited at once to a chair in some university; and secondly, that he should take up with a rural pastorate and should receive so small a salary. The professor had heard of American clergymen who received several thousand dollars *per annum*, and were, in his esteem, inferior to Mr. Smith. I endeavored to convince him that if Mr. Smith should be ultimately connected with a theological seminary, he would derive important benefits from having labored in a pastorate; and that, in his state of physical exhaustion, a pastorate in the country would be more congenial to him than a pastorate in the city. ‘But do you think,’ was the question of my respondent, ‘that Mr. Smith’s fondness for the German philosophy has awakened a popular prejudice against him, and shut him out of more wealthy parishes?’ I then attempted to convince him that the rank and file of our New England parishes had no decided repugnance to the Hegelian philosophy, as it had been modified by himself and other Germans of the Evangelical school. He still persisted in his opinion that so remarkable a young man should have a more lucrative position.”¹

It is not improbable that the fear of his German philosophy had its influence, though in fact there

¹ *Memoir*, p. 128.

were few ministers in New England more orthodox. He himself intimates that an entirely opposite prejudice, due perhaps to the fact that he did not give his philosophy free course at the expense of his theology, was the cause of the failure of his friends to secure him a permanent place in Bowdoin College. "The real reason why I have no place here," so he wrote, "is — Unitarianism."¹ In the second year of his waiting the failure of his health served to reinforce the other adverse influences, and to delay the desired consummation for many months. But over and above these immediate causes, we may see the working of that wise providence which had so often disciplined him. A still longer apprenticeship in suffering and disappointment was needful that this servant of the Master might be fitted for his work.

Soon after his return he was called to Bowdoin as "temporary additional Instructor,"² while President Woods was traveling in Europe. A year was passed most pleasantly in Brunswick. But, as was just stated, the effort permanently to retain his services in the Faculty failed. In like manner, a very attractive position in Hanover, N. H., which combined the pastoral care of the village church and the professorship of Divinity in Dartmouth College, was held out to him, only to be withdrawn. He accepted these disappointments in a spirit of admirable Christian acquiescence. When in Paris, broken in health, three years before, he had asked

¹ *Memoir*, p. 97.

² *Ibid.* p. 89.

for nothing more than to be the pastor of some small country church. But though a thoroughly modest man, he was conscious of his power, and all his tastes and ambitions drew him toward the life of a scholar; so that the failure brought keen disappointment. Speaking of the collapse of his hopes for a position at Brunswick, he wrote: —

“There is a slight degree of humiliation about it, as if I and my friends had overestimated my merits, and thought my election more important to the interests of the college than it really is. Time will show, and if I am well, it *shall* show. Only six weeks ago, what prospects; there was the chance of being elected to an important post in Hanover, to an honorable position here. The six weeks are gone, and neither hope has been fulfilled.”¹

“If I am well, it *shall* show!” Alas, that “if” was always an important factor in his life. The opportunity to enter the larger sphere of labor having for the present failed, he turned with unshaken courage to the smaller one, and sought a position in the pastorate. There is something right noble in his spirit at this time.

“It will be pretty hard work to bring my mind to where it ought to be, — to the practical application of the truths and doctrines of the Bible to the wants and hearts of men. But what is theology worth which cannot be brought home to men’s minds and hearts?”²

After reading this, need we doubt what was the secret of his power as a teacher of theology in Union

¹ *Memoir*, p. 97 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 99.

Seminary? Religious leaders do not come by accident. They are not made by the study of books. They grow by such divine discipline as Smith was passing through.

But his last hopes were to fail him. His health once more utterly gave way, and for months he was entirely laid aside from active duty.

In February, 1842, when he was beginning to recover, he set forth from his parents' home to seek again for employment in the ministry. But every door was still closed. In Boston and elsewhere he was very kindly received, but all doubted whether he was strong enough to undertake the active work of a parish. On March 2, he wrote from Boston: —

“I have been disappointed in my hope of getting employment here. As to Roxbury, I had expected that they would be willing to hear me four or five Sundays at least. I suppose they thought I was not strong enough, but if they took interest in me as a preacher they would have been willing to give me a longer trial. So I shall begin to estimate my pulpit talents at their just rate, and I never had any great idea of them. . . . This looking out for somewhere to preach, and asking people if they do not know where there is an opportunity, is to me the most distasteful business I could be engaged in.”¹

And there were months of it before him. More than thirty years later he wrote to a young candidate for the ministry who was in a like case, “Do

¹ *Memoir*, p. 103 seq.

not be discouraged ; it is what we all have to go through." But probably few have ever entered deeper into the depths of this most trying experience than he.

It was not until the next autumn had passed that the opportunity he had so long been seeking came. Early in December he received a unanimous call from the Congregational Church and Society in West Amesbury, Mass., to become their pastor. A few days later he wrote to them : —

"I accept your invitation, asking you to unite with me in prayer to the great Head of the Church, that He would strengthen my weakness, give me grace according to my need, and enable me to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." ¹

On the 29th of December he was ordained and installed as pastor.

The five years of his ministry at West Amesbury were among the happiest and most useful of his life. His later success as a teacher of theology was more than doubled by his experience as a pastor. It mattered not that the church to which he ministered was small, and the position humble. So much the better for the work he had to do. There can be no question that the custom which has prevailed of recruiting the professorships of our theological seminaries from the ranks of the pastorate has been most wise, where the men chosen have been men of true scholarship. The chief aim of a theological

¹ *Memoir*, p. 128.

institution is to educate men for the ministry, and this can be best done by teachers who have seen active service. Undoubtedly one of the chief reasons for the failure of the system in vogue in the German universities, and the repeated lapse of these institutions into infidelity and error, has been the fact that the theological professors are scholars rather than ministers. It will be an evil day for our seminaries in this country when the time-honored policy ceases to be maintained, and the wisest minds of our times see that there are already signs of danger in this direction.

A little later, Mr. Smith was married, and installed his young wife as mistress of the parsonage. She was Elizabeth Lee Allen, daughter of the Rev. William Allen, D. D., the President of Bowdoin College during the years that Smith was a student there. No circumstance of his life was more happy than his marriage, and in nothing does the wise and kind providence everywhere observable in his career appear more manifestly. To his wife his later success was in large degree due. Her attractive personality, her warm heart, her strong and cultured intellect, her wisdom, were just what he needed to make his life complete. During the more than thirty years of their wedded life she was his helper and companion. In spite of the cares of family life she kept pace with him in his studies and activities. Since his lamented death she has prepared the biography — with rare literary skill, and a modesty which we can chide only when it

fails to do justice to the part she played in her husband's career — by which his memory will be kept fresh long after the generation of those who knew him has passed away.

Into the new life now opened to him the young minister plunged with all his wonted enthusiasm. He said : —

“ My people are not rich, not cultivated, but they are kind. It is good, yea, pleasant to live among them, — to talk with them of the highest themes which are alike to all hearts. They understand not my philosophy nor my German ; they care not for critical discussions in Hebrew and Greek ; but sin and death, regeneration and a Saviour, these they care for ; and are not these the greater ? In such a field I am glad to test my speculations. It is doing mind and heart good.”¹

Of the happy and useful pastoral life at West Amesbury it is not the function of this book to speak in any but the most general way. The young scholar was a thorough success as a minister. He won the hearts of his people. They were proud of his attainments. They trusted him in spiritual and practical matters. The church prospered and grew under his wise care. His preaching was appreciated. His efforts for the intellectual improvement of his parishioners were gratefully received. He and his wife won their hearts in personal intercourse. The children found the parsonage a congenial place, — not the less so, when here in due time appeared the minister's own

¹ *Memoir*, p. 113.

little ones. The theologian found application for his theology in his own family. On March 4, 1844, he announced to his friend Prentiss: —

“ Here at home we are right well in our quiet parsonage. Yesterday Baby was transferred from a state of nature to a state of conditionally covenanted grace; and behaved very well upon the occasion — looking straight up into her father’s eyes, while he administered Holy Baptism. It was beautiful and fitting. I could almost believe in a direct communication of grace to the unconscious babe. I certainly *do* believe in it as a *vehicle* of grace — whether the exact character of the grace may be defined or not. I believe that the wild olive branch has been grafted into the true vine. And it is delightful thus to give back to God, in a divinely appointed ordinance, what God has given to us; and to feel that the dear child has been consecrated to Christ, not only in wish and in prayer, but also by a *rite* — a sacrament — a seal of the covenant.”¹

The tide that had set so long against him had turned at last. For the present God was employing the discipline of prosperity rather than that of adversity. Now that he had found his place of vantage in the world, the world had come round to his side and had plenty of work for him to do. A year had not passed after his ordination when he was elected to the professorship of Rhetoric in Amherst College. There was much that was tempting about the offer. But Smith was a far-seeing man. For one so simple-hearted he had a large element

¹ *Memoir*, p. 118.

of shrewdness. When, for example, after his return from Europe, the followers of Cousin and the Transcendentalists wished to enlist him in their service, he saw clearly that however pleasant it might be to join in the fight, the result would be injurious to himself and the cause he had most at heart. So now, he saw that to accept this offer would be to put himself in a position for which he was unfitted, and to interfere with his future usefulness. Most of his friends seem to have urged him to go. He, however, modestly but firmly disregarded their advice and declined the call. The subsequent years fully justified his decision. The Lord had better things for him to do.

A couple of years later the Andover friends laid hands on him and committed to him the instruction of the Junior class in Hebrew during the temporary absence of Professor Bela B. Edwards. To this work, with the consent of his people, he devoted four days of every week throughout the winter, laboring on the other three with such increased energy that his tasks at home did not suffer. So satisfactory was this service at Andover that the next year he was invited to undertake it once more. It seems not unlikely that his labors here might have grown into a permanent engagement, had not Amherst College once more sought his services, this time offering him the chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy. The position was a congenial one, and, after mature deliberation, he concluded to accept it. He was called to Amherst in July, 1847.

His people lovingly protested against his leaving them; and it was with much sorrow that in October of the same year, after the customary ecclesiastical forms had been gone through with, he took his leave of them.

No period of Henry B. Smith's life was brighter than this of his pastorate in West Amesbury. None was fuller of hard and useful labor. Beside the work done for his people and for the students at Andover, he carried on his private studies with his accustomed zeal. He also once more appeared in print after a silence of many years. In 1844 his friends Professors Edwards and Park established the "*Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review*." This periodical was published quarterly, and at once took the high place it has since maintained. The editors from the first looked to Smith for assistance. He gladly availed himself of the opportunity thus offered him, and during his five years at West Amesbury was a regular contributor to the "*Bibliotheca*." The articles from his pen which thus appeared were for the most part translations. It may be questioned whether he was wise in devoting his strength to the writings of others, when he was quite competent to do as good or better work of his own. All through his life he was led, from one cause or another, to give up much of his best time and strength to the task of translating German books, which, it is true, had their own value, greater or less, but which prevented him from producing that original work he was so well fitted to give to

the world. To those who knew his power this seems a mistake. No other man in America or Great Britain was more capable than he of building up Anglo-Saxon scholarship by the preparation of standard works. If, instead of leaving such writing to second-class men, he had given his full strength to original composition, the annals of American theology would be far richer than they are to-day. We should not then have to content ourselves with the meagre fragments of Smith's genius which have been gathered together since his death. There is no use of crying about it now, but one cannot help feeling, "The pity of it! Oh the pity of it!"

Much, however, may be said in Smith's defense. He had made great acquisitions in German scholarship, and, true to his character as a mediating theologian, he desired to bring his countrymen into contact with the sources to which he owed so much. This desire was not peculiar to him. The American world had only lately come to the knowledge of the great treasures of theological thought and learning gathered by the Germans. The thought of our scholars was how to make these treasures as quickly as possible our own. The great and immediate need of American theological scholarship seemed to be the appropriation and assimilation of what was best in continental knowledge. Professor Moses Stuart wittily said of the Germans, in one of his writings, "*Ægypti sunt; spoliemus.*" Every one who had the requisite ability was busy

borrowing from them. If Smith gave to translation time and powers that ought to have been kept for original work, so did his friends Park and B. B. Edwards, whose translations appear during the same period in the "Bibliotheca Sacra." It was the fault of the times. At present we have come to a better understanding of German theology. A far larger number of our ministers are acquainted with the German language and stand in no need of translations. Nearly all our professors of theology have studied in German universities. We are able to estimate more truly the value of German theological literature. We have learned that all that glitters is not gold, and that much that is good for Germany is of no value for American students. While we still recognize our great obligations to the theology of the Fatherland, we are not disposed to regard it as the exclusive source of our American scholarship. But our experience has come through the mistakes of the generation before us. We must not criticise the men of that generation too severely. We have our own mistakes to answer for.

When we come to read Smith's translations, we are more inclined to forgive him for devoting so much time and strength to this kind of work. At the present time the task of translation is too much given over to young men who have only an imperfect knowledge of the language with which they are dealing, and often a still more imperfect acquaintance with the subject. The consequence is

slipshod work, full of crudities and errors. Many of the translations that come from the press in these days are practically worthless. In more than one instance it has been necessary to withdraw the editions and to have the work done anew. Smith, however, was an admirable translator. His knowledge of both languages was complete. He was always master of the subject. The *termini technici* were at his tongue's end. It is a pleasure to follow him, and to note how perfectly he succeeded in rendering the keynote of the subjects he dealt with. Never trying to follow the original strictly, always ready, when need required, to have recourse to paraphrase, he knew how to turn over the thought in its true meaning from the foreign language to the English, producing work that is thoroughly clear and correct, and eminently readable. Some of his translations are masterly.

During the five years of Henry B. Smith's pastorate at West Amesbury ten translations from his pen appeared in the "Bibliotheca Sacra."¹ Of these several deserve particular mention, affording,

¹ They were: 1. Interpretation of the Number 666 in the Apocalypse, etc., by Benary, Feb., 1844; 2. The Structure of the Gospel according to Matthew, by Harless, Feb., 1844; 3. The Expiatory Sacrifices of the Greeks and Romans, and their Relation to the One Sacrifice upon Golgotha, by Lasault, May, 1844; 4. Interpretation of the Baptismal Formula, by Bindseil, Nov., 1844; 5. and 6. The Doctrine respecting Angels, by Twesten, Nov., 1844, and Feb., 1845; 7. A Sketch of German Philosophy, on the basis of an article in the Halle *Literaturzeitung*, May, 1845, — this only in part a translation; 8, 9, and 10. The Trinity, by Twesten, Aug. and Nov., 1846, and Feb., 1847.

as they do, not merely evidence of his ability as a translator, but also interesting glimpses of the tendencies of his mind at this time. The remarks, explanatory and in part apologetic, by which they are introduced, throw light upon his philosophical and theological position.

The most important of the translations is that of Twisten. This theologian was Schleiermacher's successor in Berlin, where Smith had attended his lectures. Once occupying a distinguished place among German thinkers, he is now almost forgotten. The translation, which covered considerable portions of the author's *Dogmatics*, was originally prepared at the request of George Ripley, the distinguished Transcendentalist and founder of the Brook Farm community, later for many years the literary editor of the "New York Tribune," who wished to give it a place in his "Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature." But this series was afterwards discontinued, and Smith's translation was left on his hands.

The first two sections of the translation, which deal with the doctrine respecting angels, may be passed over. The other three sections, however, are of more importance. They relate to the doctrine of the Trinity. On this subject New England had been convulsed during the years that had passed since the first explosion in 1815. Though the controversy might be regarded as over at the time when this translation appeared, the air was not yet cleared after the storm. The minds of

New England people, and especially of the more thoughtful among the ministers, were seething with the great problem. Smith had grown up with the controversy. It had, as we have seen, begun the very year that he was born. He had been brought up a Unitarian, notwithstanding the pious parental dedication of his infancy and the evangelical teachings in his home. His conversion had been practically implicated with the great question. When he found in his own heart the need of an "Infinite Saviour," he had given himself to the divine Christ, and had come to what he believed a personal and experimental knowledge of him. This experimental knowledge had changed his whole system of divinity. From this time forward his theology and Christology were "orthodox." He believed that Christ is in the truest and highest sense God. He believed that God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These great facts stood firm to him beyond all controversy. But it was as facts, — as realities; and he believed that philosophy also has a function in confirming these facts to the reason, and setting them forth more fully in their connections. His own studies in German philosophy and theology had led him to believe that the German speculations on the subject were of value in giving these great doctrines a rational basis, and thus not only confirming them to the Christian, but recommending them to the cultivated thought of the age. While far from accepting the positions of Schleiermacher or of Hegel, he

believed that both of these men had contributed something to the fuller understanding of these priceless truths.

It was for this reason that Smith wished to give a wider currency to what he regarded as the best German thought on the Trinity. In the discussions between the Orthodox and the Unitarians in this country, the chief arguments on both sides had been drawn from the Scriptures, which the Unitarians then accepted as inspired. The appeal to Christian experience and to the principles of a sound spiritual philosophy had found but little place. One who reads the controversial writings of the day — those of Channing and Ware on the one side, and of Stuart and Woods on the other — is increasingly impressed with the conviction that neither side perfectly understood the real nature of the controversy. The Unitarians rejected the doctrines because they regarded them as irrational, and because they thought the Bible, rationally interpreted, gave them no place. The Orthodox defended them as revealed mysteries, to be received because the Bible, interpreted according to their principles of exegesis, teaches them. But no attempt was made to go below the surface. The result was unfortunate. The Orthodox won the exegetical battle, as could not but be the case, inasmuch as the Bible, to use the phrase of a distinguished Unitarian at a much later period, is “an orthodox book.” But the Unitarians, when worsted on Biblical ground, simply withdrew to

their inner defenses. They continued to reject the doctrines on the ground of their irrationality, or later on explained them away by the aid of a pantheistic philosophy.

Smith saw the need of a better method, and hoped to furnish some help towards its attainment by his translation from the "Vermittlungstheologie Twesten." In his introductory note he says:—

"The following article has been translated, not only on account of its intrinsic excellence, but also because it presents a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity upon somewhat different grounds from those ordinarily found in English and American systems of theology. Even if we do not agree with all the positions advanced nor think them conclusive, yet they may aid the mind to some new aspects of a doctrine which lies at the basis of the whole Christian scheme. . . . And such a discussion of this doctrine as is here presented may lead us to a more thorough conviction that it is not a mere abstract formula, but a living truth; a truth not merely derived by a set of proof-texts from the Scriptures, but intimately inwrought into the whole scheme of Christianity; which cannot only be shown to be unassailable by the principles of a common-sense philosophy, but can also be maintained in its most orthodox form in the midst of the severest critical discussions of the Scriptures, and against all the pretensions even of pantheistic and transcendental speculations." ¹

These words are important for the understanding of Smith's attitude toward the great questions

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 499 seq.

of theology, as well as for the appreciation of his own system.

Evidently he had his doubts as to how the translation would be received by some of the more conservative theologians in this country, for in the note introductory to the second section he says : —

“The more we love a doctrine, the more shall we think about it, and the more we think about it, the more shall we see its connection with other truths ; and every one who reverences and loves and thinks about the truth, may aid us in our own studies, even though we do not think all his speculations sound. . . . In respect to this particular doctrine, it is well known that the most orthodox divines, while assenting to the fundamental formula, have differed in the way in which they have explained and defended it ; and this fact should keep us from arguing that an exposition which is new to us is therefore an unwarrantable speculation and a hazardous tampering with the faith. . . . As to philosophizing — without some degree of it we can hardly see how the formula can be fully explained ; and when a philosophical objection is made to our statement of a doctrine, it is surely not unworthy of a Christian to attempt to answer it philosophically.”¹

It is an interesting fact that while Smith's own doctrine of the Trinity was so largely the result of his deepest religious experience, not indeed superseding but confirming the Scripture, yet he does not seem to have been particularly impressed by Twisten's very valuable and suggestive discus-

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iii. p. 760 *seq.*

sion of the connection of the doctrine with the Christian consciousness. Smith recognizes the place of the experimental element in his Andover address on Faith and Philosophy, and in the introduction to his Theology. But he never did full justice to it in his system. This is the more surprising in view of the fact that he was so strongly influenced by men like Tholuck, Neander, and Twesten. In the introductory note to the first article on the Trinity he speaks of the term "Christian consciousness," and defines it. He says:—

"It is a phrase of very distinct import in the school of Schleiermacher. It will not do to translate it by *Christian experience*, for that phrase is too subjective; it will not do to translate it by *the whole scheme of Christianity*, for that is too objective. A Christian believer is supposed to have new elements of consciousness, those, viz., which are derived from the religion he has experienced. The word consciousness is here of course used in a somewhat broader sense than it bears in the English language. The phrase, *a conscious experience of the Christian faith*, may be a sufficiently accurate description of what is meant by Christian consciousness—it is the inward experience considered as embracing the whole of the objective revelation."¹

But the time had not come for American theologians to do justice to this important element in theology.

In May, 1845, between the sections of the translation from Twesten, Smith published a "Sketch of

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iii. p. 500.

German Philosophy." He says of it that it is "rather a paraphrase than a translation." It was put together out of no less than three German originals, — namely, an article in the Halle "Allgemeine Literaturzeitung" on New Schellingism, the name of whose author does not appear; an essay by Professor Bachmann in the Jena "Allgemeine Literaturzeitung;" and a summary of Hegel's system in the "Conversationslexicon." None but a Yankee could have performed such a feat of combination. It is like those fabled ships of Smith's native State, which are said to be built by the mile, cut off in lengths to suit purchasers, fitted with appropriate bows and sterns, and launched upon the deep. The beauty of the Maine vessels — whatever may be said of this story of their origin — is that they always serve their purpose perfectly. The same can be said of this composition of the West Amesbury pastor. It gives an admirable representation of the course of philosophy from the days of Kant, — as good as could be given in a form so condensed. It is worth reading to-day. It goes without saying, it is true, that Smith could have written a better sketch himself, as witness his articles on Schelling and Hegel in the "American Cyclopædia." But the best part of this is Smith's own. All through the "paraphrase," as he calls it, his own voice is heard.

The article is antagonistic, in its general tone, to the prevalent German philosophy, and this was undoubtedly the translator's own position. He did

not wish to commend any particular system of German philosophy to his countrymen. He did not himself give his assent to any. He regarded all the later systems as essentially pantheistic, and he was altogether theistic in his philosophical creed. But his German studies had convinced him of two facts: first, that the Christian theist might find great help in his own doctrine from some of the principles of these systems; and secondly, that to Christianity they were most formidable opponents, whose assaults could not be ignored, but must be met by a skill and intellectual power equal to their own. In his introductory note he speaks of those who regarded German philosophy as "a mere mass of fantastic conceits," as "mysticism," as "a far-rago of words and nonsense;" as well as of those who were looking to German speculations as the means "of solving some of the questions and problems which are forcing themselves upon their minds," and of those who regarded them "with unmingled aversion and distrust." His own judgment is indicated when he says, "Perhaps it may be found upon a closer examination of the subject that none of these parties and opinions are wholly correct." To make light of German philosophy is to expose one's ignorance. Equally mistaken is the opposite extreme, of expecting "to see the enigmas of life solved, and the difficulties and contradictions of science explained in the German schools." This was "going into the thick of the conflict to find peace. German philosophy is as yet militant,

is not yet triumphant.”¹ Then he stated what he regarded as the sober truth: —

“It cannot be doubted that the fiercest assault which Christianity has ever experienced, both in its history and in its doctrines, is that to which it is now exposed in the country of Luther and the Reformation. Many present the alternative — Christianity or philosophy; as one author has expressed it — ‘Christ or Spinoza.’ Whether it be necessary to accept the alternative or not; what Christian can doubt that it is not Christianity which will be [at] last abandoned?”²

The whole drift of the article was sober, truthful, discriminating, calculated to make the young theologians whose thoughts were turned towards German philosophy mindful of the dangers, as well as of the advantages, of the study. No man in this country has ever understood German philosophy better than Henry B. Smith, and no one was ever a safer guide than he.

Before leaving the translations of this period, attention should be called to one which appeared in Dr. Hedge’s “Prose Writers of Germany.” It was from Hegel, and gave specimens of that philosopher’s characteristic style and thought. Smith prepared it in the early part of 1847. Dr. Hedge says of it in the preface of his work: “The translations from Hegel are by an anonymous friend possessing peculiar qualifications for that difficult

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 261 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 262.

task.”¹ He wrote to Smith personally, “I believe you are better acquainted with Hegel than any one else in this country.”² In the introductory sketch of the philosopher’s life, Smith gives the following account of his system, which is certainly a remarkable specimen of condensation and of lucid statement of a difficult subject.

“His philosophy claims to be the absolute system, the result and culmination of all other systems. In it he resumes the whole progress of the human mind, and alleges that his system, and that alone, is able to explain the whole course of history, all the phenomena of nature, all the problems of speculation. There is one *Absolute Substance* pervading all things. That substance is *Spirit*. This Spirit is endued with the power of development; it produces from itself the opposing powers and forces of the universe. All that we have to do is to stand by and see the process going on. The process is at first the evolution of antagonistic forces; then a mediation between them. All proceeds by triplicates; there is the positive, then the negative, then the mediation between them, which produces a higher unity. This again is but the starting-point for a new series. And so the process goes on, from stage to stage, until the Absolute Spirit has passed through all the stadia of its evolutions, and is exhibited in its highest form in the Hegelian system of philosophy. The system comprises three departments: Logic, Natural Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Spirit. Logic is the science of the Absolute Idea, in its abstract character; in the Philosophy of Nature

¹ *Prose Writers of Germany*, p. iv.

² *Memoir*, p. 124.

we have the same Absolute in another, an external form ; in the Philosophy of Spirit we have its highest stage. Here it manifests itself as the Subjective Spirit, the Objective Spirit, and the Absolute Spirit. The Absolute Spirit, in fine, has three stages of development, which are Religion, Art, and Philosophy.”¹

Smith closed his series of translation with an original article, published in the “Bibliotheca” in August, 1847, and by far the most valuable of his contributions to that review during his West Amesbury period. Its subject was “The History of Doctrine.” In form it was a review of Hagenbach’s “Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte,” the English translation of which Smith afterwards revised and enlarged and presented to the American theological public, and of the “Lehrbuch der Christlichen Dogmengeschichte” by Dr. F. Ch. Baur of Tübingen. But in fact it was much more than a review ; it was a clear and able statement of Smith’s own views on the subject of the article. Hitherto the history of doctrines had been an almost unknown discipline to American students of theology. The only accessible book on the subject was a translation of Münscher’s “Compendium,” made in 1830 by Dr. Murdock, a former professor of ecclesiastical history at Andover ; but this was not only meagre, but already antiquated. The article was a plea for this branch of study. It showed how essential for the understanding of the confessions of faith and the theological systems of the

¹ *Prose Writers of Germany*, p. 446.

present is a knowledge of the history of doctrine, and how it serves to correct the narrowness so apt to attach to the study of systematic theology. It called attention to the striking fact that not only is Christianity the only religion possessing what can properly be called doctrines, but also the only religion in which a succession of doctrinal systems appears. This law of growth in theology is developed and illustrated:—

“The true life of the church of Christ is indeed a hidden life, it is hid with Christ in God; but the expression of that life is in its articles of faith, and its systems of doctrine. The truest history of the church is to be found in the history of its doctrines. . . . While the very name of such a history is almost unknown among ourselves, while the English theology has studied the records of theological opinion almost solely for polemical ends, the patient and far-sighted and speculative German mind has entered into these researches with the most thorough investigation, and brought out results of the most surprising interest.”¹

The article then proceeds to state the object of a history of doctrines, which is “to give in the truest possible manner the order in which divine truth has been unfolded in the history of the church,” and traces out into details the method by which this object is to be attained. Hagenbach is represented as belonging “to that school of German theologians, already large and constantly increasing in numbers and influence, which is giving a

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 559 *seq.*

new direction to historical investigations in theology," the school of which Neander is the father. The secret of the power and influence of this school lies in the thoroughly critical character of its work, and its deep evangelical spirit.¹ It is also animated by a truly philosophical spirit. In its theology it owes much to Schleiermacher, who "with all his serious defects, did yet recall the men of his times from such an empty faith to a higher appreciation of reality, and the experienced reality, of the leading points in Christianity, considered as a redemptive system; and with the views of this great and generous theologian all this school are deeply imbued. The consciousness of sin, and the conscious experience of redemption through Christ; these are the two poles of his theological system."²

"This school," Smith goes on to say, "has not disdained to learn something from the wise men of this world, even from the speculations of the modern German philosophy;" and then he takes occasion to speak out his mind about the indiscriminate abuse of everything German, then so rife in this country, and even now not wholly unknown: —

"Its attitude in respect to the results of the philosophies of Germany is hostile; but while it is exposing the insufficiency of these systems to solve the problems of the Christian faith, and firmly opposing their pernicious and pantheistic results, it does this with far other weapons than those which are at the control of many, the severity

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 562 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 563.

of whose denunciations is equalled only by the extent of their ignorance, and who neither know nor care anything about that whereof they affirm; and who are only careful to make their affirmations of repugnance so indiscriminate that they really become unmeaning; who are as when one beateth the air, and is eager only to strike a heavy blow, not knowing nor caring whether he hits anything or everything.”¹

He then carefully describes the use made of philosophy by the men of this school. He shows how philosophy itself led them into their investigations respecting the history of doctrine. One of the tests of a system of philosophy which a German regards as essential is that it shall be able to explain the phenomena of history. This was where the system of Hegel failed. The conviction of the validity and necessity of this test has led the evangelical theologians to the study of history. He goes on to say: —

“The more history, and especially the history of the Christian doctrines, has been thus studied, the more deep seems to be the conviction of the German mind, that the historical problems are greater than are the problems of mere speculation, and that no system can be true which perverts or disallows the substantial verities of the Christian faith, as exhibited in the Bible, in the church, in its history, and in the history of its doctrines. And so in the end it may be found that the German philosophy, like all other systems, shall only contribute to enhance the glories of the truth as it is in Jesus.”²

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 563 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 565 seq.

He then passes to speak of Baur's "Compendium." In a note he gives a succinct but very clear statement of this writer's critical theory of the New Testament, which by this time had become generally known and was exciting as much attention as Wellhausen's theory of the Old Testament does to-day. He says: —

"This theory is resorted to for the purpose of explaining the production of Christianity by a sort of natural process out of the Jewish faith; and no more arbitrary criticism can be found, none more opposed to the true historical method of inquiry, than that which its author applies to the hitherto undoubted epistles of Paul."¹

He shows how Baur's method of dealing with the Christian doctrines is the consistent application of the Hegelian principles.

"All that is substantial in all history, all that is veritable in all doctrines, is the *philosophical* truth contained therein. The philosophy of the doctrine is the doctrine itself. The truths of revelation are nothing more than certain philosophical ideas."²

Here follows a very powerful statement of the Hegelian system as developed by the "left wing:"

"A process more vast, and more desolating than this we are unable to conceive. This process, unfolded in the history of man, this theory asserts, is God himself; the Trinity — it is this process. The distinction between the infinite and the finite is abolished. God comes to consciousness only in the consciousness of man. The

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 577.

² *Ibid.* p. 579.

distinction between time and eternity, this world and another, is abrogated; the substance of eternity is contained in time. All that truly and forever exists is spirit, and spirit, not as individual, but as universal and impersonal. The whole order of our ideas is reversed. Reason domineers over faith; time over eternity; the human over the divine. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ is resolved into the union of the human and the divine in the history of the race. The atonement is a work of reconciliation performed only in and by the human spirit; justification is the conscious knowledge of each individual spirit of its union with the universal spirit; immortality is not the continued existence of the individual after death, but is the continual existence of that which is spiritual; and while the Scriptures declare that the last enemy that shall be overcome is death, this philosophy by the mouth of Strauss asserts that the belief in a future life is the last great enemy which speculative criticism has to contend against, and, if possible, to overcome.”¹

Against this system, thus truthfully described, he brings a terrible indictment: —

“It sweeps through the whole sphere of faith, and with relentless hands destroys all that has ever been held dear and sacred. It knows nothing sacred except philosophy; it holds nothing as true but its own annihilating processes and desolating conclusions. It is the deadliest enemy which Christianity has ever encountered.”²

And then he declares: —

“Only by Christianity, only by orthodox Christianity

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 579. *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 580.

can it be overcome. The bulwarks of natural religion are insufficient against such a logical and learned and philosophical foe. A negative faith has nothing to oppose to its vast generalizations. A faith that rests only on abstractions is already in alliance with it. A faith whose only bulwark against deism and infidelity is in the doctrine respecting miracles cannot hold its ground against the criticism and philosophy of this new enemy. A faith which rests only on tradition cannot abide the searching tests which this school applies.”¹

What kind of a faith is it, then, that can overcome this terrible foe? What does the theologian of West Amesbury mean when he speaks of orthodox Christianity? Not any scholastic system of theology; that he expressly repudiates. His answer is clear and unequivocal:—

“Only a faith which rests in Christ as its centre, which is wrought by his Spirit, and allies the soul to Him, which relies upon his sacrifice, and sees in Him the very incarnation of Deity; only a theology which has its root and its life in Christ, can withstand the encroachments of that fearful philosophy, which, after annulling all faith in the past and all hope for anything beyond the seen and temporal, leaves nothing for the race of man to accomplish, excepting the reorganization of human society in such a manner as will confer the largest and longest happiness upon those whose only destiny is to be denizens of this earth for threescore years and ten. The time is sweeping on when he who will not be a Christian must be a pantheist; when he who does not

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 580.

find God in Christ will find Him only in the human race; when he who does not love the human race for the sake of Christ will have no higher love than love to humanity.”¹

He ends the article by picturing the great conflict then going on in Germany between pantheism and evangelical theology, and declares: “In this conflict Christianity must either be annihilated or victorious beyond all former example.” This contest the evangelical theologians of Germany are waging not only for themselves, but also for us. “That it may issue in the final triumph of Christ and his church should be the constant prayer, as it is the firm faith, of every Christian heart.”²

More than forty years have passed, and pantheism has indeed been overcome in Germany; but only to give way to agnosticism and materialism. The great enemy of the Christian faith is hydra-headed. The fight is still going on in the land of Luther, as it is in our own country. Christianity has, it is true, gained ground, but it is still far from having won the final victory. In the church of Germany the school of Ritschl has appeared, with its Christian positivism and its denial of many of the distinctive Christian truths, substituting for the speculative philosophy which filled the air with its discordant clamor during the fourth decade of the century the rejection of all philosophy. So the fight goes on and the end is not yet.

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iv. p. 580 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 581.

It is characteristic of men like the West Amesbury pastor that they see close before them in their own age the great battle of Armageddon, where the hosts of the Lord and of his enemies are arrayed for the decisive conflict. It is well that it is so. They fight all the better for their hope. In this they are true prophets. For it is the nature of prophecy to overlook the stages that intervene between the present and the consummation, and to see in the near future the final struggle and victory. The kingdom of God is at hand. The coming of the Lord is near. Blessed are those whom, when He cometh He shall find watching.

Smith was now ready for the larger tasks that awaited him. Years afterward he wrote to a young friend who was too eager to press on into such service: "I have no doubt you will in time obtain such a place as you are best fitted for in the educational work of the church; but such places must be *waited for* here. But when the time comes, the prepared man has the chance." He was now "the prepared man."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

SMITH had now found his true sphere of labor. His pastoral work had been an essential element in his training. But the pastorate was not the place for which he was best fitted. He was made to be a teacher. The natural bent of his mind, his character, his acquisitions, all marked him out for the professor's chair. He had not yet, it is true, reached the particular position for which he was best qualified; that could not be until he became a teacher of divinity. But he had taken a long step in that direction. For in his case, to teach philosophy meant to teach divinity. From the first he had been a theologian. While he was pastor at West Amesbury he had taught theology in simple forms which his plain parishioners could understand. He taught it now in the Amherst class-room. Philosophy with him was never an end in itself, but always a means to theology as an end.

His pupils in the college all bear witness to the truth of the assertion just made. Professor Francis A. March, writing of his teaching, says: —

“ He was always alert and earnest about religion, the relations between philosophy and religion, the difficulties

started by philosophized systems, and especially pantheism, which was then lively. His way of dealing with them was appreciative and historical, a way since grown common, but then seeming peculiar. Christianity is a fact, a power, as much as gravitation, he said ; study the history of its workings. He did not diminish the attractive traits of the great systems and their authors, but aimed to show that Christianity and Christ had the same traits in a higher degree. Christ is the centre and source of all.”¹

He preached much, too, and in this, as well as in the public exercises of the college, exerted a religious influence which showed how strong the theological tendency within him was. President Julius H. Seelye, who was a student during the days of Smith’s service in the college, says : —

“I remember how early I was impressed with the prominence — both in his preaching and his prayers — of his conviction of the glory of Christ. Sometimes his prayers would seem little other than the out-breathings of desire that we might know more of Christ ; and often the deepest impression of his sermons seemed to come from the impulse pervading them, to be and to make others complete in Him.”

And again, he writes : —

“The most prominent of all his traits seemed to be his undoubting faith in the truth of God, and the spirituality of man, and the efficacy of the atonement of Jesus Christ.”²

No period of his life was more peaceful and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 153.

² *Ibid.* p. 150 *seq.*

happy than the three years at Amherst, from 1847 to 1850. His surroundings were altogether pleasant. His tasks were to his taste. The pressure of work which was to make his life in New York so burdensome, and to bring him to his too early grave, had not begun. He had leisure for study and used it faithfully. His associates in the college were congenial, and gave him the intellectual stimulus he needed. His salary was sufficient for his wants. His ability was universally recognized. The students were strongly attached to him and proud of his growing reputation. All his letters at this time breathe a cheerful and contented spirit. The struggle of his early life lay far behind him. His health was adequate to the tasks he had to perform. Reading the record of that period, one could almost wish he might have been left to the peaceful course of a career so beneficent and enviable. If he had remained in Amherst all his life, he would still have been a power in American theology. Such a light could not have been hidden. Had he stayed there, he would in all probability have written the books which he alone was capable of writing, and the value of which we can in part estimate by the reviews and essays he threw off in the intervals of his busy life. He might have lived to be an old man. Even now, in this year of our Lord 1891, he might have been still among us, — and he would have been only seventy-six years old.

But the Providence that had guided all his life had other purposes. He was to become the the-

ologian of Union Seminary, to do the more desultory work as an author, to live the shorter life. But he was thus to accomplish a higher task, the task that God needed him to do in his kingdom. And this was best.

In the summer of 1850 he was elected to the professorship of Church History in the institution with which his name was thenceforth to be so closely connected. In the autumn of the same year he accepted the position and entered upon his new work.

The chief literary achievement of the Amherst period was the Andover address on the "Relations of Faith and Philosophy." This was delivered in September, 1849. But before speaking of it, we must look at another production belonging to the same time. In the "Bibliotheca Sacra" of the preceding February Smith published a review of Dorner's "History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ." In the years 1835 and 1836, not long before the former had gone abroad, Dorner had published in the "Tübinger Zeitschrift" the two articles which formed the basis of the History. They were an answer to Strauss, who had been Dorner's fellow-student at Tübingen. When Smith was in Germany these articles were much spoken of, and he had undoubtedly become familiar with them. Indeed the volume based upon them, and which forms the first edition of the History, was published in 1839, while he was still abroad.

The review is done in Smith's best style. In

these days reviews have almost disappeared. They have degenerated into mere book-notices, which are quite as often as otherwise of very slight value. The old reviews, which aimed to give a brief and truthful analysis and criticism of a book, were of great value. They fell, it is true, into incompetent hands, and so into disrepute. But nothing has come to take their place, and we feel their loss to-day. Smith was one of the best of the old-fashioned reviewers. He dealt with no book he had not mastered, and for him to master a book was completely to analyze it and understand it. And so his reviews are of great value, and even his short book-notices have a permanent worth. The student who desires to enter upon the study of this in some respects most remarkable of Dorner's works can find no better introduction to his task than the article in the "Bibliotheca."

In this case Smith not only gives a good review, but he makes it an exposition of his own convictions. For though he expressly disclaims agreement with the author in some of his philosophical statements, yet there can be no doubt that in the main his attitude toward him was one of hearty sympathy. Dorner's work has been spoken of as an answer to Strauss. It was this and more. It was an answer to all the erroneous and imperfect views which prevailed respecting the person of Christ; and an answer not merely negative in its nature, but positive and constructive, overthrowing the false positions by confronting them with the

truth. It will be possible to give only a single passage from the article. It is that in which Smith states Dorner's main argument:—

“Christianity was not originally a theory; its beginning was not in the announcement of any abstract notion; its basis was laid in facts. The manifestation of God in the flesh, in the person of Jesus, is the historical and real basis of Christianity. . . . The person of Christ is the centre and life of this revelation. Who that person is, what are the elements of his nature, is historically recorded. We know, on sure testimony, what Christ declared Himself to be; we know what his early disciples believed Him to be. That higher view of the nature of Christ, which makes Him to be essentially divine, is not a phantastic and unaccountable product of a subsequent age; but was held by the earliest church, and this can be historically proved. And not only in the first century, but in the others, without any hiatus, is this truth set forth.”¹

Dorner's whole method of argument is in accordance with Smith's own favorite views of Christian history and the historical proof of Christian doctrine. It especially commended itself to him because the doctrine in question was that which he, like Dorner, made central and essential in the Christian system, the doctrine of Christ's person.

But it is time to speak of the Andover address on the “Relations of Faith and Philosophy.” This was in some respects the supreme effort of his life. It has been generally recognized as such by his

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. vi. p. 167.

friends and those familiar with his work. He himself, however, had no thought of making it so. On the contrary, he wrote it in haste. In the previous July he said in a letter : —

“About that anniversary, I have pretty much made up my mind that it was rather a foolish thing for me to accept the invitation. I never felt less like writing anything ; but I hope to have some two or three weeks of quiet, and after a little ramble among the hills, next week, I hope that my thoughts may move more freely. The fact is, that the whole burden of the senior class has fallen upon me this year, and it has been about as much as I could well do to carry them on.”¹

In literary style it is not equal to many of his other addresses and essays. It is too rhetorical, especially in the first part ; and throughout it is needlessly diffuse. But it was given to him to put into this address the best thoughts of his life upon the great principles that underlie all theology and all philosophy, and to do it in a way so comprehensive, so clear, so well-balanced, so wise, as to carry the full-orbed truth home to hundreds of minds that before had been perplexed and groping. There was indeed nothing original in the positions he took. They were in the main the positions to which the Christian world came as the result of the mediæval discussions respecting the relation of faith and reason. They were the fundamental principles of Protestantism on this great subject, recognized in the writings of the Reformers, and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 143.

still more fully in those of the Puritan theologians. They were familiar to the evangelical school of German theologians. But in this country they had not been clearly stated for years, and there was crying need that they should be. Smith said just the word that needed to be spoken.

Perhaps, too, he was the only man who could have said it. At least no one could have said it so well as this theologian teaching philosophy in the college hard by Jonathan Edwards's old home. All his previous experience and study had fitted him to do this work. He was providentially brought to it and he did it. That he was not aware that it was the work by which he was best to be remembered, was all the better. The consciousness of performing an important task makes the task itself difficult. Nor is the work to be underestimated because it was all contained in a short address and published in a thin pamphlet. It is easy to write big books and to move the world not an atom by them. It is not the much speaking that makes men heard. It is the speaking of the word the world is eager to hear, the word it needs to bring it out of its perplexities. The man who has that word to utter will certainly be heard, whether he utters it from a platform or in a book, whether with much breath or little, whether with a reputation or without one.

It is not hard to discover the impulse which led Professor Smith to choose the subject he did and treat it as he did. The year before, he had at-

tended the anniversary at Andover and listened to the striking address of Horace Bushnell, before the Porter Rhetorical Society, on "Dogma and Spirit." When he was invited to fill the same position, there can be no question that his predecessor's theme was suggested to him, and that it furnished, by way of opposition, the germ of his own address. Bushnell's brilliant effort was a memorable event at Andover and created a deep impression. He was then at the zenith of his remarkable career. There was no man in the theological circles of New England more marked than he. During that very summer he had delivered two other addresses which had caused the greatest commotion, — the *Concio ad Clerum* at New Haven, on the Divinity of Christ, and the discourse on the Atonement before the Harvard Divinity School, both involving startling innovations upon the traditional positions of the New England theology. The Andover address was an assault upon theology itself, and a plea for the spiritual life of Christianity as in itself sufficient for the wants of the church. The speaker claimed that dogma, or the school divinity, formed no part of the original Christianity, but came into the church through the influence of the Greek philosophy, — taking substantially the position rendered so familiar in our day by Harnack's brilliant "History of Doctrine." Though the Reformation was a return to spiritual Christianity, Bushnell declared that it did not succeed in throwing off the weight of dogma. We are still staggering

under this incubus. "We do not put our theology to school to faith, but our faith to school to theology."¹

Bushnell did not deny that theology has a place in Christianity, but he made it wholly subordinate. The "true reviving of religion," which forms the second title of his address, he would find in the return from dogma to spirit, from theology to life, from philosophy to faith. He would have the church turn from creeds and doctrinal tests to the simple forms of the Apostles' Creed. Thus he hoped that the sundered New England churches might be reunited, and the long separated Unitarians return to the old fold.

In much that Bushnell said Smith could not but sympathize. The theology of New England had become permeated with the rationalistic spirit. At the time of the Unitarian controversy both parties had occupied rationalistic ground. Christianity had become principally a matter of doctrine. Not that the life was not present. The remarkable revivals of religion that occurred during the first half of the century furnish one among many proofs that this was abundantly the case. But it was doctrine, not life, that was taken into account in the theologizing. Bushnell was one of the many who reacted. Smith's experience had been in some respects the same. The chief difference was that he had been brought up in Unitarian rationalism, instead of in orthodox rationalism, as had been the

¹ *God in Christ*, p. 291.

case with Bushnell. He felt as strongly as Bushnell the perils that threatened religion from this side. His German life had served to prevent him from being caught and involved in the rationalistic tendencies of American theology. All his writings thus far, since his review of Upham, had contained the protest against it.

But while there was much of sympathy with Bushnell, Smith's position was altogether different from his. Bushnell held the half of the truth, and it was the half that needed to be emphasized. Smith always tried to hold the whole truth, to retain both elements and unite them in the higher unity. He was one of those men who are not satisfied till they have climbed up to the heights whence the temporary conflicts can be seen in their full meaning, and where the whole truth appears. To him Bushnell's position could not but seem one-sided, and therefore likely to do harm. He believed in life. His own Christian experience was too precious for him ever to ignore it. The spiritual element in Christianity was always present to him. But he believed also in doctrine. He was too good a theologian and too clear-headed a philosopher to undervalue it. He would have protested as strongly as Bushnell against philosophy without faith, but he was quite as unwilling to take faith without philosophy. In his view of the case it was not an alternative, — faith *or* philosophy; but the combination of the two in their proper proportions and relations, — faith *and* philosophy. He believed

it possible to possess the facts of Christianity in their reality, and yet to state them in clear formulas and to arrange them in their true relations in the unity of a system.

How far Professor Smith was consciously influenced by Bushnell's address, it might be hard to say. But no one can compare the two discourses without being convinced of the connection between them. Smith's positions can best be understood when placed side by side with those of Bushnell. The two addresses deal with substantially the same theme. Bushnell's gives the part; Smith's gives the whole.

To estimate at its true value the impression made by this address, we must remember that the Andover anniversary was an occasion that drew together the most distinguished clergymen and Christian laymen from all over the country. The audience that listened to the speaker before the Porter Rhetorical Society was a picked one. The opportunity was such as men have but once in a lifetime. There can be no doubt that Smith made the most of it. A writer in the "Christian Mirror" says that Professor Smith spoke for two hours, and that he could have listened, without tiring, for two hours more. Dr. Park writes:—

“ At the conclusion of this address, in which he spoke to every one a word in season, every one was delighted with it. The men who rejected faith, and the men who condemned philosophy; those who believed in Bushnell, and those who disbelieved in Schleiermacher; theologians

who had a power to the contrary, and theologians who had not much power of any kind, all crowded around the orator of the day, and thanked him for his lesson to their brethren, and praised his diversified gifts.”¹

The impression was greatly increased by the publication of the address in the November number of the “*Bibliotheca Sacra*,” and its republication a little later in Edinburgh. It made the author’s theological reputation.

The address begins with a reference to the assaults being made on the Christian system and the greater conflicts that were threatened. The supremacy of faith was being endangered, and the chief attacks were from the side of philosophy. Hence the vital importance of the question, What are the relations of faith and philosophy? The subject is one “which lies at the heart of all the questions of our times, and forms their sum and strength, their ‘pith and puissance.’ ”²

The author first describes the characteristics of faith and philosophy. Faith is the conviction of things unseen, a trust in God and his word, a belief in the articles of the Christian system, a reliance on Christ by which we become partakers of his salvation. It rests on authority, namely, the authority of God’s word, and is confirmed by experience. It is a life. It seeks union with God and Christ. Philosophy, on the other hand, “is the product of human thought, acting upon the data given by the world without or the world within, and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 144.

² *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 3.

eliciting from these data principles, laws, and system." It is "the knowing things rationally; the knowing them in their ideas, their causes, their successions, and their ends. . . . So diverse are faith and philosophy. The one is a simple act of trust, the other is a reflective process; the one rests in facts and persons, the other in law and system." ¹

Inasmuch as the two are thus different, it is inevitable that they should come frequently into conflict. Faith accuses philosophy of rebelling against it, and declares that the pride of human reason has led men into infidelity and error. It asserts that "there is no possibility even of a truce. It is war and only war; it is faith *or* philosophy; a disjunctive proposition, a vital dilemma." Philosophy at first defends itself and points to what it has done for the defense of faith. But it, too, is prone to accept the dilemma, faith *or* philosophy, and to urge its own exclusive rights. Its opposition culminates in pantheism, which gives us "the great alternative of our times," Christ or Spinoza.²

But in spite of these oppositions, faith and philosophy are not necessarily exclusive of each other. The true position is "that faith and philosophy are not inherently opposed, but inherently at one." The position that we are to take faith without philosophy, spirit without dogma, is

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 3-6.

² *Ibid.* pp. 6-11.

“not only inconsistent with the rightful claims of reason, it is also repugnant to the real necessities and nature of faith. . . . A faith which we do not believe in the very depths of our hearts to be rational, to contain in itself the sum and substance of all philosophy, is a faith which no thinking man can rationally hold; and if he holds it irrationally, it cannot long maintain its sway. . . . We rob faith of one of its strongest persuasions, if we do not claim that it is perfectly rational.”¹

And then he shows how the grandest intellects in the Christian church — men like Augustin, Anselm, Pascal, Butler, and Edwards — have always had “an intimate persuasion of the inherent unanimity of faith and reason.”

This brought him to the proper subject of the address, the “real relations and rightful claims of faith and philosophy.” The two “are employed about the same great subjects, God, man, providence, and human destiny.” But they are employed about them in a different way. Philosophy is a formal science; it does not furnish the materials of knowledge. It is a knowing of things rationally, “in their causes, their relations, and their ends; the knowing them in the harmony and completeness of a system.” But the things must be there in the first place.

“The materials, the substance, the facts must, from the nature of the case, exist before the philosophy, and be taken for granted by the philosophy, and be the limit and test of the philosophy itself. . . . There is one thing,

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 11-17.

then, against which speculation is fruitless, and that is the majesty of fact, of all facts of the outward or inward world properly attested.”¹

The facts cannot come from philosophy. But they do come from faith. And these facts which faith furnishes are of four kinds. First, there is the Christian revelation. This

“is not primarily a system of doctrines, nor a confession, nor a speculation; but it is a grand historical economy, a manifestation of God and his purposes, an annunciation of supernatural truth by natural agencies, by prophets and teachers, and, last of all, by Jesus Christ; a manifestation forming a part of human history, connected and progressive through thousands of years.”²

This revelation is continued in the Scriptures. It culminates in Jesus Christ,

“Himself an historical personage, Himself a man, in whom it is declared that heaven and earth are reconciled, that the great problems of human destiny are solved.”³

But the facts of revelation are not merely outward. They are confirmed by the Christian's inward experience. In his own regenerate life he tests the truth and reality of the revelation the Bible records. “And here is another series of facts, reaching through thousands of years, embracing men of every clime and degree.” Of this experience Christ is the centre. A third series of

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 17-19.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* p. 20.

facts is furnished by the influence of Christianity on human history, in which it has existed as a real and permanent power, as "an organic, diffusive, plastic, and triumphant force." Here, too, the "centre around which all revolves is Christ." Finally, Christianity shows itself to be the answer to the questions of humanity, the solution of its problems. "For each enigma, so dark to reason, it has a definite and authoritative response."¹ And here, also, it is the person and work of Christ that furnish the key to open its locked doors. To sum up: —

"This, then, is the primary aspect in which the Christian faith is to be viewed: as an historical reality, confirmed by experience, influencing history, and professing to solve the great questions of our destiny, and all concentrating in Jesus Christ, a personal object of faith and love, the very manifestation of God here upon earth."

These are the facts furnished by faith. If they are properly attested philosophy cannot dispute them.

"Until philosophy can overthrow the pillars of our revelation, and prove our inmost life to be all a delusion; until it can find some other centre of convergence and divergence for the whole history of our race than the city of Jerusalem and the middle cross on Calvary; until it can resolve the questions of our fate with a higher argument than Christianity presents; it is obliged to leave to faith all the vantage ground, all the supremacy, which an historic and experienced reality may confer."²

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.* p. 22.

When, however, philosophy denies the existence of God as a personal Being, or the possibility of a revelation, it must be met by philosophy. "It is as unphilosophical for faith to be dogmatic here, as it is for philosophy to be dogmatic in the face of a recognized reality." To repudiate philosophy is to leave faith without foundation. Faith need not fear to call philosophy to its aid. It must show that the skeptical positions are opposed to sound reason. "The wise method is to expose the principle which lies at the heart of all this modern infidelity, and to show that the principle is really unphilosophical and incomplete." What this principle is, is clearly stated; it is

"that we have given a rational account of things when we have reduced them to abstract ideas, or great principles; to laws, whether physical or ideal; that physical causes, antecedents and consequents, are the great end of philosophic inquiries; in short, that law and system are sufficient to account for the energy, the order, and the ends of the universe. This is the prime falsehood coiled in the heart of all these infidel schemes."¹

And now comes the point to which the whole address has been converging, and which makes it truly an answer to Bushnell's "Spirit and Dogma." Philosophy has a place within the Christian system itself. Faith must indeed furnish the facts, but it calls upon philosophy to reduce the facts to order and system, that is, to bring them into scientific form.

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 24.

“And this is the same thing as saying that we need systematic theology. For systematic theology is the combined result of philosophy and faith; and it is its high office to present the two in their most intimate conjunction and inherent harmony.”¹

Then follows a generous defense of systematic theology, proving how thoroughly the professor of philosophy was a theologian. He puts his plea for its necessity “on the broad ground that we need a reconciliation between faith and philosophy.” Here we cannot doubt that he had Bushnell in mind. He says:—

“Simple faith might have been sufficient for the first ages of the church, though it was not; we live in an age of controversy, surrounded by minds drenched with objections to orthodoxy, among people who, whatever else they have asked, have always asked a reason; to defend our faith, to commend our faith, we need systematic theology.”²

In taking this position Smith showed himself the theologian. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he did so on narrow grounds. He was always more than a mere school theologian. He did not urge the claims of systematic theology in any merely scholastic sense. It was because he loved so profoundly and accepted with such entire loyalty the facts on which theology is based, that he insisted upon their scientific presentation. Systematic theology, in his view, is a living organism, of which faith furnishes the material and philoso-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 26.

² *Ibid.* p. 27.

phy the form. He knew that because men are not feeling alone, or will alone, but intellect also; because they have heads as well as hearts, they will in the long run demand a rational and ordered exposition of the facts of religion, in other words, systematic theology. It was here that Smith was so far in advance of Bushnell. The latter merely reacted from the abuse of systematic theology, and rushed to the opposite extreme of denying its use. Accordingly, his "Spirit and Dogma" had only a temporary value. The experiment of dispensing with systematic theology has been pretty well tried, and Christian people are beginning to demand dogma once more. So it comes that Smith's wise words are as valuable to-day as when they were first penned.

The address then takes up the objections to systematic theology. It is said to be unfavorable to a life of faith. But this is an objection to a merely technical, and not to a true and living, theology. Again, it is said that systematic divinity is impossible because language cannot adequately convey spiritual truth. This was Bushnell's objection, stated in the Andover address, and drawn out more fully in a "Dissertation on the Nature of Language as Related to Thought and Spirit," prefixed to the volume "God in Christ," in which that address was published. But Smith replies that "it is of the very office of language to express what is consciously working in the soul; language is the express image of spirit." He goes on to say: —

“For the objection itself, we might be the more anxious, did we not find in the exquisite grace of the language of the accomplished thinker who has propounded it, that his own theory is practically refuted by his own eminent example.”

What could be finer as an *argumentum ad hominem* than the following?

“None more skillful than he to express the subtlest moods of mind, the most delicate analogies of thought; no one who better exemplifies the fact, that the sublimest objects of Christian faith, and the tenderest play of Christian feeling may be so fully expressed in human language, that the only hearts unmoved are those themselves devoid of feeling and of faith.”

The way is now opened for the statement of the manner in which faith and philosophy are to be harmonized. This is given with the greatest clearness.

“Only that can be a true system which contains the very substance of the Christian faith; which gives us the very heart of the revelation in a systematic form. Hence the absolute necessity of Biblical study, as the prime condition; hence, too, he only who knows the inward power and reality of faith can be a true theologian. This results from the very fact that the Christian economy is both an historical and an experienced reality.”¹

This is, however, only one side.

“Only the philosophic intellect can grasp the prime

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 30.

principles, can see the relations of the parts, can guard against inconsistencies, can show the harmony of the system with the powers of the mind, with ethical truth, and with our necessary and essential ideas." ¹

But one point is still untouched, and this is, in some respects, the most important of all. It is, "Whence are we to get the principle, and what is to be the principle, which is to be of central influence, and the controlling energy of the whole system?" Smith clears the way for the answer to this question by pointing out that

"the inquiry really hinges about the relative supremacy of faith and philosophy. Is philosophy to bring this principle with it from ethics, from mental philosophy, or from natural religion; or is it to take it from the revelation itself?" ²

Without hesitation he maintains the latter position; the central principle must come not from philosophy but from the Christian system itself.

But this involves a radical departure from the older systems of theology. The Westminster Standards, he said, rest

"upon the basis of the divine sovereignty, but this sovereignty is further modified by the idea of a covenant relation; and this it is which may, perhaps, be said to give shape to the exposition of the leading doctrines in the consistent Presbyterian Church, so far as their views are different from the general orthodoxy." ³

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 30.

² *Ibid.* p. 31.

³ *Ibid.* p. 32.

With similar clearness he states the genetic principle of the New England theology. It “has its basis in the same general idea of the divine sovereignty, drawn out into a clear and articulate system of decrees, giving us the very anatomy of religion in its most abstract form. . . . But besides the decrees, we have had two other modifying influences in our systems, which have given them their most distinctive character, and which have both come to us through the discussions of Jonathan Edwards. . . . What is the Nature of True Virtue and what is the real Freedom of the Human Will in connection with the divine sovereignty: are the two questions which have chiefly determined the character of our theological systems and parties.”¹

But times have changed. Men are asking different questions from those the Westminster and New England theologians had to answer. The old system no longer presents the facts in the right form. They are all there, but they are not rightly stated. Theology is a progressive science. It must meet the needs of the age. It must reconstruct its system on the basis of a new principle. If Professor Smith had been a narrow man, seeing the needs only of his own time, he would doubtless have proposed some inadequate principle. Because he was a wise and far-seeing man, he sought the principle that is suited to all ages and all circumstances. “To get at a living Christian theology, we must have the central principle of Christianity itself.” And this principle is to be found in Jesus Christ, the God-man.

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 32.

“He is the centre of God’s revelation and of man’s redemption ; of Christian doctrine and Christian history, of conflicting sects and of each believer’s faith, yea, of the very history of this our earth, Jesus Christ is the full, the radiant, the only centre — fitted to be such because he is the God-man and the Redeemer : Christ — Christ, He is the centre of the Christian system, and the doctrine respecting Christ is the heart of Christian theology.”¹

In this statement of the central principle of systematic divinity Professor Smith made his most important contribution to theological thought. It was the outgrowth of his whole Christian and intellectual life, from the days of his conversion at Bowdoin College, when the light of the Saviour’s presence first dawned upon his soul. It was in a true sense his own. The idea of making Christ the centre of the system had, it is true, been familiar to German thought since the days of Schleiermacher. But Smith, as we have seen, had reached his convictions on the subject through his own independent thinking, before he went to Germany. Doubtless, also, thousands of other thoughtful Christians in America had come to the same view. The best thought of the age was steadily drifting towards it. Yet he was the first on this side of the ocean to make public proclamation of the principle, and so to be in this respect the prophet of his age. His memory as a theologian will always be associated with his endeavor to make the sys-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 34.

tem of Christian theology centre in Christ the Redeemer.

It was a bold innovation that the young Amherst professor proposed, almost as revolutionary in its possibilities for theology as the shifting of centre when the Ptolemaic theory gave place to the Copernican. Not that it implied any new doctrines, for the doctrines are simply the facts of revelation and Christian experience — the same in all ages — stated in scientific form. But it did imply a new arrangement of the doctrines, a new scale of order and importance, a new emphasis on parts of the system hitherto slighted and a withdrawal of emphasis from parts once regarded as of prime value, and throughout the system a new light thrown on all the doctrines. And yet while this was in one sense an innovation, in another it was not. It meant just that change which had begun to take place in the preaching of our orthodox ministers and the thinking of our evangelical Christians. We are in better position to estimate the extent of this change than the men of Smith's time. The issues of our age are not those which used to exist between the Old School and the New. In these days our preachers do not lay the chief stress upon predestination and election, original sin and irresistible grace; they proclaim Christ and Him crucified.

In the defense of his position Smith refers to the Germans, and shows how in their struggles with infidelity the doctrine of Christ had become of

prime importance. In this connection he was led to speak in generous terms in vindication of Schleiermacher, then regarded by conservative men in this country as the most dangerous of heretics: —

“ In the name of the republic of letters, in the name of all generous scholarship, in the very name of Christian charity, I dare not refrain from testifying, that the indiscriminate censure of all that is German, or that may so be called, is a sign rather of the power of prejudice than of a rational love for all truth. A criticism which describes a circumference of which one’s ignorance is the generating radius can only stretch far beyond the confines of justice and of wisdom.”¹

This laid him open to more opposition and suspicion than anything else that he said. It was taken up by the religious press and made the ground of serious reproach. If he had been a professor of theology, it might have gone hard with him. But professors of philosophy are not expected to be so careful. It is interesting, however, to know that when Smith next year was a candidate for the chair of history in Union Seminary, this part of the Andover address was brought up against him, and some careful men were fearful that he would not prove wholly sound in the faith.²

Professor Smith further vindicated his position by showing that the principle which he advocated was “ eminently adapted, when brought out in its

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 37 seq.

² *Fifty Years of the Union Theological Seminary*, by Professor G. L. Prentiss, p. 68 seq.

fullness and fitness, to counteract some of the extreme tendencies among ourselves, as also to present Christianity in its rightful attitude towards an unbelieving world." He referred especially to what he called "the vast subjective process of modern theology and philosophy."¹ He did not deny the value of this tendency in its place, but he believed it to be full of danger when presented exclusively. It is probable that he had in mind Bushnell's speculations on the Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement, and justification. But still more he was thinking of the deeper movement of which these speculations were only a sign, and which, it seemed to him, looked to the destruction of the distinctive truths of Christianity. His remedy is simple: —

"Let us come unto Jesus. When Christ is to us more than a doctrine, and the atonement more than a plan; when the Incarnation assumes as high a place in revealed, as creation does in natural theology; when the Trinity is viewed not as a formula, but as a vital truth, underlying and interwoven with the whole Christian system; when from this foundation the whole edifice rises up majestically, grand in its proportions, sublime in its aims, filled with God in all its parts; when we feel its inherent force streaming out from its living centres; then, then are we saved from those extreme tendencies which are the most significant and alarming sign of our times; then, then are we elevated above those lesser controversies which have narrowed our minds and divided our hearts."²

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 39.

² *Ibid.* 42.

The words which follow show that he did not undervalue the importance of Christian experience, but only wished to guard against the false use of it.

“Here also we have a real inward experience, as well as an objective reality ; for the best and fullest inward experience is that which centres in Christ ; and the centre of the experience is then identical with the centre of the divine revelation.”¹

He closes with the assertion that

“The Christian system, thus viewed, gives us all that philosophy aims after, and in a more perfect form ; that it also gives us more than philosophy can give ; and this more than it gives is what man most needs and what reason alone never could divine.”²

To the great and vital problems of human life and destiny it gives the only satisfying answer : —

“God is infinite, man is finite ; how, then, can man come unto and know his Creator and sovereign ? Man is sinful and God is holy ; how can a sinful man be reconciled to a holy God ? how can a sinful nature become regenerate ? Man is mortal, as well as sinful ; how can he obtain certainty, entire certainty, as to a future life and his eternal destiny ? ”³

Jesus Christ is the answer. He is the union of the Infinite with the finite, of the divine with the human. In his sacrificial death the problem of the reconciliation of the holy God with sinful man is solved. In the work of his Holy Spirit the sinner

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 42.

² *Ibid.* p. 44.

³ *Ibid.* p. 45.

is regenerated. In the reality of the Saviour's kingdom the certainty that man seeks respecting his eternal destiny is given. As theology begins, so it ends, with Christ.

I have given an outline of this remarkable address. The space here devoted to it is no greater than its importance demands. It was, as has been said, in a true sense the supreme effort of Smith's life, his most significant contribution to the theology and philosophy of his times.

As, however, we study his later writings, we are obliged to confess with disappointment that the promise the address holds forth was never wholly fulfilled. A magnificent foundation is laid upon which might have been constructed the most remarkable system of theology the age has known. But in point of fact the superstructure does not correspond. It is not indeed a matter for surprise. Few men are able to form such a plan and also to carry it into execution. If Smith did not complete the structure whose lines he drew, no one else has done it. The age still waits for the theologian who will accomplish this task, and it looks as if the twentieth century would open without his having made his appearance.¹

Professor Karr, the editor of Smith's theological works, tells a story of him which shows the latter's consciousness that he had not done what he might : —

¹ An interesting and able beginning has been made recently by Dr. Gerhart in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

“In a conversation which I had with him not long before his death, I asked how it was that in his oration on Faith and Philosophy, spoken nearly thirty years before, he had succeeded in divining so accurately all the coming movements of anti-Christian and half-Christian thought, and in meeting them so fully. He laughed at my enthusiasm, but afterwards said that in point of fact he did not seem to have got much beyond that address in his subsequent study and thinking.”¹

One who knew the man can imagine that quiet laugh, half pleased, half sad, and the half humorous but more sad self-satire in the remark which followed the moment of reflection.

As will be seen by and by, Smith prepared his system of theology somewhat in haste, under the pressure of class-room work, and never reconstructed it. Nominally it made Christ the centre; but practically it did not. In the portions preceding the doctrine of Christ he followed the traditional order, and there seems to have been little, if any, attempt to bring the doctrine of Christ to bear upon this large section of the system of divinity. He satisfied himself by putting this into apparent connection with his scheme by giving it the title “Antecedents of Redemption,” but this was all.

There are not wanting indications that his mind was often at work upon the problem he set for himself in the address. One of the most notable is found in the memorandum discovered among his papers after his death, in which he says: —

¹ *Introduction to Christian Theology*, Introductory Note, p. iv. seq.

“What Reformed theology has got to do is to Christologize predestination and decrees; regeneration and sanctification; the doctrine of the Church; and the whole of the Eschatology.”¹

This word “Christologize” seems to have been of his own coining. It appears also in the “Introduction to Christian Theology.”² It expresses what needs to be done for theology, if the programme of the Andover address is to be carried out. But in Smith’s own system only a part of the theology is Christologized.

One passage in the address gives a faint suggestion of what was in his mind: —

“With that glorious Person all the other truths of our faith are inherently connected. The distinct personality of Christ is the starting-point, from which to infer the reality of the distinctions in the God-head; atonement and justification centre in Him; our very spiritual life is hid with Christ in God; if we believe in Him we are born of God; we are to be changed into the image of Christ; the sacraments of the church testify of Him until He come.”³

It was not needful, in order to complete the work, to treat the doctrine of Christ’s person at the beginning of the system, though that might have been appropriate. It would have been enough if each doctrine had been presented in its connection with this great central truth, and in the light which it throws upon it.

¹ *Presbyterian Review*, vol. v. p. 562.

² Page 47. *The Century Dictionary* does not contain the word.

³ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 34.

One point more. It is possible to construct a theology of which Christ is the centre from two different points of view. His incarnation may be made the genetic principle of the system, and so the redemptive work, or at least important elements of it, may fall out of view. This is the error into which not a few of the Germans have fallen. It is the too exclusive prevalence of this point of view in Dorner which has laid him open to criticism. Or, it may be the redemptive work of Christ which is made the generative principle. In the Andover address Smith does not seem fairly to have considered the alternatives, though he uses language which appears to favor the acceptance of the first. In his later writings he was careful to define his position. He says : —

“ We cannot reduce the principle to a single word : ‘ Incarnation ’ or ‘ Redemption ’ ; we must take both. Incarnation does not of itself involve redemption, and redemption without the incarnation would not be Christianity. Moreover the two are related as ground and consequence, means or measure, and result. Hence the full idea of the Christological principle of theology is that of INCARNATION IN ORDER TO REDEMPTION.”¹

This guards the principle against abuse. It makes redemption ultimate and incarnation subordinate, which is the scriptural relation of the two.

¹ *Introduction to Christian Theology*, p. 57 seq.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY.

THE acceptance of the call to New York gave Professor Smith his true life-work. He had found his fitting sphere when he became a teacher in Amherst College. Now he had entered upon those special tasks for which he was best prepared, and with which his name was to be permanently associated. It is true that he had not reached even yet the particular *niche* for which, in God's providence, he was designed. But it was well that for a few years, before he began to teach systematic theology, he should occupy the chair of History.

An interesting account of his call to Union Seminary is given by Dr. William Adams, at this time a director of the seminary, in later life its president. Writing on the 11th of February, 1877, immediately after the death of Professor Smith, he says: —

“My acquaintance with Dr. Smith began when he was yet a young man in New England. In September, 1849, I heard his address before the Porter Rhetorical Society of Andover Theological Seminary, on the Relations of Faith and Philosophy, published in the November number of the ‘*Bibliotheca Sacra*’ of the same year. None who

were present on that occasion will forget the glow of enthusiasm with which that address was delivered and received.

“ Dr. Smith, at this time, was thirty-four years of age, and Professor in Amherst College. Just then the Directors of Union Theological Seminary were looking for a suitable person to fill the chair of Church History. Attention was immediately directed to Professor Smith, and correspondence was opened with him and his friends in reference to his appointment.

“ There lies before me at this moment a letter from the late Professor Bela B. Edwards, my classmate at Andover, whose name can never be mentioned by any who knew him, without a spontaneous tribute of admiration and love, in which, with true sympathy, he bears this testimony to our common friend: ‘ As to his scholarship there can be but one opinion. He is a scholar every inch of him; he would do very well in Sacred Philology, in Theology, in the Classics. His predilections, however, are for Philosophy and Church History. In either department he is, or would be, excelled by very few in this country.’ At the same time the writer begs me to desist from all attempts to remove him from Amherst. ‘ He is the life of Amherst College. He is the most popular and influential man there by far, and that College is of the greatest importance in raising men up for the ministry.’

“ In 1850 it was my privilege to nominate Dr. Smith as Professor of Church History in our seminary, and in the autumn of that year he accepted the office. From that time to the day of his death he has been our pride and joy and crown.”¹

¹ *New York Evangelist*, September 9, 1880.

It is interesting to notice that Dr. Edwards regards Smith as better fitted for the teaching of philosophy and history than of theology, the department in which his best work was to be done.

The call to Union was not in all respects a flattering one. Relatively the college stood higher than the seminary. Smith deliberated long and prayerfully before he came to his decision. He entered upon the new work not without misgivings, realizing that it involved much hazard, but in faith that he was acting under divine guidance.

Union Seminary had been founded in the year 1836, when Smith was a student at Bangor. It was a time of controversy and struggle in the Presbyterian Church. The unhappy differences between Old School and New, which culminated in the disruption of 1838, were already filling the ecclesiastical world with angry clamor. Curiously enough Smith had been present — it was while he was a tutor at Bowdoin — at the meeting of the General Assembly at Philadelphia in 1837, when the crisis was reached by the abolition of the Plan of Union and the excision of the four Synods. In the struggle, Princeton Seminary, while not countenancing all the acts of the extremists, took the Old School side. The New England seminaries, though not directly involved in the conflict, since they were Congregational and not Presbyterian, naturally favored the New School side. It was under these circumstances that Union Seminary was founded, by New School men, it is true, but not by extremists.

The purpose of the founders was thus stated by themselves : —

“ To provide a Theological Seminary in the midst of the greatest and most growing community in America, around which all men of moderate views and feelings, who desire to live free from party strife, and to stand aloof from all extremes of doctrinal speculation, practical radicalism, and ecclesiastical domination, may cordially and affectionately rally.” ¹

The years that followed were a constant struggle with scanty means. The very existence of the seminary seemed doubtful. The professors often had literally to raise their own salaries. Beginning its career, as the institution did, just before the great financial crisis of 1837, everything seemed to be against it. And yet it had continued to exist. In spite of obstacles, professors had been provided, land secured, buildings erected, and a goodly number of students educated. In 1850, when Professor Smith was called, it was just beginning to see better days. Its financial resources had been enlarged, the Faculty increased, the confidence of the church and the community secured, and the prospects were in all respects more favorable.

And yet at the best the outlook was not very hopeful. The New School branch of the Presbyterian Church was small and weak. The seminary had an insufficient endowment. Its doctrinal sta-

¹ Prentiss, *Fifty Years of Union Theological Seminary*, p. 8.

tus was not fixed. With respect to this last point Smith wrote: —

“The theological position is not defined. It stands somewhere between Andover and Princeton, just as New School Presbyterianism stands between Congregationalism and the consistent domineering Presbyterianism, and it will be pressed on all sides. Whether it is to be resolved into these two or to be consolidated on its own ground is still a problem.”¹

Its creed was the Westminster Confession of Faith, to which the professors were required to subscribe, “solemnly and sincerely” accepting it “as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures,” and promising not to “teach or inculcate anything” which should appear to them “subversive of the said system of doctrine” during the continuance of their office. The pledge also contained an approval of the Presbyterian Form of Government.² Professor Smith seems to have had no difficulties about taking this pledge, so far as the doctrine is concerned. It was a recognized principle of the Presbyterian Church, going back to the original “Adopting Act” of 1729, that the term “system of doctrine” was to be construed as relating not to the *ipsissima verba* of the creed, but to “the essential and necessary articles,” namely, those essential to the Calvinistic system, as opposed to Arminianism, Pelagianism,

¹ *Memoir*, p. 159.

² Prentiss, *Fifty Years*, etc. p. 43 *seq.*

Socinianism, etc. The New School branch of the church was historically committed to the broadest theory of subscription. While it professed to be loyal to substantial Calvinism, it claimed liberty for such modifications of the system as did not destroy its doctrinal integrity.

Smith's theological position seems to have been practically settled from the time of his conversion at Bowdoin. At that time he accepted the evangelical system of theology in its Calvinistic form. He was what was known in New England as an Old School man. The name did not imply what it would have done among the Presbyterians, where the Old School accepted, or professed to accept, the traditional Calvinism in conformity with the stricter interpretation of the Westminster Confession. The Old School men of New England adopted the modifications of Calvinism introduced by President Edwards and, to a certain extent, those of his successors, Bellamy, Hopkins, Smalley, etc. But they did not go so far as the New School men, who accepted, more or less fully, the teachings of the younger Edwards, Emmons, and Taylor. The Old School were fairly represented by Dr. Woods of Andover, the New School by his successor and Smith's friend, the brilliant Park. The Old School adhered largely to the traditional terminology. They were realistic rather than atomistic in their philosophy. They did indeed repudiate the old Calvinistic positions with respect to the limitation of the atonement to the elect; they

taught that the sinner's inability is moral and not natural; they denied the direct imputation of Adam's transgression. But they held back from what seemed to them the too daring innovations of the New School with respect to original sin, justification, the nature of the atonement, and the like. Yet the two Schools agreed in their substantial loyalty to Calvinism, and all except the followers of Taylor accepted Edwards's doctrine of the will as the philosophical basis of their theology. In a later chapter we shall examine Smith's theology more closely. For our present purpose it is enough to state his general position. There can be no question that he accepted the Westminster Confession with entire sincerity.

The seminary did not rank high in scholarship. Smith writes in the letter already referred to :—

“The literary character of the seminary is slight, its zeal in theological science is little, the need of a comprehensive range of theological studies and of books thereto has got to be created.”¹

Yet it had the beginnings of a library, comprising the invaluable Van Ess collection, purchased before Smith's advent. Its Faculty, too, was composed of able men. In the chair of Systematic Theology was Henry White, who at the time of the founding of the seminary was pastor of the Allen Street Church in New York, from which he was called to his professorship at the opening of the

¹ *Memoir*, p. 159.

seminary. He died in 1850, just before Smith began his work. Though he did not achieve so extensive a reputation as some of his successors in the same chair, he was still a man of power, who did much to shape the seminary and give it the strength and influence it afterwards attained. The chair of Sacred Literature was adorned by Edward Robinson, one of the pioneers in American Biblical scholarship, whose name will always be among the greatest connected with the seminary. He had been an instructor and professor at Andover, when in 1837 he was called to the infant divinity school in New York. His Greek and Hebrew lexicons had already appeared. Before entering upon his work at Union he spent some years abroad, during which time he made those explorations in the Holy Land which have rendered his name famous all over Christendom. As we have seen, Smith had met him in Berlin, the two little imagining that they were so many years later to be colleagues. When Smith came to New York, Robinson was fifty-six years old and had still thirteen years of service before him. The professor of sacred rhetoric, pastoral theology, and church polity, was Thomas Harvey Skinner, whose saintly memory still rests like a benediction upon the seminary. He, like Robinson, had been a professor in Andover, but at the time of his appointment to the chair in Union, in 1848, was pastor of the Mercer Street Presbyterian Church in New York. His ability as a theologian and power as a teacher were great. But it

was the spiritual life and insight of the man that gave him his great influence. Professor Smith said at his funeral : —

“ A theological seminary needs to be poised upon a spiritual centre ; not only to be rooted in Christ the Head, but also to centre in some visible impersonation of the spiritual power of a living Christian faith, animating its members by example and by word. That was the position which our venerable senior Professor held (all unconsciously to himself) to both the Faculty and the students of this institution.”¹

But the true life and power of the seminary began with the advent of Professor Smith himself. He was then still a young man, not yet far past his thirty-fifth birthday, at the zenith of his manly vigor and intellectual power. His reputation as a brilliant scholar and thinker had preceded him. He possessed an unbounded capacity for hard work, or what then seemed unbounded. He threw himself heart and soul into his new tasks. His whole life presently became bound up with the institution to which he had given himself. He wrote ten years later : —

“ That seminary is the one thing, which, next to the Church of Christ, I love and live and labor for. My work in life is there ; and for it and its prosperity I have given up, and do give up, all other earthly plans. If I have done anything, it has been there ; if I am to do anything, it will be there.”²

¹ *A Discourse in Memory of Thomas Harvey Skinner.*

² *Memoir*, p. 227.

His reputation was more than anything else the magnet that drew young men to Union Seminary. They came thither from all over New England, as well as from other parts of the country.

From the first he made his power felt as a teacher. In later life, as cares and labors and infirmities pressed more upon him, he lost something of this power. He grew more quiet and less stimulating, though he never lost his hold upon the students, who recognized his great qualities and venerated him for them. But he did not arouse the enthusiasm that seems to have been so marked in earlier life, when he was himself full of life and fresh hopefulness. Dr. Thomas S. Hastings, then a pupil of his, now the president of the seminary, writes of those first years : —

“ From the first time we met him in the lecture room Professor Smith was truly our master. With a singular absence of all assumption, with the utmost simplicity of manner, without any apparent self-consciousness or effort, he commanded and swayed the best minds of the class as they had never been commanded or swayed before. . . . It was our privilege to ask questions ; and I remember that I did not know which seemed to me the more wonderful, — the greatness of his learning, which was always perfectly at his command, or the acuteness and quickness of his analytical powers. No question surprised him, his answers dissected the subject so thoroughly that it seemed as if he had specially prepared himself for each question.”¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 170 *seq.*

His method of teaching church history was new and stimulating. Up to this time the subject had occupied only a subordinate place in the curriculum of the theological seminaries, being overshadowed by systematic theology. It was taught by rote from a text-book, commonly Mosheim. The mind was loaded with dates and names and events, and no sufficient attempt was made to connect them with the great ideas and principles that underlie history. Smith came to his work with the best German methods. He thus describes his own teaching: —

“ I have given up Mosheim, and all that lumber in my teachings, as a text-book, and am trying to get at the *real* things in church history, or rather to tell the students how to get at them. My general idea is to make the burden of my teachings fall upon the history of doctrines, at least as far as my lectures go. Another object I aim at is, to habituate the students to proper historical investigations. I do not believe that one in ten of the graduates of our colleges knows any historical facts under the true idea of such facts, or, in other words, knows what makes a fact to be historical.”¹

The results were most gratifying. He succeeded in opening to his students a new world of fruitful theological study.

The work of a teacher in a theological seminary is not an easy one, if he is faithful to the demands of his situation. He has not only to meet and impart instruction to his classes, but also to make

¹ *Memoir*, p. 182.

careful special preparation for them. Moreover, if he will keep abreast of his work and enlarge his mind by collateral studies, there is a vast amount of patient labor to be gone through with in the study. Any ordinary man will find his time filled by these necessary demands of his position. But Smith was not an ordinary man. Because he had a mind so strong and well-equipped, he could not disabuse himself of the notion that he had powers of work commensurately great. This was his undoing. In truth it was his fault, an amiable fault indeed, but none the less a fault. There was much, however, in his circumstances to excuse him. His salary was insufficient. The *res angustæ domi*, if not actually existent, were always to be feared. Even the insufficient salary was not paid. There is something pitiful in his words, "I do not like to have to go down to the treasurer's on pay-days, and then not be able to get any funds."¹

So he plunged into all sorts of outside work with a recklessness bad enough for a man of the strongest physique, but suicidal for one like him, bringing down that fine intellect of his, which might have furnished so much of permanent value for the church of Christ, to literary drudgery that could as well have been done by others. From the time he went to New York until the inevitable breakdown came he thus misused his powers. It was all the time burning the candle at both ends. Almost every Sunday he preached somewhere, and then

¹ *Memoir*, p. 188.

was at his work again next day without the pastor's Monday Sabbath. And not only did his health suffer and finally succumb under this strain, but the success of his work in the seminary was impaired. He never found time to re-write his lectures on theology. The strength and enthusiasm which belonged to his students were too often gone when he came to the class-room. He had not been in New York four years when we find him using language like this : —

“ It is all labor, labor, and I am often weary, and do not like to think beyond the present hour, for myself or my family. Little indeed does this world give, except in the friendship of a few tried hearts. Life is often a burden — always a pilgrimage ; and blessed are they who can unwaveringly believe in a final home.”¹

So overburdened was he that an opportunity that came at this time to take the presidency of Amherst College almost tempted him to abandon the work in New York. One cannot help thinking with pain how different it might have been, if he had had the financial support which was given to his brethren in the pastorate in New York city, many of them men of ability and attainments far inferior to his. What a pity it was, or rather, what a pity it would have been, if God had not permitted and overruled it all. He knew best, — that is all we can say.

Mention has already been made of the fact that Smith came to the teaching of church history

¹ *Memoir*, p. 188.

with his methods matured. He came also with his philosophy of history, and especially of Christian history, clearly fixed in his mind. It was indeed not so much a philosophy as a theology. He believed that Christianity gives all that philosophy promises, that it is in a true sense itself the highest philosophy. The light that dawned upon his soul during those eventful spring days in Bowdoin College, was the light which illuminated for him the vast tracts of human history and the varied annals of the Christian church. His studies in Germany confirmed him in his convictions and taught him the method he needed for bringing others to his own point of view. We see something of his views in his articles on Hagenbach and Dorner. But he gave them full and mature expression in his Inaugural address on the "Nature and Worth of the Science of Church History," delivered on the occasion of his induction to the chair of Church History in Union Seminary; in his Phi Beta Kappa address on the "Problem of the Philosophy of History;"¹ and in his address on the "Reformed Churches of Europe and America."²

He was thoroughly in sympathy with the modern theory of history, which bases it upon an exhaustive

¹ Delivered at Yale College in July, 1853, and again the same year at Bowdoin, afterwards published in the *Presbyterian Quarterly Review* for June, 1854, and republished in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in 1855.

² Delivered by request of the Presbyterian Historical Society before the General Assembly at St. Louis, Mo., in May, 1855, published in the *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, September, 1855.

investigation of the facts and an application to them of the inductive method common to all the sciences. "It is a body of facts. . . . Its solidity is in its facts ; it is above the sphere of mere speculation, as much as is nature, though it is a proper and the highest object of speculative inquiry."¹ These facts are indispensable. No theory can stand against them. Every philosophy must be tested by them. He says, referring to Hegelianism : —

"The most imposing pantheistic system which was ever framed, the most compact and consistent, was bereft of its power, chiefly in its attempt to reconstruct the moral and religious history of mankind in conformity with its desolating principles. It fell upon this stone and was broken."²

But not all facts are worthy of being made the basis of history, only those connected with the great and permanent interests of mankind.

"Human history in its real character is not an account of kings and of wars ; it is the unfolding of the moral, the political, the artistic, the social, and the spiritual progress of the human family. The time will yet come when the names of dynasties and of battles shall not form the titles to its chapters."³

The true historian makes the past live again. He reproduces it with such effect that we may understand it better than those who were actors in it. In this connection Smith pays a tribute to Gibbon

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 54.

as the "greatest English master . . . of that high art which thus makes the past present and the absent real."¹ It was characteristic of the man that in spite of his prevailing German culture he sought his illustrations, when possible, from English and American writers.

He was never satisfied with a treatment of history that is confined to mere facts, however important these might be. He held that in order to do justice to history, and still more to teach it, a man must have a philosophy of history. This was where American scholarship thus far had been weak. The histories so-called were mere chronicles. But history is of little value unless it can reach down to those causes and movements which underlie the facts. In Europe, on the contrary, no man thought of writing history without a philosophical basis and method. Men like Bossuet, Vico, and Herder had led the way. In more recent times Schlegel, Comte, and Hegel had essayed the task, and a host of less noted men were following in their track. It was, however, a matter of vital importance that the philosophy should be a true one, that it should accurately represent the underlying causes of history, and bring it into vital connection with the rest of human knowledge.

It is in his address on the "Problem of the Philosophy of History" that Smith sets himself to the work of determining the essential conditions of a true philosophy. This is one of the ablest of his

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 56.

productions. At the start he asks, "What is the real problem which the philosophy of history attempts to solve?" The answer is:—

"The philosophy of history proposes to treat history as a branch of science. This takes for granted, that it is susceptible of a scientific exposition; that from the study of its facts, we can come to a knowledge of its laws and principles. It supposes, also, that only through the facts can we come to a knowledge of its principles; that in a legitimate way the inductive method can be applied to these facts; and that the induction must precede the deduction, or the application of the historic laws to any future possible cases. The inquiry, then, is the same in kind with that in any other branch of philosophy."¹

And the question which the philosophy of history has to answer is, "What is the destiny of the race, as that is contained in, and may be inferred from, the whole history of the race?"

The essential conditions of a true philosophy of history, according to Smith, are chiefly four.

The first is, "that it be a legitimate generalization from the mass of the historic facts themselves."² Though this requisite is so important, none is more frequently neglected. The second condition of a true philosophy is, "that it should recognize and give us an adequate law of progress in the development of the race." And here Smith asserts that great law of evolution which has been so fruitful in all modern scientific and theological thought.

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, vol. iii. p. 6 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 8.

The recognition of this principle we owe largely to German philosophy, especially to that of Hegel. But the philosopher has borrowed it from the man of science, or rather from nature itself.

“There is a law of growth to every living thing. The modern historian is indebted to the natural philosopher for the introduction of this idea into the sciences. It has made a revolution in the science of nature, and also in that of history. While in its perversions we may find the license, yet in its just application we may also find much of the glory of modern science.”¹

This was six years before Darwin had published his “Origin of Species,” since which time we have come to think that there is no development but that of organic evolution according to the law of natural selection. The development which Smith taught is not one of steady and uninterrupted progress, but “of progress through conflict, of progression by antagonism,” a truth he had also learned from his German masters, and they from nature.

The third requisite of a true philosophy of history is that it give us an adequate end or object of human progress. It must be able from the history of the race to infer the destiny of the race.

“And with no uncertain sound the voice of history here teaches that its consummation can only be found, as the moral interests of the race become superior to the material and natural, and as its spiritual interests predominate over the merely moral and natural.”²

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, vol. iii. p. 11.

² *Ibid.* p. 13.

In the long run the world shows itself to be under the control of moral law. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.* The good triumphs, the evil is overthrown. But this is not the whole. History teaches us

“that all merely human and temporal ends are to be subordinated to those which are spiritual and eternal. To understand the orbit of the earth we must take the sun as our centre; to understand the course of history we must look at it from those supernal heights, whence we can see its spiritual and eternal bearings. . . . That can only be a real philosophy of history which recognizes the validity and supremacy of those spiritual wants and aspirations, which, like the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, have led the progressive hosts of the human family in their continuous and unreturning march, from one encampment to another of their onward course.”¹

The fourth and final condition is that “we give to human history an adequate author.”

“The problem is this: Here is a history of countless numbers of free and rational beings, placed upon an ample theatre, living in successive races and periods, through whom as the almost unconscious agents, a vast plan, reaching already through some six thousand years of time, has been working itself out towards its consummation.”²

Where shall we find a sufficient cause. In matter and energy? No. In an unconscious impersonal Idea? No. There is but one adequate

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, vol. iii. p. 16 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 18.

explanation, namely, that which assigns this plan and its working to a living, personal, omnipotent and omniscient author, in other words, to the God of theism.

Such are the conditions of a true philosophy of history. Now, Smith asks, is there any order of things in which these four conditions are satisfied? If so, this will give us the basis of our philosophy of history. And his answer is: —

“If there be any possibility of a true philosophy of human history, if the necessary conditions of such a philosophy are anywhere realized, they are so, and only so, in the Christian view of human history, in the idea of a divine kingdom, established in the world for its redemption from sin, and looking for its full consummation in an eternal state of being.”¹

It is the kingdom of redemption, the kingdom of Christ. And so Christ, who gives us the centre of our theological system, gives us the central principle of human history, our true philosophy of history.

Here, as elsewhere, Smith is true to his fundamental convictions. It is his theology of the living Christ that furnishes the key to his philosophy and his historical method. The fact appears again and again in his writings, as in his address on the “Reformed Churches of Europe and America,” where he quotes and accepts as his own the word of the Swiss historian, Johann von Müller: “Christ is the key to the history of the world. Not

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, p. 24.

only does all harmonize with the mission of Christ ; all is subordinated to it.”¹ Jesus Christ and the kingdom of redemption — they give the philosophy of history.

With such a philosophy of history in general, the nature and method of church history become plain. They are concerned with the central fact of all history, with the principle which gives it its philosophy. It is

“the record of the progress of the kingdom of God, intermingling with and acting upon all the other interests of the human race, and shaping its destiny. . . . In the whole history of man we can trace the course of one shaping, o’ermastering, and progressive power, before which all others have bowed, and that is the spiritual kingdom of God, having for its object the redemption of man from the ruins of the apostasy.”²

To describe this is the function of church history. It is the history of what is deepest and most formative in all history.

“The true idea of church history then embraces these points : God has made a revelation of himself to man, having for its object the redemption of man. . . . This revelation is made in a real, instituted, historical economy. This economy centres in the Person and Work of our Lord, who is the living Head of a new creation. Of the life, the doctrines, and the growth of this new creation, the elect church, he is the source, through the energy of his Spirit. And the history of the church

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 90 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 57.

tells us how far the redemptive purposes of God have been accomplished in the actual course of human events.”¹

In connection with this view of church history, Smith calls attention to Jonathan Edwards's remarkable “History of Redemption,” and to the letter to the Trustees of Princeton College in which he outlines it. The great American theologian anticipates the very philosophy of history and the very view of church history which Smith is expounding, the theory attained by the best German evangelical thought only when the nineteenth century was well advanced, and after the long struggle with rationalism and pantheism. Smith afterwards spoke of Edwards's work as “written in the beginning of our new American civilization, and sketching with masterly outline, though imperfect in historical details, the whole of human history as a divine theodicy, a real body of divinity, which is from, for and to God, centring in the person of Christ and the work of redemption.”² It was the teaching of divinity through history that was characteristic of his own method. It was also like him to bring out so prominently the achievements of American theology.

But if church history occupies this central and vital position in the history of mankind, and furnishes the standard by which all history is to be judged, then the method of its presentation be-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 58 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 90.

comes of essential importance. Professor Smith therefore urges that it should be exhibited in scientific form, — that is to say, that, like all history, and all the more because it is the key to all history, it should not be a mere statement of facts, but should bring its facts under their legitimate laws and principles, and view them in connection with the causes which have produced them and the ends to be accomplished by them. It gives, so to speak, the philosophy of the philosophy of history, the core and heart of all. This is of vital importance in our own times, when false philosophies are giving their erroneous explanations of human history and destiny. “Everybody nowadays speculates about events, more or less, well, badly, or still worse.” Church history must give the truth which is higher than all speculation. Or, to use Smith’s own words once more: —

“Church history is now to be conducted and taught in comparison and contrast with the false philosophy of history. And, as thus taught, it is the best philosophy of history which can be written, the best vindication of the ways of God with man. It is the true philosophy of human history.”¹

He then proceeds to state his view of that in which the scientific exhibition of the history of the church should consist, namely: —

“In the presentation of all the facts that concern the kingdom of God in Christ, in their orderly succession, with their causes, whether proximate or ultimate, and in their

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 62.

bearings on the divine purpose for the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ, which purpose will be fulfilled in the perfect fellowship of a divine kingdom, where justice shall adjust and love harmonize the relations of all its members.”¹

The facts upon which the science rests are to be found in the Christian revelation and in the course of human history. These facts are to be grouped around the great epochs “in which the combined interests and relations of the church have undergone some decisive change.”

The causes of the history are either proximate or ultimate. The former are “unquestionably the motives and feelings of the actors in the events.” But behind these proximate causes there are causes of a more general character, which the historian must disclose. Here the Christian philosophy of history comes into opposition to the naturalistic and pantheistic philosophies, which find these causes in the forces of nature, or in an abstract impersonal idea. Christianity “refers them ultimately to the purpose of God, to a real personal providence, to an Incarnate Redeemer, to the living agencies in a divine kingdom.”²

In order to explain the historical progress of the church, there must be a test as well as a cause; otherwise we are at the mercy of any opposing system. All the philosophical schemes have existence. We cannot in this sphere claim that what-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 62.

² *Ibid.* p. 63.

ever is is right ; else we shall have no standard of truth. The true test is given in the sacred Scriptures. "By its truths and doctrines all history, and especially the history of the church, is to be judged." And as a matter of fact this has always been the test.

"The truths revealed in the Bible have been the touch-stone which has tried men's spirits. Human speculation has not gone beyond, has not even fathomed its wonderful revelations. . . . As a matter of simple fact, the whole history of the church might be summed up with saying that it consists in pouring into the human race the treasures of this volume, there to germinate, until the kingdom revealed in word and promise shall be fully manifested in its reality and power." ¹

And then church history must exhibit the end or object to which all history tends. This is

"the bringing the race back to union with God, through the grace of Christ, by the influences of the Spirit, and in the fellowship of men one with another. . . . Church history shows how far this end has been actually accomplished, and it ought to make us both wise and earnest in carrying on the church still further towards the same great object." ²

This, then, is the higher view which is taken of church history, that it gives the true philosophy of history. In presenting it, Professor Smith expresses his obligations to Neander, his "venerable and beloved teacher." But however much he may have owed to his German instructors, there can be no ques-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.* p. 66

tion that he had wrought the system through by his own patient thought, and that it rests upon the same foundation as the rest of his thinking, the conviction of the presence and power of the living Christ.

The same views determined his idea of the practical uses of church history. It has its own inherent dignity, which makes it worthy of study on its own account. But of chief importance in his eyes is its bearing upon the great facts and truths that constitute the Christian system. It teaches us by indisputable facts that Christianity approves itself as the highest reason. It is a safeguard against error, showing us how the church has met and vanquished error in the past. And then it confirms the truth.

“Those very truths against which human reason has brought the subtlest objections, the Incarnation, the Trinity, Atonement, Justification and Regeneration, those very truths, which to the superficial view seem contrary to reason, because they are above mere natural reason, are the ones which have received the strongest additional confirmation, in the progress of doctrinal discussion, which have approved themselves as fundamental in the Christian system.”¹

And what was true of past controversies was equally true of those of the present. Smith came to New York at a time when the long conflict between Old School and New had not yet ceased. He came not to foment the bitterness, but in the hope of doing something to dispel it. His disposition

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 77.

and attitude were always of mediation. The same spirit that led him to declare, looking out over the church and the world, that "the great attempt in the midst of which we now stand" is "to reconcile the whole of Christianity with all the thoughts and interests of the race," led him to seek to bring closer together the scattered and warring fragments of the Redeemer's church.

"He, who knows the full history of controversy, will be as little disposed as any one, to tamper with the truth for the sake of novelty; he will see the wisdom of the forms in which it is embodied; but he ought also to acquire such breadth of vision that he will not unnecessarily exalt minor points of difference, even for the sake of displaying his own orthodoxy. It is easy to gain the notoriety of a polemic — little knowledge is needed to that; it is easy to exalt the difference between Old School and New, between Presbyterians and Congregationalists; but it is wiser and better to work together for our common good and against our common foes."¹

How wisely he could use history for such irenic ends, is shown by his address on the "Reformed Churches of Europe and America."

And then the future of the church. Church history teaches us the true method of dealing with its problems. Though forty years have passed since these words were uttered, what wiser ones could be spoken to-day? —

"If any lesson is written broad and deep upon the whole course of Christ's militant church, it is this, that

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 78 seq.

the unity of the church is to be the consummation of the church, and not the means of its consummation. This unity is to be attained by means of its inward life, and not by means of its outward forms. External unity is not Christian union.”¹

Such was Henry B. Smith's philosophy of history, and his view of the nature and methods of church history. No wonder that his lectures aroused the enthusiasm of the Union Seminary students. There was no teacher in this department in his day, perhaps there is none now, who had penetrated so far to the hidden springs of this important branch of theological study. In contrast with the narrow and humdrum methods then in vogue, the view he presented was most inspiring.

The same admission, however, must be made here as in the case of the theory outlined in his Andover address. In his teaching of church history Professor Smith did not reach the height of his own philosophy. Nor is it strange that he did not. It was much even to open up the way to others, and in part to follow it himself. In our own time, when the popular German methods of church history and the history of doctrine are based upon a philosophy which repudiates metaphysics and makes the spiritual subservient to the moral, it is to be wished that his principles might be widely known and followed. As they were the true preservative against the infidelity and imper-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 83 seq.

fect Christianity of his generation, so they are against those of ours.

The present chapter affords the best opportunity for mentioning Professor Smith's works on church history and the history of doctrine, which, though not actually published until a later time, date from this period and properly belong to it. Of these the most important, because an original work, was his "History of the Church of Christ in Chronological Tables." If its significance is to be measured by the amount of labor expended upon it, it may well count as his *magnum opus*. In mere bulk it is monumental, containing, as it does, the "matter of four large octavo volumes."¹ The Tables were published in 1859. Mrs. Smith says that he began to collect the materials in 1851, but that he did not set himself continuously to the task until two years later.² The object of the book is best stated by Professor Smith himself in the Preface: —

"This work on the 'History of the Christian Church' is a Manual in the form of Synchronistic Tables. It differs from a Manual by presenting in parallel columns the various departments of history in each period. It is different from the ordinary Tables, in attempting to give, not only dates and facts, but also a digest of the subject-matter, in accordance with the best recent histories."

He availed himself, in its preparation, of all the standard works on the subject, but the book also

¹ Allibone's *Dictionary of Authors*, vol. ii. p. 2138.

² *Memoir*, p. 175.

contains the results of his own research, and is by no means a mere compilation. It is indeed not without its minor errors and inaccuracies, but these are singularly few when the vast number of details are borne in mind, and not greater than are to be found in most books of the sort.

In this "History of the Christian Church" Professor Smith remains true to the theological position which he took in his inaugural address. The First Table begins with the following significant words:—

"The Centre of General History is found only in Christ and his Church. The Jewish history, essentially prophetic, was fulfilled in Him. Ancient Pagan history resulted in the formation of the Roman Empire and the Greek culture; these the Church subjected to itself in the first stadium of its progress. Yet the Church cannot be explained as a mere development out of ancient history; it was founded on the basis of a new and specific revelation in the Person of Christ."

"The Christian Religion, as a *Redemptive System*, aims to restore to mankind the lost fellowship with God in an eternal kingdom. Its history is the record of the facts pertaining to the nature and growth of the Kingdom of God on earth, in their external and internal relations, in chronological order, and in the light of their causes and issues."

Three points especially strike one in using the volume. The first is the admirable outline of the history of doctrine. In the statement of a theological position in a few pregnant sentences, con-

veying the gist of the whole, Professor Smith was singularly happy. He had thoroughly mastered the facts in his own mind, saw distinctly the points of controversy, and consequently was able to state the doctrines with remarkable simplicity and clearness. A second point of great value is the way in which he keeps the history of the church abreast with the contemporaneous secular history and culture. Here is the weak point in most of our works on the subject. We forget that outside of the distinctively ecclesiastical history, there is a sphere in which the world is going on its way, doing work and seeking ends of vital importance to itself, which God is overruling for the good of his kingdom and his church. Smith never draws any arbitrary line between the two spheres of history, a fact that adds much to his success. The third point of importance is his skill in bringing the voluminous literature of the subjects with which he deals into vital connection with the history which it illustrates. Upon this part of the work a vast amount of labor has been spent, and it forms one of the most valuable features of the book.

The tables that deal with the church history of America are worthy of especial mention. Smith was a pioneer in this branch. In the German works of the time the references to this country were ludicrously inadequate and incorrect, as may be amply proved by consulting the original of the fifth volume of Gieseler, afterwards translated under Smith's direction. And yet there is no field

more rich than this, as there is certainly none of more vital importance to Americans. At the time he wrote, the historical spirit had just been awakened in this country. His friend Bancroft had done much to give it strength and direction by his invaluable history of the United States. But the new interest in historical investigation seems to have penetrated slowly into our churches and theological seminaries. In the latter this country with its rich annals appears to have been almost ignored in the instruction. Smith endeavored to arouse a greater interest in this important subject by his address before the General Assembly at St. Louis, already alluded to. It is largely due to his efforts that the tide has changed. His Tables gave the Germans the facts they needed to correct their misstatements about the condition of the church in America. If our teachers of church history in this country have not even yet given us an adequate manual of American ecclesiastical history, the fault is not Smith's.

He had himself given careful study to the doctrinal history of our American churches, especially to the New England theology. In the tables dealing with the subject is to be found a large amount of material existing nowhere else in a form so convenient. Here, also, the statements of the doctrinal positions are particularly happy. It was not easy, writing as he did when the fires of American controversy had not yet died out, to maintain the impartial attitude of the historian. But his

success is shown by the fact that no better brief statements of the views of the great representatives of American theology can anywhere be found than those contained in the Tables. The lists given of American writers on theological and philosophical subjects, with their works, are also of great value, and the result of indefatigable labor.

The book was received with general favor. The thoroughness of the appreciation with which it met is shown by the fact that a second edition was called for two years later. No other book of the kind has come to take its place. It is, indeed, too bulky for easy use, and this has probably done more than anything else to interfere with its circulation; for scholars are not indifferent to considerations of comfort, and it is no easy work to handle a folio so large. Yet the book did its work and is still a most valuable assistant to the student who knows how to use it. Professor George P. Fisher, than whom none is more competent to speak, writing a few years after Smith's death, said, after speaking of the translations of Hagenbach and Gieseler: —

“To these productions is to be added his ‘History of the Church in Chronological Tables,’ the result of herculean industry. It includes nothing less than a condensed survey of universal history from the time of Christ. It would have been better, as I think he himself felt, to have written a full manual in the shape of a consecutive narrative, which would have been a task even less severe. But as it stands, the work is a monument of his erudition,

and at the same time of the acuteness of his judgment as a philosophical theologian.”¹

One is indeed tempted to wish that he might have prepared, instead of these monumental Tables, the manual he was so well fitted to have produced. But it is well to remember, under such circumstances, the wish and purpose of the author himself. His object was to give to students of church history a help to study which the manuals in their common form do not furnish. This object he accomplished. Those who have made the intended use of the Tables have found them invaluable. Though now somewhat old, they are by no means antiquated. If they could be thoroughly revised and brought down to date, and the pages reduced to one half the present size, it would be the beginning of a renewed and useful career for these remarkable Tables.

The translation of Gieseler's Church History was begun during this period, though it was left unfinished at the time of his death. It was only in part a translation, the first three volumes of the American edition and three sections of the fourth having been previously translated by Cunningham, Davidson, and Hull. This portion was thoroughly revised by Professor Smith, who made many additions. The rest was translated and enlarged either by himself or under his supervision. His object in attempting this work was to furnish students of church history with a manual for pri-

¹ *The Independent*, November 4, 1880.

vate reading and study, which should supplement the work of the class-room, or serve as a basis for more advanced study. He regarded it as particularly valuable, because Gieseler gives in the notes copious citations in the original languages from the sources, thus affording the student the opportunity for an independent judgment of the use made of them in the text. Neander's History, though far more interesting and inspiring, has not the same value for the student, inasmuch as the quotations are for the most part incorporated into the text. The practical difficulty in the way of the ordinary student's use of Gieseler lies in the great mass of undigested matter which it furnishes, and which makes the mastery of it a formidable and not altogether interesting task. Unquestionably it might be made very useful under the guidance of such a teacher as Smith himself. But it is too much for the unassisted beginner, while the advanced scholar finds it easier to go to the original sources.

The first volume of Gieseler was published in 1855. The others followed at intervals during the remainder of Smith's life. The last volume, if he had lived to complete it, would have been the most valuable of all, for it would have contained his ripest statement of the facts of English and American church history. When he died no one was found to complete it according to his plan, and only the translation of Gieseler's imperfect survey of recent church history was published.

The translation of Hagenbach's "Text-Book of

the History of Doctrine" was published in 1861 and 1862. Professor Smith took the work in hand early in 1860. It will be remembered that while in West Amesbury he had written an article for the "Bibliotheca Sacra" on the "History of Doctrine" which was in part a review of Hagenbach's manual. He had always regarded this branch of ecclesiastical history as of the greatest importance, and gave it a foremost place in his own teaching. In the preface to this book he says, "Among all the branches of theological study, the History of Doctrine has been the most neglected in the general course of instruction in our theological schools." This was doubtless true at the time, strange as it sounds now. Smith himself did much to bring the study into favor in this country. The work is said to be "The Edinburgh Translation of C. W. Buch, Revised with Large Additions from the Fourth German Edition and Other Sources." With Professor Smith revision and addition meant much, and one has but to compare with the German and the earlier translation to see how considerable and important were the improvements which he made. The most valuable additions occur in the second volume, and of these the most extensive, involving a vast amount of labor, and embodying an equally vast amount of information not to be found in the same form elsewhere, are the sections on the theology and philosophy of England, Scotland, and the United States. Professor Fisher says of these

chapters that "they are still the best guide which the student has in this province."¹

It may not be amiss to express the wish that Professor Smith had spent the time employed on Gieseler and Hagenbach in doing original work. Even from a pecuniary point of view — and at this time the pecuniary motive necessarily weighed heavily with him — it would have been more advantageous. But he was too modest to estimate his own attainments at their true value. The works of the Germans were then so immeasurably superior to anything that had been produced in this country, that it seemed to him quite enough to bring them within the reach of the theological public. A more ambitious man would have gained a much wider fame with far less work.²

¹ *The Independent*, November 4, 1880. Since this time Professor Fisher has furnished another guide in his own admirable *History of the Christian Church*.

² Bancroft, the historian, wrote of him after his death (letter to Dr. Prentiss, February 2, 1878) : —

"I used constantly to impress upon him that he of all other men was best fitted to write a complete history of religious and philosophic thought in our country. I do not think we have had in my time a man who more fully understood the canons of history, and I know that he was looked to by the best German theologians as the ablest and most trustworthy authority for all that was passing in America within his sphere of observation."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY.

IT requires no great skill in interpreting the movements of the divine providence to see that the foreordained goal of Henry B. Smith's life was his work as a teacher of systematic theology. When, in 1853, the chair of this department in Union Seminary became vacant, its duties naturally fell into his hands. For two years he discharged these duties, under a temporary arrangement, in connection with his work in church history. Meantime, however, the directors of the seminary had become convinced that no one could be found who would grace this important chair like Smith himself, and in the spring of 1855 he was formally transferred to it, the department of history being assigned to his accomplished friend, Roswell D. Hitchcock. Henceforth, until sickness compelled his resignation and partial retirement, his best powers were devoted to the teaching of systematic theology.

Before entering upon the subject of the present chapter, which is Professor Smith's work as a theologian, it will be well to speak briefly of his personal history during the few years intervening between his assumption of the chair of Theology

and his entrance upon another important work of his life, carried on for many years alongside of his seminary duties, namely, the editorship of his *Reviews*. During this time he passed the quiet life of a scholar, engaged in manifold labors within and outside of the seminary. Much of his best time was given to the library. His Sundays were usually occupied with preaching, in New York or the neighboring towns. He gave courses of lectures on mental and moral philosophy, history, the evidences of Christianity, etc., to the young ladies of Dr. Gorham D. Abbott's Spingler Institute. In the summer his services were in requisition for the delivery of addresses at the college commencements. Several notable journeys to the West broke the monotony of his busy round of duties. His wife says: —

“During his summer vacations, he usually remained awhile in town, busied with library work during the week, and with pulpit engagements on Sundays. He then went with his family to some quiet place where he could lead a free, unconventional life. His buoyant temperament enabled him easily to throw off care, forget work, and give himself up to enjoyment. He preferred going to out-of-the-way places, and when once in the woods or on the water, he was as merry and free as a boy.”¹

For the most part his spirits were high. But at times the burden of labor rested so heavily upon

¹ *Memoir*, p. 177 seq.

him as to call forth words of discouragement. Thus in the summer of 1858 he writes : —

“ It is all work — work — work — and how little fruit ! . . . The printers are driving me about my Tables ; ten are now in their hands, and will be done next week ; five more will complete the job, and then, after all, I do not believe that anybody will appreciate it. I wish I could stir up a little enthusiasm for my Phi Beta Kappa address, but I am past the time of enthusiasm, I am afraid — getting old and dried up. . . . I am getting to be a mere drudge of work. . . . To be forty-three years old and little more than out of debt, and to feel that if my health gives out, we are in want, is not a very bright prospect.”¹

Again a few weeks later the same minor key occurs : “ It is all work, work, work, and the end of it is vanity and vexation of spirit.” And once more, in the autumn of the same year : —

“ I cannot believe that I am now forty-three years old, yet it is only too true. Would that I had a better account to give of these years, now so fast gliding away. I have done so little of what I once thought I should do, if my life were spared so long. . . . With each year I hope to accomplish more. But I do so much partially, and so little thoroughly ; I am spending so much time in details and drudgery which profit little in the end, that I begin to give up the hope of doing anything of permanent value. I long to escape from this web of daily cares and duties, and give my heart and mind to some work of more value, for which I know that I have been fitting myself, but which I have no time now to write.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 197.

When will such leisure come? Perhaps never for me; but then God will provide some one to do it better, if it is to be done.”¹

But it is only now and then that we find evidences of this noble discontent. For the most part, in spite of the constant pressure of work, he maintained a cheerful spirit. Though life ran in deeper channels, as the years went on, it is still the same life of faith in the crucified and risen Redeemer, and therefore predominantly joyful and peaceful.

On Sabbath evening, May 6, 1855, he was inaugurated as professor of systematic theology. The address he delivered on this occasion was entitled, “The Idea of Christian Theology as a System.” It is not equal in freshness and power to the Andover address. This is due in part to the fact that some of the ground was traversed for the second time; and in part to the practical and temporary object he had in view, namely, the definition of his theological position at a time when all eyes were turned towards him, and the various parties in his own and other denominations were asking what attitude he would take towards the controversies of the day. There is not the spontaneity, exuberance of thought and feeling, and absence of self-consciousness, which are such marked features in the address of six years before. Nevertheless, it was a notable and exceedingly able utterance, and exerted a wide influence, among both Presbyterians and Congregationalists, heightening his already high reputation.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 199 *seq.*

Attention has been more than once called to the fact that Smith was a "mediating" theologian. He sought to build up the Christian church by reconciling its extremes. We search in vain through the records of his life to find one occasion on which he willfully fomented strife. His very polemics had an irenic purpose. His tendency and aim were constructive rather than destructive. To reconcile the culture of the age with Christianity, to harmonize faith and philosophy, to bring to an end the jarring discords of the sects by showing their real unity in Christ, to reunite the severed parties holding the same type of theology, — these were some of the objects that were dear to his heart. The ambition or frivolity which is willing to involve the church of Christ in conflict on matters non-essential to the Christian faith was utterly repugnant to him. He had no desire to become the leader of a party or the founder of a new school in theology.¹

These aims are manifested on every page of the address. It begins with a statement of the purpose of the seminary, as expressed by its founders, "to commend itself to all men of moderate views and feelings, who desire to live free from party strife." He points out the connection between the department in which he had been teaching and that which he was about to enter.

"They should ever go hand in hand. . . . Theology

¹ See Charge by the Rev. J. F. Stearns, D. D., p. 18 in the pamphlet containing the Inaugural Address.

divorced from history runs out into bare abstractions; history separated from theology becomes naturalistic or humanitarian merely. . . . All history and all theology meet in the person of the God-man, our Saviour.”¹

Passing then to the proper subject of the address, the radical idea of Christian theology as a science, he shows, in the first place, that its special characteristic is that it is “the exposition of the facts of a divine revelation.” It is concerned not with abstractions but with realities. “There is, if we may use the phrase, a Christian realism, which is the life of theology.” This was distinctive of Smith’s whole mode of thought, and gave his theology one of the chief elements of its power. He quotes with approval Madden’s line, “Words are men’s daughters, but God’s sons are things.” He had no patience with the rationalistic tendency that would reduce the facts of theology to mere notions. . . . “The spirit of nominalism, resting in words and definitions, eats out the core of theology.”² There was need of such teaching. A new scholasticism was in danger of gaining possession of American theology, especially of its more liberal forms.

On the solid basis of this Christian realism Smith would build up the theological system itself. That it may be a true system, that is, that it may be truly scientific, it must have some central principle which will give shape and direction to all its parts. This principle is the one stated so fully and powerfully in the Andover address. It is no other than Christ

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 126.

² *Ibid.* pp. 128-130.

himself. But it is to be noted that the principle is not stated here in precisely the same way. There is a distinct enlargement and advance in his thought. The earlier address did not make it wholly plain what is the element in Christ's person and work which gives the principle. For all that is said there, it might be the incarnation alone, or the person, apart from the work, of the Saviour. This point is now carefully stated and defined. Christianity is the religion of redemption. This is its prime characteristic.

“And this redemption centres in the person and work of Christ, the one mediator between God and man. In his mediation is, then, to be found the central principle of this divine economy. It may be called the Mediatorial principle, for mediation between a holy God and sinful man is the essence of his work: or it may be termed the Christological principle, as it represents to us the person of Christ, the God-man. In its fullest statement it includes both incarnation and redemption. . . . In the fact of *the incarnation of the Son of God for our Redemption*, may be said to be the grand principle of the Christian faith, its centre of unity.”¹

This is clear and explicit. It makes the theology Christocentric — to use a convenient but somewhat barbarous word — but it makes the redemptive element paramount. It is the cross that is the symbol of our religion. It is the crucified and risen Lord who is the object of our faith. Theology cannot deny the possibility that Christ might

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 132.

have been the Perfecter of mankind, if sin had not entered the world. Incarnation without redemption is therefore conceivable. But theology knows no Christ in the universe as it is, who is not also the Redeemer from sin. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. So that if Smith had fully carried out his plan, he would have had not only to "Christologize," but also to "soteriologize," the other doctrines of the system.

Starting from this central principle, he lays out his scheme of the theological system. It falls into three divisions. The first is concerned with "the Antecedents of Redemption." The second gives us the Redemption itself, as it appears in the Person and Work of Christ. The third and last deals with the Application of Redemption.

In giving this scheme Smith is careful to say that the uniting principle is not such "in the sense that the rest of the system is to be logically deduced from it," but merely that it is "the centre of unity to the system."¹ There is of course a sense in which this is true. But if his principle is what he affirms, all the other portions of theology ought to be developed under its guidance, or in the light of our knowledge of it. Thus the doctrine of God, so far as it belongs to the Christian system, ought not to be treated as merely a part of natural theology. It is here that Smith did not work his system completely through. He seems to be aware, to some extent at least, of what is needed, when he

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 138.

says in a footnote, "The knowledge of the Trinity has its root in the knowledge of the Son of God, although Christ himself can be known only through the preliminary knowledge of God."¹ But in other respects also the Christian knowledge of God is a knowledge of Him through Christ. When Smith wrote of the need of Christologizing decrees and predestination he betrayed a consciousness of his failure in applying his own principle.

His view of the Christian system is vindicated by the appeal to the great conflicts of the church, to the testimony of the most eminent theologians of all ages, to the fact that the Christian system itself furnishes the only satisfactory answer to the great questions which philosophy raises, and to the practical effects of the system that centres in Christ.

The remainder of the address is occupied with an application of the subject to the prevailing controversies. The history of Calvinism from the days of the Westminster Confession to his own time is traced with a masterly hand. Mention has already been made of the three theological parties then existing within the ranks of American Calvinists, as particularly represented in the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations. On the one side were the Old School Presbyterians, who accepted the Confession in its stricter interpretation. On the other were the New School men of New England, including not only the Hopkinsians but also

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 138. He is quoting from Nietzsche.

the liberal New Haven School. Between were the Old School New England theologians. Taking his stand substantially with the latter, Smith aimed to show the superiority of his own system, centring in Christ, to the two extremes, especially to the New England New School. At this time the principles of the New Haven theology were supposed to be extensively prevalent in his own branch of the Presbyterian Church. He claimed that the underlying principle of this theology, as of the New England theology in all its more extreme forms, belonged rather to the region of moral philosophy than to that of revelation, or, in other words, that it was based upon an ethical theory rather than upon revealed facts, and that consequently a true system could not be built up upon it. He said :—

“It is not to be doubted that all doctrines should be held and stated so as not to conflict with a true psychology and a valid ethics. Ethical truth has a relative value in the Christian scheme. But if intellectual and moral philosophy be the ultimate standard, are we not forced to the inference that in the controversy between philosophy and faith, philosophy or the intellectual form of truth is the final arbiter?”¹

He then, in a very powerful passage, drew what he regarded as the legitimate consequences of making an ethical theory the central principle of theology, showing how, if consistently carried out, it must alter the orthodox system at all its essential

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 153.

points, putting a new meaning upon such doctrines as those of original sin, regeneration, atonement, justification, sanctification, and the rest. The address was a distinct repudiation of this position, and an invitation to moderate men in both schools to rally around the better system which finds its centre in the crucified Saviour. It is in the spirit of reconciliation that he closes this noble address : —

“I have spoken my mind frankly on some of the great topics which agitate and divide us. I have spoken with the deepest conviction as to what is our vital need. I may have crossed some prejudices, and have pleased no extreme and no partisan; but I have spoken only against a system, and not against parties or men. To mediate between our extremes is our vital need, and such mediation can only be found in Christ, and not in an ethical system. As the central idea of the whole Christian system is in mediation, so should this be the spirit of our theology, the spirit of our lives. There is a higher unity, which is not the indefinite middle between the two extremes. There is a golden mean, where discord is lost in concord. The pendulum, as it oscillates from end to end, ever passes over its centre, while it moves the hands of time. There is a common orthodoxy, as well as these embittered antagonisms.”¹

These generous words show the spirit of the man, and betray something of the secret of his power. Naturally there were many who were not pleased with the address. The extremists of the New School in New England did not like it. They

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 163 seq.

had already reproached Smith and some of his friends who had entered the Presbyterian ministry as having become recreant to the principles of their native section. Dr. Hodge of Princeton, while assenting to the main positions of the Inaugural, found fault with Smith's construction of Edwards's doctrine of imputation.¹ But the men on both sides who were tired of the din of theological warfare listened to him gladly, and henceforth regarded him as their leader. It was the theology thus announced, and afterwards taught through many years of quiet service in the seminary and the press, that at last allayed the prejudices of the contending parties, and brought together the separated branches of the Presbyterian Church.

The point has now been reached where some account should be given of Professor Smith's theological system. In so far as it is outlined in the Andover address and the Inaugural, this has been done already. But a fuller exposition is needed and must be attempted. In the whole course of this sketch the fact has pressed upon us that Smith was through and through a theologian. It was his theology that lay nearest to his heart. It was his theology that determined his philosophy, gave shape to his theory of history, and manifested itself in all his labors for the upbuilding of the Master's kingdom.

And yet it is a very difficult task to present Smith's theology. A scholastic system, the strength

¹ *Princeton Review*, October, 1855, pp. 699-702.

of which lies in its definitions and logical articulations, is easily stated. It gives only the skeleton. It reduces great truths to easy formulas and compresses them into brief statements. Such a theology abounds in catchwords, upon which the memory readily lays hold. But to expound a living theology is not so easy. Here we have to do not with abstractions but with facts, not with logical formulas but with vital truths. Now Smith's theology was preëminently living. It was this fact that gave it its power. One felt in listening to him that he was dealing with realities. It was not that he was eloquent. On the contrary, he was reserved, self-restrained, lacking, at least in his later days, in outward show of fire. But the men, who were strong enough intellectually and mature enough spiritually to understand him, were made to feel that his doctrines were living things with power in them. In his system the Spirit was always in the wheels. It is therefore very difficult to reproduce his theology, especially within the narrow compass of a few pages.

Professor Smith left behind him no satisfactory exposition of his system. Had he lived, like Dr. Hodge of Princeton, to prepare his theology for the press in the form his own judgment and taste would have preferred, the world would be much the richer. Unfortunately he never wrote out his lectures in full. The draught prepared at the beginning of his theological career remained substantially unchanged. Such additions or alterations as

he made were either upon the manuscript or on scraps of paper, which lay loosely in the sheets, like so many sibylline leaves, and which only he knew how to arrange and use. The notes of his students, some of them taken stenographically, represent the course in different years, but they are necessarily unsatisfactory. Many of the best things he said in the class-room came out without premeditation, and were uttered with too much rapidity to find adequate preservation in the students' note-books.

After Professor Smith's death, his manuscripts and several sets of notes, together with a full phonographic report of the course in the year 1857, were put into the hands of the late Professor William S. Karr, of Hartford Theological Seminary, a pupil and trusted friend of Smith's. With patient labor and loving loyalty to his master's memory, he prepared the two volumes which give us the larger part of what we possess of Smith's theological writings, namely, the "Introduction to Christian Theology," and the "System of Christian Theology."¹ These volumes are invaluable to the students of Smith's system and have done much to perpetuate his work. Yet they are far from being satisfactory. They are very fragmentary. The due proportion of the subjects is not preserved, a

¹ The first published in 1883, the second the following year. In 1882 Professor Karr had published a volume entitled *Apologetics*, made up from the manuscripts of Smith's lectures delivered after his resignation of the chair of systematic theology.

disproportionate space being allotted to topics that now have little more than an historical interest. There is no way of distinguishing between the earlier and later statements of doctrine. In many cases it is more than doubtful whether Smith would have been willing to leave the statements given as the final expression of his views. Moreover, it must be said — though it may seem almost ungenerous to call attention to an editorial fault in the work of one who labored under so great difficulties as Dr. Karr, and did his task on the whole so well — that it was a mistake to eke out the gaps in the lectures by introducing parts of sermons, prepared for an altogether different purpose, couched in wholly different style, and having no marks to indicate the period of his life to which they belong.

Still, we must take these volumes as we find them, and be thankful that we have so much. It is a notable fact that, imperfect though they are, they have heightened rather than diminished the respect in which Professor Smith's theology is held. From them, and from some of his writings published during his lifetime, such as his sermon on Inspiration, and the articles on Emmons and Wheldon on the Will, as well as the articles that appeared in the discussions preceding the Reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, we are able to get a tolerably good idea of the system which exerted such powerful and moulding influence upon the students of Union Seminary during the years of his instruction in that institu-

tion. But the best exposition of his 'theology is to be found in his students themselves. They are his epistle known and read of all men. Few teachers have left their impress more strongly upon their pupils. Smith's theology made strong, earnest, spiritual men, without crotchets, moderate yet decided in their convictions, truly liberal and broad-minded, yet orthodox in the best sense of the term, men to whom God and Christ and the kingdom, and the other great facts of Christianity, are not mere doctrines, but living realities.

The Introduction contains the discussion of the subjects preliminary to the presentation of the system. The opening chapters are addressed to young men entering upon the study of divinity, and are full of wise counsels. They treat of the claims of theology upon the educated men of to-day, the spirit which should animate the true student of the sacred science, and the general characteristics of the system adapted to our times. Nowhere else can such a valuable discussion of these subjects be found. These chapters are full of glimpses into the sources of Smith's power. The combination of learning with simple piety, of strong leadership with the humility of the searcher after truth, of conservatism with true liberality and tolerance, is such as is to be found in few men, certainly in few teachers of systematic theology.

Out of the many points that suggest themselves for comment, only a few, and those most germane to our purpose, can be mentioned here.

This is his view of the present requirements of the ministry: —

“If ever the service of the ministry was a mere routine, now it is no longer such. There is no research of scholarship, no philological skill, no power of historical investigation, no mastery in philosophy, no largeness of imagination, no grace of life and character, no practical self-denial, no gift of eloquence to man by the written or the spoken word, no energy of character, no practical sagacity, no polemical acuteness, no wisdom of counsel, no ready sympathy with the outcasts and abandoned, no zeal for real human rights and against all social wrongs, no living faith, and no large charity, which may not, through the length and breadth of our land, find the fullest employment, and which are not needed by the Christian church.”¹

What words could be more inspiring than these? or who better qualified to teach theology than he who could utter them?

The first requisite of a student of theology, according to this wise teacher, is spiritually-mindedness. By this is not meant mere intellectual discernment, nor emotional piety, according to the maxim *pectus facit theologum*. It “is in its inmost nature an expression — a living sense — of the reality of God’s kingdom, as centring in the person and work of Jesus Christ.” He says: —

“There are two great realms, that of nature and that of grace. The natural mind dwells in the one, the spiritual mind has its home in the other. Just as in the inves-

¹ *Introduction to Christian Theology*, p. 23.

tigation of nature a consideration of the reality of the natural world is at the basis of all our researches, so, in the study of Christian theology, a living sense of the reality of a divine revelation is at the foundation of all right studies. If there be not this inmost sense of the reality of spiritual things, all theological study is nothing but a play of words, a trick of definitions, a process of merely philosophical argumentation.”¹

And again, in the same connection:—

“There is ever to be maintained a Christian realism in distinction from that nominalism which makes the whole of Christian theology to be a dispute about words and names.”²

In like manner the student should be humble.

“In respect to humility and reverence, the theological student should be like ‘the minister and interpreter of nature.’ . . . He cannot be a true divine who is not awe-struck and reverential, a humble learner, before the mysteries of the Incarnation and of the Atonement, who does not feel and know that in these grand facts there is that which calls upon him to put off his shoes from off his feet; who has not the conviction that here is holy ground.”³

The phrase of Bacon, at the beginning of the “*Novum Organum*,” is often to be found in Smith’s writings. He had the true idea of theology as an inductive science. It is interesting to notice that in this connection he quotes another saying of Bacon, from the “*Advancement of Learning* :” — “As to perfection or completeness in Divinity, it

¹ *Introduction*, p. 26.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 27.

is not to be sought; for he that will reduce a knowledge into an art will make it round and uniform; but in Divinity many things must be left abrupt." In this he was not always as good as his theory. There were times when his philosophy carried him farther than the facts will warrant. But this is the temptation and the sin of all the systematic theologians.

It is characteristic of the man and his method that he would have the theological system adapted to the times "wrought out in each student through the *medium of free discussion*." How many young minds have been injured or turned into wrong channels by the dogmatism of teachers! It is the theory of many Christian men that divinity should be taught only in the way of inculcation. Smith's conviction was altogether different, and the reverent but moderate and tolerant orthodoxy of his pupils is his best vindication. Here are his words. They should be written in letters of gold on the wall of every theological class-room: —

"By some the office of a teacher of theology is limited to the mere explanation of a system, and the office of the student to the mere reception of the explanation. This is at war with the best good of both; it makes the teacher dogmatic, and the student passive first and dogmatic afterwards, when not rebellious. A teacher ought, indeed, to have his definite system and teach it. But what is teaching? So imparting that the student may understand and receive what is taught into a *willing*

mind. For this, free discussion is necessary. *Prudens interrogatio est dimidium scientiæ.*"¹

It gives us also a deep insight into his aims and purposes, when he says:—

“Such a system of theology as is needed in our times should strive to be a mediating system between the conflicting parties of the times.”²

In this connection he enters into an elaborate and most helpful statement of the kind of mediation needed and the results to be gained from it. The system that is to reconcile the jarring parties of our modern age, he declares,—

“should be both *conservative and progressive*. . . . It should be conservative without bigotry, and progressive without lawlessness. It should conserve all the truth and be eliminated of the errors of the past, while it should advance onward towards a more complete understanding of the full mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures. . . . The oldest truths have the strongest living power in all times. They have proved their efficacy. The progress consists in giving to the old truths a new aspect, and adapting them to the times in which our lot is cast.”³

The idea of Christian theology as a system is stated here in the same form as in the inaugural address, and it is needless to repeat what has already been given so fully. The positive and authoritative source of theology is the revelation given in the Scriptures. On this point Smith is explicit.

¹ *Introduction*, p. 38 seq. ² *Ibid.* p. 39. ³ *Ibid.* p. 44.

“Each doctrine,” he says, “is to be established by Scripture. No doctrine can have a place in the system which may not be thus proved.”¹ The subsidiary sources are: “Experience, the vital source, or the condition of the right apprehension of the facts of theology; Confessions and Systems, the traditional source; Philosophy, the shaping, formal source; Nature, the fundamental source.”²

It will be noticed that Christian experience is placed first among these subsidiary sources. It does not, however, exercise an important function in Smith's system. This is rather surprising, considering the emphasis he lays upon spiritual-mindedness as a prerequisite, and the recognition of the Christian facts as spiritual realities, as well as his familiarity with the use made of this source by Schleiermacher and the mediating theologians of Germany. He does more justice to the confessional source, as was to be expected from a man so strongly possessed as he with the historical spirit. He undoubtedly gives the highest place among the subsidiary sources to philosophy, though he keeps it in subordination to the Scriptures. It is this devotion to philosophy that imparts to some portions of his system a scholastic character, disappointing to one who has been led by his general principles to look for a larger admixture of the spiritual element. In this he was influenced not only by the natural tendency of his own mind, but also by the traditions of the New England theology.

¹ *Introduction*, p. 223.

² *Ibid.* p. 61.

A large place is given in the "Introduction" to the subject of natural theology, which is presented with much skill and acuteness. Here Smith's philosophical power renders him thoroughly at home. Of especial value are his preliminary definitions, and his successful vindication of the ontological argument for the divine existence. Then follows a sketch, necessarily slight, of the evidences of Christianity. He expounds with much power the historical proof, the evidence from the person and work of Christ, and that from Christianity considered as a philosophy, while he touches, though rather too lightly, upon the experimental evidence.

The latter part of the book treats of the divine authority of the record of revelation, or the Scriptures, and discusses the subjects of the Canon and Inspiration. Those who have hitherto been impressed with the liberal spirit of Smith may perhaps be surprised at the strong language he uses respecting the authority and inspiration of the Bible. This surprise will be increased upon reading a sermon on the "Inspiration of the Scriptures," which he preached before the Synod of New York and New Jersey in October, 1855, a few months after his induction into the chair of Theology at Union.¹ The subject was assigned to him by the Synod, and tradition has it that there was an inten-

¹ *The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.* A Sermon delivered before the Synod of New York and New Jersey, in the First Presbyterian Church, Newark, N. J., October 17, 1855. Published by direction of the Synod.

tion of testing his orthodoxy on this important subject. If there were any who expected to hear heretical sentiments from the new professor of divinity, they were disappointed. His utterance was with no uncertain sound. The doctrine he professed was that which bears the name of "plenary inspiration." This he describes as

"a special divine influence for a special purpose. Its object is the communication of truth in an infallible manner, so that, when rightly interpreted, no error is conveyed."¹

There are both divine and human elements in it, but there is no admixture of human errancy. We have "entire truth on the subjects for which the Scriptures were written, and no error on other incidental matters."² The analogy which throws most light upon the subject is that of the divinely-human person of our Lord. The inspiration is called plenary because

"the divine influence, which is its source, extends to and pervades the whole contents of the Scriptures, both historical and doctrinal; it includes the whole of the strict divine revelations, and also whatever the sacred writers utter as historians and witnesses. . . . It extends even to the language, not in the mechanical sense that each word is dictated by the Holy Spirit, but in the sense that, under divine guidance, each writer spoke in his own language, according to the measure of his knowledge, acquired by his own experience, by the testimony of others, or by immediate divine revelation."³

¹ *Sermon on Inspiration*, p. 10 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 14.

³ *Ibid.* p. 12 seq.

He distinguishes inspiration from the spiritual illumination common to all Christians, and from the intuitions of genius. He will not confine it to the revelation, but extends it to the whole Bible. In his view, "the Bible not only contains, but is the Word of God." ¹ The evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures, according to the sermon, rests upon the testimony of Christ and the Apostles, especially upon that of Christ. This internal evidence is confirmed by the inward witness of the Spirit. "This is the *fides divina*, that divine faith . . . which is the root of entire assurance, the *aliquid inconcussum* in the fluctuations of argument and opinion." ²

It has been a question among those of Professor Smith's pupils who have found themselves compelled by the exigencies of Biblical investigation and criticism, to frame for themselves a freer doctrine of inspiration, whether he would have continued to hold the position of the Synodical Sermon, if he had lived in our generation. Even the conservative theologians of our age feel themselves obliged to make concessions to Biblical criticism which his theory would have excluded. The more liberal take positions which, if they had expressed their views thirty or forty years ago, would have compelled him to class them among the opponents of Christianity. If there is any truth at all in the conclusions of the Higher Criticism, accepted by many of our believing scholars at the present time,

¹ *Sermon on Inspiration*, p. 26.

² *Ibid.* p. 21.

an altogether different formula from that of the Synodical Sermon would seem to be demanded.

It is easy to speculate upon such a subject. Smith lived in his own times, not in ours. Certain it is that he would have been loyal to proven facts wherever he found them. No man ever held his doctrines less dogmatically, or would have shrunk back with greater horror from what Lord Bacon calls "offering to the Author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie." He was perfectly familiar with the grounds upon which such men as his friend Tholuck, and the evangelical German theologians generally, deny the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He had carefully studied the objections to the theory of plenary inspiration current in his time, and thought that he could answer them. If he had discovered what he believed to be new facts, he would undoubtedly have accepted them and modified his doctrine accordingly. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that he would ever have changed his fundamental position respecting the divinity and authority of the Bible.

We come now to the system itself. It will be possible only to present its most general features. By way of introduction a quotation may be made from Professor Smith's "Memorial of Anson G. Phelps, Jr.,"¹ in which he describes the theological views of that eminent merchant, Christian, and philanthropist. It often happens that a biogra-

¹ The *Memorial* was published in 1860. Mr. Phelps was an intimate friend of Professor Smith and a director of Union Seminary.

pher, in delineating his subject, gives a picture of himself, all unconsciously, but with touches so exact that none can fail to recognize it. Such a self-portraiture is invaluable.

“The groundwork of his religious life was found in that general system of faith which has been the vital strength of our evangelical churches. . . . He was not dogmatical in doctrine ; still less was he technical in his religious phraseology ; nobody ever suspected him of *cant*. And yet the fundamental articles of the so-called Calvinistic creed were vitally inwrought into his religious experience. Thus was his personal faith nurtured and matured. The great Christian verities of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement ; the fact of original sin, including the total depravity of man in his native condition, and his moral inability to good excepting through the grace of the Holy Spirit ; the electing love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord ; justification through faith in Christ alone ; sanctification as a progressive work of the Spirit within the soul, begun but not completed here ; these, and their kindred or related truths, were to him great spiritual realities. . . . The God-man, incarnate Love itself, stood before his mental vision in all the fullness of divine grace, with all the attractions of the tenderest human love. It was as if the Saviour were to him a personal and present friend, full of grace and truth. The life was manifest, and he saw it, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us. And thus was his fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. His theology was eminently a Christology. It was not a mere barren belief in certain propositions about Christ ; it was

an inwrought sense of the absolute need to him as a sinner, of such a person, and such a sacrifice. He loved to dwell upon Him in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King. . . . And all other Christian truths were for him vitalized and illuminated by these central facts of the Christian faith. His own sinfulness and inability, the divine sovereignty and the election of grace, were seen, and seen truly, in the light of the cross.”¹

The “System of Christian Theology,” as Dr. Karr has preserved it, opens with the doctrine of God. This is developed philosophically rather than theologically; or, more accurately, from the standpoint of natural rather than of revealed theology. It was never “Christologized,” and this must always be a marked defect in it, only in part relieved by the fact that it is a defect inherent in most of our theological works. Smith seems to have been aware of it, for he says:—

“God in all his fullness of wisdom, love, and grace, is known and can be known only through Christ, only as we know Christ. He is ‘the Way’ of knowledge as well as of redemption. Through him we attain intellectual views of God as well as knowledge of the divine mercy. So that in one sense *we go through Christology to Theology, in the way of knowing.*”²

But the hint remains unheeded.

In other respects the work is done in a masterly way. No fuller and better statement of the possibility and nature of the knowledge of God, and no

¹ *Memorial of Anson G. Phelps, Jr.* pp. 65-69.

² *System of Christian Theology*, p. 6.

finer analysis and definition of the divine attributes, can be found in modern theological literature. One could indeed wish that the attributes might have been brought into direct connection with the proofs for the divine existence, as Dorner has done with such marked success. But this did not occur to Smith, and would have been foreign to the method he had chosen. It is needless to say that the conception of God which he presents is in the fullest and strictest sense theistic, being most carefully guarded against all deistic and pantheistic implications. All through his system he knew how to balance the divine immanence and the divine transcendence with admirable skill.

The need of a thorough "Christologizing" of the Antecedents of Redemption appears when we come to the doctrine of the Trinity. Here again Professor Smith seems to have been aware of the defect, for he says, "The centre and source of our knowledge respecting the Trinity is to be found in the Person of Christ, and in his revelation of God to man." ¹

It is the orthodox doctrine that is presented, but it is set forth with a freshness and force which show how much more than a doctrine it was to him. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit became to him the great spiritual realities in that wonderful conversion at Bowdoin College. He says of the Trinity: —

"It is not a barren, abstract truth, but vital, inter-

¹ *System*, etc. p. 48.

woven with the whole Christian economy. This holds true, whatever difficulties may be found in the formal statement of the doctrine. The doctrine has always been vital in Christendom, the source of the life and power of Christianity.”¹

Again, he declares: —

“When it has been abandoned, other chief articles, as atonement, regeneration, etc., have almost always followed it by a logical necessity; as when one draws the wire from a necklace of gems, the gems all fall asunder.”²

It is the highest expression of our knowledge of God, which may be reduced to the formula: God = Father, Son, and Spirit. He admits that the fact of the Trinity is mysterious, in the sense that it is unintelligible in its interior nature, but denies that it is irrational.

“The doctrine of the unity of God, taken in the sense that God is a single person, like a human person, having a single circumscribed personality, is no more natural, and no more rational in itself, than the doctrine of the Trinity. . . . It is in itself really no easier to conceive of God as one person, single I, than as three persons, and no more rational.”³

In designating the sacred Three, Smith does not, like many of the later New England theologians, hesitate to use the term “person,” but he is careful to define it.

“In common usage a person is one who can say I. . . . Self-consciousness is then the distinctive attribute of personality. . . . Each of the persons of the Trinity

¹ *System*, etc. p. 48.

² *Ibid.* p. 49.

³ *Ibid.* p. 48 seq.

must, then, be supposed by us to have a self-consciousness. . . . If we do not say this, we deny any *conceivable* distinctions in the Godhead.”¹

Smith also differed from the majority of the New England theologians in accepting all the implications of the Nicene Creed. Dr. Emmons irreverently called the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son “eternal nonsense.” Smith found a place for it and for the “spiration of the Holy Spirit” in his system. He believed it possible thus to gain a deeper insight into the inner nature of the Trinity, and to guard more fully against the deistic and pantheistic positions. He had no sympathy with the Sabellianism which, since the publication of Moses Stuart’s translation of Schleiermacher’s views on the Trinity, had been so prevalent in New England, and which Bushnell had endeavored to render more acceptable by his agnosticism respecting the essential nature of God. In spite of the temptation he must have had, in his reaction from Unitarianism, to deny it, he taught the “subordination” of the Son, — not of course in the sense of making the Son less than God, but in that of admitting a personal order and relation of dependence in the Deity itself, “an *ordo subsistendi* — a certain inequality.”²

In the portions of his theology preserved to us, there is no formal attempt to give the philosophical and experimental proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is found in his translation of Twisten’s

¹ *System*, p. 80.

² *Ibid.* p. 89.

“Dogmatik.” He does, however, lay especial stress upon the scriptural argument, as was natural for one brought up in the midst of the Unitarian controversy.

The doctrine of creation presents no matters of especial interest. When this part of the “System of Theology” was prepared, the theory of evolution had not come into prominence, and we must look for the treatment of it to the apologetical work of Smith’s later years. We turn with far greater interest to his doctrine of providence and the divine decrees. It is here that his Calvinism appears. For Smith was a decided Calvinist, not extreme but genuine. Calvinism has its root in the doctrine of the divine sovereignty. It is God, and not the creature, who decides what shall be. He is free to do what He pleases. He has “foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,” and his providence is simply the execution of his decree. Smith says:—

“God as a sovereign has foreordained the course and order of providence. He has purposed that things should be and take place as they are and do actually occur. . . . The doctrine of the divine decrees is simply and ultimately that God is the sovereign ruler of the universe which He has created, and that He does as He pleases, according to the counsel of his own will and wisdom, not in an arbitrary sense, but in such a sense that He needs not to take counsel of his creatures.”¹

This view of God’s decrees and providence makes

¹ *System*, p. 115.

them extend not only to the necessary operations of nature, but also to the free acts of men. And if to their free acts, then of course to their sinful acts. The only mitigation which Calvinism allows at this point is the distinction between the permissive and the efficacious decree and providence. God's attitude towards sin is merely permissive. But it none the less finds a place in the plan. Here are some of Smith's statements: —

“The divine decrees, as including all events, include sin also. . . . It is taken into the plan, not under God's approval nor as the means of good, but as a fact. . . . If sin be excluded from the divine decree or purpose, then that on which the whole economy of grace rests is not contained in the divine purpose. . . . The relation to sin in which the Scriptures exhibit God is that of permitting and overruling it, but at the same time they imply that it is included in his general purpose.”¹

If God's attitude towards sin is permissive, it follows that He has power to prevent it; otherwise the word “permission” would be meaningless. Accordingly, the Calvinist, in his theodicy, or vindication of God's justice in view of sin, will not avail himself, as the Arminian does, of the position that God cannot prevent sin. Smith is explicit on this point: —

“God might, by omnipotence, have excluded sin; yet we must say, for wise and good reasons, some of which we can see, others not, He chose not to exert his omnipotence in the way of its suppression.”²

¹ *System*, p. 118 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 156.

In taking this position he also repudiated two Calvinistic theologies widely held in New England, namely, that of the Hopkinsians, according to which sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; and that of the New Haven School, which approached the Arminian view by the declaration that it might be that God could not prevent all sin in a moral system. In like manner, he rejected the Arminian view which would condition the divine decree, and so the divine providence, upon foreknowledge. He did indeed admit that foreknowledge is the ground of the decree in the sense that God does not decree anything that He does not know. But if the foreknowledge has reference to the actual occurrence of particular events, then the decree must be the ground of the foreknowledge. "Unless the event or act was adopted into the divine plan, there could not be a certainty of its occurrence. It only would be possible."¹

It remains to say, in connection with this, that Professor Smith's doctrine of decrees and providence was supported by a deterministic doctrine of the will. Edwards advanced his theory of philosophical necessity for the purpose of giving additional support to Calvinism. It is not necessary to the integrity of that system, as Smith himself conceded. The Westminster Confession is not committed to it. But it has been accepted by the majority of Calvinists since Edwards's time, and was almost universal among the New England the-

¹ *System*, p. 120.

ologians until the rise of Taylor's School. Smith was not unconscious of some of the defects of Edwards's doctrine, especially his view of motives as the efficient causes of volition. But in the main point he agreed with Edwards; he denied the power of contrary choice. He has discussed the subject most fully in his review of Whedon on the Will.¹ This review, which is one of the best specimens of Smith's ability as a controversialist, makes short work of Whedon's inconsistencies and superficialities. But all who are not necessitarians will turn from it with the feeling that Smith, in spite of all his logical acumen, has not touched the real truth defended in Whedon's book, the truth that the will — to use the Methodist divine's peculiar phraseology — is a "pluripotential cause." Smith believed that the ultimate determination of human actions could not rest in the hands of God, and indeed that He could not have a foreknowledge of the free acts of men, unless the human will is subject to the law of causation. Since our modern infidelity has made such baleful use of the doctrine of necessity, we are coming to see that we must give a more real meaning to the term "freedom," if we will uphold the true distinction between God and the creature, between man and nature.

One of the finest chapters in the work deals with a subject not so much discussed at present as it was forty or fifty years ago, namely, the end of God in creation. Smith takes the position of Edwards that

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, pp. 359-399.

the supreme end of creation is the "declarative glory of God," that is, "the manifestation of the internal divine glory." This internal divine glory is "the radiant sum of all the divine perfections,"¹ the infinitude, the power, the wisdom, the holiness, the perfect love of God. He maintained this view in opposition to the utilitarian theory, once so prevalent in New England, which finds the chief end in the happiness of the creature, or in the greatest happiness of the whole system. So far as the supreme end relates to the creature, he held that it has in view their highest good, and not merely their happiness. Our later theology tends to find the end in the Kingdom of God, and it is not unlikely that Smith would have favored this view if rightly stated and properly qualified.

The Third Part of the Antecedents of Redemption is devoted to Christian Anthropology. Here also a large place is given to philosophical discussions in the departments of psychology and ethics. The Scriptural element is not emphasized. Once more we have reason to regret that Professor Smith did not "Christologize" the Antecedents of Redemption. The German writers on Christian ethics had already shown what could be done in this respect and no one was more competent to perform the task than he. Two considerations, however, may be urged in partial excuse for the undue prominence of the philosophical element. In the first place, the current discussions of the New England

¹ *System*, p. 134.

theology had been largely philosophical, and no theologian at that time could pass them by. And in the second place, the lectures we possess were intended for class-room use, and Smith could scarcely presuppose such a knowledge of what he regarded as the true philosophy, on the part of his students, as to justify him in confining himself to topics strictly theological.

The realism which runs through all his thought is nowhere more apparent than here. Men are not mere individuals; they are members of a race. What a man is as a member of the race is "the substratum of what he is as an individual, personal being."¹ This is directly opposed to the atomistic philosophy which underlay the New School theology of New England. It is very important in Smith's system. He says:—

"The unity and 'solidarity' of the race is at the basis of the doctrines of sin and redemption. As a whole, as well as in each individual, it is the object of the divine government."²

On the vexed question of the origin of souls he takes the traducian position, namely, that the soul is propagated with the body. But he also recognizes an element of truth in creationism, asserting that "God does doubtless act in a specific way in producing each human individual." True to his spiritual philosophy, he lays the greatest stress upon the personality of man, as that which distin-

¹ *System*, p. 162.

² *Ibid.* p. 162.

guishes him from the brute. Because man is a personal being he is also a moral and religious being. As such he is possessed of conscience, which is not a special faculty, but "that combination of powers by which we judge and feel in respect to moral right and wrong."¹ His ethics are intuitional rather than hedonistic. He teaches an "immutable morality." Conscience "acts in view of Right, which is a simple idea, no more to be resolved than the idea of Beauty." In this also he took ground opposed to the New School New England theology, which, since the days of the younger Edwards, had been for the most part Utilitarian. Virtue, he, like President Edwards, makes to consist in holy love. It is "love of all intelligent and sentient beings, according to their respective capacities for good, with chief and ultimate respect to the highest good, or holiness."²

We have seen how vigorously Smith in his young manhood, when reviewing Upham, insisted that the seat of moral character is in the affections rather than in the will. As time passed on, he came to concede a larger place to the will, though always denying that personal choice is the exclusive source of moral character. This latter view he considered one of the fundamental errors of the New School theology. His own position is stated in the maxim of Edwards, "The virtue or vice of a disposition of the mind lies not in its cause but in its nature," a position which, as a consistent determinist, he was

¹ *System*, p. 179.

² *Ibid.* p. 223.

bound to take. But with this qualification he takes the will into account in his statement. "What is moral in man is only to be found in the affections or the will, or both, considered as conformed or not, to some one ultimate end, to the highest good." ¹ The "immanent preference," which is the union of will and affections, is the true seat of moral character.

This brings us once more on the track of Smith's doctrine of the will. He says: —

"The will is not anything distinct from the person; it is the person himself, considered as acting or as having the power of acting in a certain way, the way of choosing." ²

It acts in two chief modes, the first that of single volitions or executive acts, the other that of immanent preference. The latter has reference to the ultimate moral end. In it the choice and the motive blend. It is free in the sense that it is spontaneous, that it is a choice, that it expresses the true tendency of our moral nature; but not in the sense of having been brought into existence by a deliberate act of choice involving power to the contrary. Only executive acts of the will are deliberate. At the beginning of our moral career we find an immanent preference in full possession of our souls; when God comes to the soul in his regenerating grace, He creates a new immanent preference. But in neither case can we be said

¹ *System*, p. 237.

² *Ibid.* p. 238.

ourselves to be the authors of it. Its freedom is a quality of it, but not dependent upon its authorship. Freedom always implies alternatives, but it does not involve the power to choose either of the alternatives. Smith differs from Edwards as to the relation of motives to the will. They are not the efficient, but only the final causes of the volition. The efficient cause is the man himself.

“Motive is not that which causes the choice, but is that which determines the direction of the choice. . . . The algebraic expression here would be: Will + Motive = Volition or Choice.”¹

Or we might say, the will is the engine that carries the train (of the man) along the track; the motive is the switch which makes him take one rather than the other of two tracks, *i. e.* engine + switch = movement of train. But as the moral direction is all-important, the motive is the vital element, and the volition is always as the strongest motive.

All this is determinism or necessitarianism. While Smith says that “the term ‘necessity’ is rather an unfortunate one to use,”² he does not repudiate it.

Man in his primitive state, according to Professor Smith, was in a condition of innocence, with the “spontaneous bent of his soul” directed “towards a holy end.” He possessed the divine image, which

¹ *System*, p. 247.

² *Ibid.* p. 251.

“consisted in the entire spiritual capacities and powers of man, which were in a state of positive proclivity to holiness and to divine wisdom (or the enlightenment from God), which state was to undergo a trial in order to become confirmed.”¹

The original state, he says,

“is not that of children, still less that of primitive savagery : it is a state of innocence, of moral purity, of simple childlike communion with God.”²

He accepts the Westminster doctrine of the Covenant of Works, though not without explanations. He tells us : —

“The term ‘covenant’ is not understood here as implying an actual transaction, a compact distinctly made and entered into by two parties. What is meant to be set forth by the term is, that if man had continued in his state of original rectitude, if he had stood the trial, the test, he would have had what is here called *life*, as the reward of his obedience.”³

This is not the only instance in which he quietly takes great liberties with the definitions of the Confession.

We come now to Christian Hamartology, or the Doctrine respecting Sin. Smith accepted the account of the temptation and fall in the opening chapters of Genesis as historical, on the ground that the New Testament treats it as such and bases upon it some of its most important doctrines. A curious result of his determinism is to be found in

¹ *System*, p. 258.

² *Ibid.* p. 253.

³ *Ibid.* p. 258.

his discussion of the temptation. His theory leaves no place for an original probation. On the deterministic hypothesis it is impossible to see how a holy being should fall. Yet Adam did fall. Here is a sinful immanent preference, which did not exist before the eating of the forbidden fruit and did exist afterwards. How shall it be explained? Dr. Emmons boldly said that God was its author. Smith would not accept this explanation. The advocate of the true freedom of the will cannot help feeling a wicked pleasure (which it is to be hoped is not to be laid to the account of his own free-will) as he sees this truly great theologian wrestling with the difficult problem, and coming to the lame conclusion that "we cannot account for Adam's fall psychologically."¹

Professor Smith's realism plays an important part in his doctrine of sin. There is a race as well as individuals, man as well as men. Of this race Adam is the natural head. As the result of his transgression all mankind has fallen.

"His transgression involved us, not in a personal sense, or in our personal relations, but so far as we have the common position and liabilities of the whole race under the divine government. In consequence of his first sin, all men come into the world alienated from God, propense to sin, and exposed or liable to eternal death. . . . The doctrine then does not immediately concern individual responsibility as such, but has to do with the common heritage and condition of humanity."²

¹ *System*, p. 263.

² *Ibid.* p. 274.

Among the various theories advanced by the theologians to explain the connection between the transgression of Adam and the sin of his posterity, Smith found most to approve in that which bears the name of "mediate imputation." He describes it as follows : —

"God makes Adam to be the head of a race : he sins : in consequence of his sin, because he is the head of a race, all his descendants are born in a sinful condition, not as a punishment, but in the way of a natural connection, and the punishment of such is on the ground of the sinful condition of each, including as final punishment his own personal acts and ill-desert. Punishment is always based on sin, and each individual's punishment is based upon what he is as an individual. The infliction of punishment is on the ground of the sinful nature, and just as much in Adam's descendants as in Adam himself."¹

This view seemed to him preferable to that of Augustin, which teaches the generic presence of the race in Adam, and its immediate participation in his sin and guilt ; to the theory sanctioned by the Westminster Confession and maintained by the Princeton theologians, that Adam acted for mankind in a representative capacity as their federal head under the covenant of works ; and to that of the New England theologians which reduces the relation between Adam's transgression and the sins of his descendants to a divine constitution. But in spite of what seemed to him its decided advantages, he never fully committed himself to this theory.

¹ *System*, p. 285.

His true position is probably expressed in a note his editor found among his papers, which reads, "Neither Mediate nor Immediate Imputation is wholly satisfactory."¹

The New School New England theologians denied the existence of sin before personal choice. Smith, on the contrary, maintained the doctrine of original sin. That is, he claimed that all men come into the world in a state that is in a true sense sinful, and that is antecedent to all actual transgressions. It renders the soul guilty and liable to, though not deserving of, eternal punishment.

"This state in which we are born is the ground of our first moral choice, of our immanent preference, so that the latter only expresses in the form of choice, of preference, what was before in this state, *in potentia*. And this immanent preference was before any present memory of ours, so that we find ourselves in it — as the whole bent and bias of our being — our inmost, profoundest moral reality. And for this, when the light of the law comes, we feel and know ourselves to be guilty before God."²

It may seem hard that all men should thus be guilty and condemned apart from any sin of their own. This Smith does not deny. He is careful to assert that newborn children are not guilty in the sense of being ill-deserving, but only in that of being liable or exposed to punishment. But he is particularly influenced by the question whether redemption through Christ is universal. If it is, and

¹ *System*, p. 285.

² *Ibid.* p. 300.

so extends to those who die in infancy, then they must be sinful and guilty. He says : —

“ Which is the best system, one which is able to say outright, Christ died for them, they may be the subjects of renewing grace, or one which is obliged to hesitate and falter on this point? Otherwise, strictly taken, infants are not saved through the atonement of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Ghost.”¹

Nor does he hold that any other class of men are lost, solely on the ground of original sin. All who have received the offer of the gospel are condemned for the rejection of grace. The heathen who are lost are lost, it may be believed, because they have not availed themselves of such opportunities of repentance as they have had, “ and this, too, on the ground of the redemption in Christ, whether they have known it or not.”² And as for the vindication of God’s justice and goodness in establishing such a constitution of things, our chief relief is to be found in considering the redemption through Christ.

“ As to individuals, it is not improbable that it is better for each one to be in a state where there is a common sinfulness and in which there is a common redemption provided, than it would be for all the members of the race to stand or fall, each by himself, without such a provision.”³

On the subject of ability and inability Smith

¹ *System*, p. 295.

² *Ibid.* p. 323.

³ *Ibid.* p. 320.

adopted the distinctions of Edwards. The sinner possesses natural ability, that is, he has all the faculties and powers of a natural agent, including the power of choice, so that he may be held responsible for his sin. But he also labors under a moral inability, that is, "such a state of the heart or will as makes continued sinful action certain."¹ His immanent preference is for self and the world. His moral inability consists in the fact that he *will* not repent. It is thus possible to say to the sinner that he is responsible for his sin, and that all that stands between him and salvation is his own unwillingness. But this mode of address which might, if the power of contrary choice were admitted, carry with it the implication that the sinner can save himself, is rendered innocuous by the deterministic philosophy on which it is based. Only the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit can transform this immanent preference of sin into the immanent preference of God and holiness; so that the sinner, while wholly responsible for his sin, is yet entirely dependent upon the sovereign grace of God.

The Second Division of the "System" is concerned with the Redemption Itself as it appears in the Person and Work of Christ. The most satisfactory part of the whole theology is the Christology. Here Professor Smith enters the field most congenial to him, where the distinctive principles of his theology can best be carried out.

He begins with the Incarnation, which is devel-

¹ *System*, p. 328.

oped from the point of view of the fifth chapter of Romans and the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, the two Headships, of Adam and Christ. Nowhere in theological literature is there a finer statement of this essential doctrine. One only wishes it might have come earlier in the system. Primarily, he says, the Incarnation is fact, and not a mere doctrine. "It belongs to what we have called the Christian Realism in distinction from Nominalism."¹ It meets the deepest needs of man, — of a perfect human life as an example and pattern; of direct communion with God; and most of all his great need as a sinner. The Incarnation was necessary on account of human sin; it is an "Incarnation in order to Redemption." In opposition to such theologians as Liebner, Martensen, and Dornier, who teach that the Incarnation would have taken place apart from sin, he holds that Christ became incarnate on account of sin. He is not the Head of the race as a race, but of the race as redeemed. If there had been no sin, some manifestation of Christ might have been necessary for the perfecting of mankind and other intelligent beings, but the Incarnation is redemptive in its purpose. It was not metaphysically necessary on God's side, according to the pantheistic view of development through incarnation. But it was morally necessary, — not indeed as a matter of justice, but on the ground of love and mercy.

"The Incarnation was not needed by God, but for

¹ *System*, p. 353.

man. It was a free act of condescension and grace on God's part. We cannot say that Redemption could have been secured in any other method. . . . It is very possible that the manifestation of grace to a race of beings, to be redeemed, made up of body and spirit, could be only by an Incarnate Redeemer." ¹

The doctrine as presented by Smith corresponds in all its main points to the Catholic position. "Christ," he says, "is very God and very man, yet one Person, the God-man." The scriptural proof is given in no perfunctory way. Smith had fought the battle through himself on this ground. He believed in his inmost heart that the Bible, largely and fairly interpreted, teaches the orthodox doctrine of Christ. He says: —

"We grant fully that it is *possible* to explain the whole of Scripture without proving Christ to be the God-man. This *can* be done, it has been done. But how? On principles which undermine every rational theory of interpretation; on principles which assert that it is possible for a person to be called God, to have divine attributes ascribed to Him, to have divine works (as creation) ascribed to Him, to be worshiped, to be an object of our highest trust and love, and yet not to be divine. On such principles Scripture can be interpreted so as to do away with the proof of Christ's divinity, and *only* on such." ²

Smith does not venture a decided theory respecting the relation of the divine and the human in Christ in the Incarnation and during the state of humiliation. His writings show that he was an

¹ *System*, p. 368.

² *Ibid.* p. 406.

interested and thoughtful student of the modern German discussions on the subject. Dr. Karr quotes a passage from one of his sermons, in which he seems to approximate to the Kenosis doctrine as presented by men like Gess and Thomasius, according to which Christ in becoming Incarnate temporarily divested Himself of the divine attributes.¹ Another passage from the same sermon seems to favor Dorner's theory of a progressive Incarnation, according to which the divine and human natures, though truly united from the first, became only gradually one in the unity of Christ's person, the physical unity developing into an ethical unity.² But he does not put himself clearly on record.³ In his lectures he repudiates the Kenosis doctrine. *Omnia exeunt in mysteria.* We cannot expect to find an explanation that will make all clear. There must be heights and depths in the doctrine of an Incarnate Redeemer which we cannot fathom.

Professor Smith showed his divergence from the New England theologians in developing the Work of Christ from the threefold view of his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King, agreeing in this with the older Calvinists and the modern evangelical Germans. The discussions of the Atonement which began in New England after the appearance of Universalism had brought the priestly aspect of the Saviour's work into such exclusive prominence that the prophetic and kingly were almost ignored, to the great loss, not only of theology, but

¹ *System*, p. 417 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 424.

³ *Ibid.* p. 398.

also of practical Christianity. The Atonement is indeed central and vital, but it is not the whole. Christ saves us not only by his blood, but also by his doctrine, his example, and most of all by his kingly working through his Holy Spirit. It was characteristic of Smith that he saw the truth on all its sides, and could not endure the onesidedness of a too narrow orthodoxy.

But while he vindicates all the elements of the *Munus Triplex*, he gives especial attention to the Atonement. After a careful definition of the terms, in which he distinguishes atonement from reconciliation, and shows its relation to the synonymous words, he passes to speak of its necessity. This he bases upon the two facts of God's holiness and man's sin. He sums up the results of his examination of the scriptural teachings as follows: —

“This gives us the revealed facts as to the nature and relations of Christ's atoning work — no theory, no hypothesis — only an arrangement and array of the chief Scriptural assertions. And it amounts to this, viz., that in Christ's death as a sacrifice for our sins, He (1) suffered and died for sin, in our stead, as a proper sacrifice: that his were the vicarious, substituted sufferings of a representative; (2) under the law, to answer the ends of the law, in some way, in our stead; (3) in order to remove its curse from us; (4) which was done by his substituted sufferings, death, obedience; (5) and which had further the effect of a propitiation, declaring God's righteousness and reconciling man to God.”¹

¹ *System*, p. 463 seq.

This is the Catholic doctrine of the Atonement, with no attempt at a theory. Smith takes up the various theories and subjects them to an acute criticism. The view "which defines the Atonement ultimately by its influence on man, in bringing to a new life," he repudiates in all its forms as insufficient and belonging not so much to Christ's priestly as to his prophetic and kingly offices. He regards with scarcely more favor "the theories which put the essence of the Atonement in satisfaction to Distributive Justice," as held by the Old School Calvinists. Perhaps he does them less justice than they deserve. This is one of the few instances in which Professor Smith allows himself to label an opposing view with an opprobrious title. The designation "Mercantile or *Quid pro quo* Theory" is neither correct nor quite fair. He also rejects the "theories which assert that the Atonement consists in the satisfaction of general justice, viewing this as having reference to happiness or expediency, in maintaining the authority of the divine government," — the Grotian or governmental doctrine so widely accepted by the New School men in New England.

His own theory was the New England doctrine in a more moderate form. He states it thus: —

"The Atonement, while it indirectly satisfies Distributive Justice, does not consist in this: it consists in satisfying the Demands of Public Justice, meaning by that the divine holiness or the holiness of the law, *i. e.* what the divine holiness sets before itself as the chief end of the

universe, or that which is the end of the requirement of the law.”¹

The main points made are the following: —

“Atonement is under moral government and under moral law. . . . Moral law has two main ends: To secure the supremacy of holiness — of holy love — in the universe; this is the generic end; To furnish the rule for individuals — moral agents — exacting conformity to that generic end. This rule is carried out in Distributive Justice, in rendering to each according to his deeds. . . . Distributive Justice is subservient to General or Public Justice; only it must always be understood that general justice is the real, essential justice of God, that which requires the supremacy of holiness in the universe, and not merely that which seeks to procure the greatest happiness. Hence, if General Justice is fully, directly, gloriously satisfied, Distributive Justice is really and entirely, though incidentally, satisfied.”²

He goes on to say that Christ’s

“obedience and death in our stead answer the ends of public justice — show God’s supreme love of holiness and hatred of sin — since it is thus manifest that only a perfect obedience and suffering for disobedience can answer the ends of the divine government. That is, the obedience of each and all individuals is demanded, in order to the satisfaction of the divine holiness. Instead of this, we having failed in obedience, and being subject to penalty, Christ in our stead, instead of the demands on each and all, does and suffers what answers the same, the identical ends. What He did and suffered is not the same in kind or degree, but the same in essence, nature,

¹ *System*, p. 470.

² *Ibid.* p. 471 *seq.*

and in its relation to the end or design of the divine government or law. — Are Christ's sufferings penalty, then? Not in the sense that distributive justice was meted out to Him, but in the wider sense, in which penalty includes suffering under the law, to show God's displeasure at sin." ¹

This is the theory. But he does not attempt to give a full explanation of the Atonement. There is a background of mystery which no man can fathom. The ultimate metaphysical question, *how*, this theory does not pretend to answer.

Professor Smith teaches the doctrine of a general or universal atonement, thus taking distinctively New School ground. Yet he expresses himself guardedly.

“The Atonement made by Christ is made for all mankind, is such in nature *and design*, that God can save all men, consistently with the demands of holiness, on condition of faith and repentance. . . . The design of the Atonement *was* to save the elect, but not merely to save them; it was also designed to impart some blessings to the whole world, and to make the offer of salvation and the duty of accepting Christ urgent upon all who hear. Not that it was actually designed to be applied to all, but to some. Not that it is consistent with all the interests of the divine government for God actually to save all, but — consistent with the demands of penal justice.” ²

But one is tempted to ask, Of what use is a universal atonement, unless there is a universal provision for redemption, of which all have moral as

¹ *System*, p. 475 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 478 *seq.*

well as natural ability to avail themselves? What good comes from Christ's having died for me, if that grace is withheld by which alone his death can become efficacious to my salvation?

The Third Division, entitled the Kingdom of Redemption, is based upon the realism of Christ's relation to the church. "The general underlying idea of this part of the system of theology is that of a union between Christ and the believer, through the work of the Holy Spirit."¹

As is to be expected from so consistent a determinist as he, Professor Smith takes the strict Calvinistic position respecting predestination, election, and the effectual call. Predestination is but a part of the divine decree, namely, that "which has respect to the final condition and destiny of moral beings, especially of man."² It is arbitrary only "in the sense that God is not dependent on any will but his own for his purposes and plans; in the sense that He acts from mere will and mere power, it is not arbitrary."³ Election is a part of predestination.

"Election is the expression of God's infinite love towards the human race, redeeming man from sin through Christ, and by the Holy Spirit bringing him into this state of redemption, so far as it is consistent with the interests of God's great and final kingdom. It is the divine love in its most concrete and triumphant form."⁴

This is election "Christologized." Smith is

¹ *System*, p. 491.

² *Ibid.* p. 502.

³ *Ibid.* p. 504.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 505.

aware of the ethical difficulties of the doctrine, and he tries, so far as is consistent with his Calvinism, to meet them. He says: —

“The following statements form no part of the doctrine of Election: That God created some men to damn them; That Christ died only for the elect; That the elect will be saved, let them do what they will; That the non-elect cannot be saved, let them do what they can; That the non-elect cannot comply with the conditions of salvation through natural inability.”¹

Still the fact remains that the non-elect have no moral ability; and according to his deterministic doctrine they never will have, unless God's grace interposes, which it does not in their case. That efficacious grace, which alone is sufficient to remove the sinner's moral inability, is not granted to the non-elect. Hence Smith does not hesitate to teach the doctrines of præterition and reprobation, that is, God's leaving of the non-elect to the consequences of their sins, and his punishment of them for their sins. If his statements are not altogether satisfactory, it is because the system he holds is not so. Unquestionably he was what he always claimed to be, a thoroughly loyal Calvinist.

The peculiarity of his doctrine of justification lies in its being based so decidedly upon the believer's union with Christ. This doctrine of the “mystical union” was not new. It was an essential element in the theology of the Reformation, and

¹ *System*, p. 505.

finds a place in the Westminster symbols. But in the theological teaching of this country it had fallen much into the background, especially in New England. It was a part of Smith's realism that he revived it and made it so prominent in his system. This union, which is as much a reality as that "between Christ and the Father, the husband and the wife, the trunk and the branches," is "spiritual, not immediate, but through and by the Holy Spirit uniting us to Christ our head."¹ It is on the basis of this union, effected by the Holy Spirit and appropriated by faith, that the believer is justified, that is, forgiven and restored to God's favor.

Faith is without merit. It is only the instrument of justification. In the evangelical sense, it is not assent to truth, but

"the receiving, resting in, and trusting upon Christ. . . . It is an act of the whole soul — not of the intellect, nor will, nor sensibilities, alone, but of all combined."²

It is a holy act, though not as being the ground of justification. It is truly moral, so that unbelief is a sin. It does not necessarily involve the assurance of personal salvation, though this is a privilege which all Christians may possess.

On the subject of regeneration, Smith also takes ground different from that of the New School New England men. The latter have identified regeneration and conversion, making both to consist in the

¹ *System*, p. 533.

² *Ibid.* p. 540.

new choice by which the sinner passes from death unto life, from the life of sin to the life of holiness, — thus an act of will, brought about indeed by the Spirit's power, but still the sinner's own act. Smith, in common with the Old School theologians, distinguishes between regeneration, which "is the Spirit's work in man, turning him from sin to holiness, from self to Christ,"¹ and conversion or repentance, which is the sinner's own act. According to him, regeneration is supernatural, instantaneous, involving the renewal of the whole man, and prior to the human activity of conversion. He says: —

"The act of the will on man's part does not produce, but indicates the change. . . . Regeneration in its full measure and extent involves a new direction of all the human powers from the world and towards God, — an illumination of the understanding, a current of the affections, and a choice of the will."²

Regeneration is the production by the Holy Spirit of a new immanent preference, a new direction of both the affections and the will. The old was that of sin; the new is that of love. From the nature of the case this is a mystery. "Any theory of regeneration which explains it all must be false, because it assumes that the finite can compass the ways of omnipotence."³

The chapters on Sanctification and Perseverance demand no especial notice. They give the common orthodox doctrine, stated with the clearness of definition and distinction characteristic of Smith. Nor

¹ *System*, p. 553.

² *Ibid.* pp. 557, 562.

³ *Ibid.* p. 564.

is it worth while to spend much time upon the eschatology. The discussions of the last ten years were far in the future when the lectures were prepared. For the most part Smith simply follows the traditional doctrine, though undoubtedly receiving it on more than traditional grounds. The state after death is one of conscious existence. The first judgment takes place at death, when the destiny of souls is decided. Believers pass into Paradise, which is in Hades, not Heaven, — on this point he is influenced by German theology, — while unbelievers are in a state of punishment. He finds no place for the extension of probation to the intermediate state. The Second Coming of Christ is personal, an objective event, to take place at the consummation of the present order of things. The resurrection occurs, not at death but at Christ's coming, and is a bodily and not merely a spiritual resurrection. The last judgment is not so much for the decision of destiny as for the vindication of God's righteousness in the government of the world in the two spheres of nature and grace. Rejecting the theories of conditional immortality and restoration, Smith teaches the doctrine of the unending punishment of the ungodly, basing it upon what he believes scriptural authority. After the judgment the redeemed enter the final blessedness of Heaven.

“ This blessedness is in the vision of God. . . . God will then be revealed to the soul, as now the world is to the senses. . . . It is in the fellowship with Christ. . . .

It is in the complete indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The creation will be transformed into its final condition of glory. . . . The glory of human nature will be fully attained: the image of God will be perfectly realized, as it cannot be here on earth. . . . All created spirits will be united in one vast spiritual empire — a harmonized universe. As Jew and Gentile were brought into the unity of the Christian church, so human and angelic beings, all ages and all histories, are brought to a headship and eternal unity in Christ. Of this the new song is the testimony and expression. . . . In the eternal melody of that song, resounding for evermore, making heaven vocal with praise deeper and tenderer than any other, — in and with that melody, Christian Theology forever closes.”¹

Such is the noble *finale* of the “Christian Theology.” The volume as we now possess it is but a collection of fragments. The system which it imperfectly reproduces was never completely wrought out. Much of the old scholasticism still clings to it. Its philosophy is open to criticism. And yet, in spite of all, when we study it with sympathetic spirit, it enables us to reproduce in thought the outline of a magnificent structure. It is the old theology, the theology of Protestantism in its best days, of New England Puritanism, made living and new by the mind of one of the profoundest and most spiritual theologians of our times.

¹ *System*, p. 621.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EDITOR AND LITTÉRATEUR.

IN the summer of 1859, Professor Smith enjoyed a well-earned respite from work in the form of a three months' trip to Europe. The theologian passed through the Old World with open eyes and reflective mind. He was not yet forty-four years old, in the maturity of his powers, and at the height of his reputation and influence. His letters written home during the journey are full of interest. They show a man more experienced, trained, and far-seeing than the Henry B. Smith who passed through many of the same scenes twenty years before, but not less earnest and enthusiastic, scarcely less vivacious. In some of them the professional theologian disappears altogether, and he writes with a joyous *abandon*, a sprightliness of expression, a simplicity, altogether charming.

We find him back in New York in September, once more beginning his Seminary work. Soon he is in the depths of labor. Besides his preparation for the class-room and his duties as librarian, there is all sorts of literary toil, — the Review, of which we are to speak a little later, philosophical articles for Appleton's "Cyclopædia," a "Memoir of An-

son G. Phelps, Jr.," and a host of other things not to be mentioned here. Life deepens in many ways, as it always does when its middle point is passed. A beloved brother is taken from him, after he had ministered to him in spiritual things, turning his theology into help and comfort for the dying bed. So time swung on, till the great Civil War came, and he, like all Americans, high and low, learned and simple, entered into altogether new and strange experiences.

In January, 1859, the winter before Professor Smith went abroad, the first number of the "American Theological Review" was published. Of this, and of the "American Presbyterian and Theological Review," formed by the consolidation of the former with the "Presbyterian Quarterly Review" of Philadelphia, he was the editor, as he was still later of the "Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review," the result of a still further consolidation, after the reunion of the Old and New School Presbyterians, with the old "Princeton Review."¹ From this time until his death his editorial labors continued, broken only by sickness and absence in Europe.

Much earlier, as we have seen, he had begun his connection with the periodical press. He was a born man of letters. In 1853, he had become an editorial contributor to the New York "Evangelist," and so continued until his death. A large number of articles on matters of public interest

¹ He did not become editor of the *American Theological Review*, till the *second* number. See *Memoir*, p. 200.

were published in this journal, and would be of great value, if they could be collected. Writing under the screen of editorial anonymity, he used great freedom of speech, and spoke always from a full mind and the stores of an abundant and varied learning. Beside theological and ecclesiastical subjects, he treated many of moral and social importance. He had an innate love of controversy, — which, however, he knew how to keep within due bounds, — and never appears to better advantage than when defending the truth that was dear to him, or attacking views that he believed inimical to the best interests of orthodox Christianity.

A good example of his editorial and controversial writing in the columns of the “*Evangelist*” is to be found in a series of articles published in the year 1853. The “*Congregationalist*” of Boston had made an attack, which he regarded as unwarranted and gratuitous, upon the motives of certain ministers, some of them intimate friends of his, who had gone from New England and Congregationalism to the pastorates of prominent New School Presbyterian churches in the Middle States. There were those in the Congregational denomination at this time who did not look with satisfaction upon the increasing strength of New School Presbyterianism. The enlarging influence of Union Seminary, since Smith’s advent, as a centre of theology very different from that which aimed to be the dominant system in New England, was not wholly pleasing to certain men who would have

preferred to have Andover rather than New York the rallying-point of the New School Presbyterians.

In the article referred to, the "Congregationalist" said: "It is a lamentable fact that some clergymen who have left our plain parishes for the splendid churches of the Middle States have soon become inimical to our institutions, and have exerted all their influence against the theology and the usages of New England." It roundly accused them of having "sacrificed their principles for larger salaries." There was a chivalrous sentiment in Smith which made him keen to resent any injustice, especially towards those he knew and loved. Moreover, he himself was, at least indirectly, involved in the attack. His replies are full of vigor. He says of his first article: —

"We took up our pen in sorrow and not in anger, deeply grieved that such charges, and such a policy, should come from such a source. We love and honor New England not less than do our brethren."¹

He concludes, after stating the accusation: —

"This, we say, is a definite charge; the persons whom it embraces are restricted to the Middle States; the motive assigned is leaving plain parishes for splendid churches; the charge made is — that these men 'are inimical to New England institutions and New England theology.' We do not hesitate to pronounce it to be a calumny until it is shown to be a fact. The men whom it covers can all be named and numbered. Will the journal that has had the boldness to make the charge, have also the manliness to prove or to retract it?"²

¹ *Evangelist*, February 17, 1853.

² *Ibid.*

The controversy continued for some weeks in the columns of the two newspapers. Smith closes the final article with these words, which show the independence and energy, as also the fairness and largeness of thought, of the man: —

“ We trust that this painful discussion is now at an end. The ‘ Evangelist ’ has labored, and will still labor, for the peace and prosperity of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists. — With Congregationalism and with New England theology it has no contest; against them it has made no attack. It does not believe that Congregationalism is identical with ‘ pure Independency,’ or New England theology with any extreme and partial views. And when some Congregationalists make sectarian assaults, and cast unjust suspicions upon the ministry and the churches it represents, it will not hesitate to meet and repel the assault, confident, as in the present instance, that it has the sympathy and gratitude of many in New England itself. And in the New England theology the whole country have such an interest, that it is not in the power of any man, or of any journal, to arrogate to itself the right of exclusive possession and interpretation. It has blessed our whole land; it has influenced many denominations. It has done so because it was not exclusive or sectarian. It will do so, just in proportion as it is interpreted and unfolded, in its harmony with, and not in its opposition to, the Confessions of Faith on which all our evangelical churches rest. There is a greater interest here than that of any one party, or of any single school. It is the common interest of all our churches. And to help this forward will be the aim of the ‘ Evangelist.’ ”¹

¹ *Evangelist*, April 14, 1853.

In all his manifold writing for the newspapers, he was the theologian, using the great truths it was his life's business to expound, as means to change and mould the opinion and life of his age. We might be disposed to regret that so much time was spent upon work of this sort, from the nature of the case ephemeral in its influence, and now likely always to remain hidden. But we cannot but look at it differently when we realize how great was the influence he thus exerted upon his contemporaries. If his life could have been devoted to the work, he would have made a superb journalist. Yet in that case he would necessarily have been without that magnificent equipment, resulting from his special studies, pursued through a lifetime, in theology, history, philosophy, and the other branches in which he was an expert. His power lay in the fact that a mind so strong, so trained and full, was given so largely to the events of the day.

In addition to this editorial work, he accomplished a vast amount of literary labor in the reviewing of books and the preparation of articles for other journals and periodicals. His pen was constantly called into requisition by the leading newspapers, both religious and secular. Thus he wrote for the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, the *Presbyterian*, the *New Brunswick*, the *Methodist*, the *Baptist*, and the *Southern Quarterly Reviews*, for *Norton's Literary Gazette*, the *London Evangelical Christendom*, the *Independent*, the *Round Table*, the *New York Times*, etc. He also prepared elaborate

articles for Appleton's New American Cyclopædia on Calvin, Hegel, Kant, Miracles, Pantheism, the Reformed Churches, and Schelling, — of great and permanent value. He made similar contributions to McClintock's and Strong's Cyclopædia. Though he knew how to write from the full mind with a racing pen, yet in all this work there is evidence of labor and thought. His friend and colleague in editorial work, Rev. J. M. Sherwood, wrote after his death: —

“He conscientiously abstained from writing, even in the pages under his immediate control, on any question or topic that he had not prepared himself, by patient study and original investigation, to discuss intelligently and profitably to his readers. . . . No pressure brought to bear upon him could ever induce him to swerve from this purpose. We often suggested to him subjects in the line of his studies, and on which we knew his mind was at work, which would be timely, and none could handle better, and which we desired to have discussed in the Quarterly, but the uniform reply was, ‘I am not yet ready. I am thinking about it. Some of these days I hope to feel competent to make the attempt.’”¹

The larger part of this literary work comes within the years from 1859 to 1869, and centres in the Reviews of which he was successively the editor, and which derived their wide influence largely from his personality. Allusion has been made to his connection with the “American Theological Review.” The circumstances attending its establish-

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. vi. p. 345.

ment and Professor Smith's call to its editorship are thus stated by Dr. Sherwood : —

“ In the year 1859, an association of gentlemen, in Boston and vicinity, originated the ‘ American Theological Review,’ with Dr. Joseph Tracy as editor. ‘ It was designed to meet the wants of those churches that accept the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism as an expression of their theological views.’ After the issue of the first number, it was deemed expedient to secure an editor from this city (New York). Dr. Smith was offered, and accepted, the position, and remained its chief editor till it was united with the ‘ Presbyterian Quarterly,’ at the close of 1862 ; the death of Dr. Wallace, the founder and editor of that journal, and the choice of the writer as his successor, having prepared the way for this union, under their joint editorship, with the title of the ‘ American Presbyterian and Theological Review.’ It was a remarkable compliment that Boston and Congregationalism thereby paid to the New York Presbyterian professor. The position did seem a little anomalous, and gave rise to more or less criticism. And yet there was a real sympathy and vital doctrinal harmony between the founders of that Review and the school of theology of which Dr. Smith was a fitting and distinguished representative.”¹

Under date of February 4, 1859, Smith writes from New York : —

“ And now about our new Review. The projected Puritan is to come here and be called ‘ American Theological Quarterly,’ and I am to edit it. A fund is to be raised to establish it, half in New England and half here. The

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. vi. p. 346.

first number is just out; I wrote nothing but some notices — for I did not get the editorship till it was half through the press. Everything looks well about it — except that the ‘Independent’ is mad — and does n’t like it, and says I am deserting Presbyterianism. The Review is professedly a doctrinal union of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, on the basis of the Shorter Catechism. Ecclesiastical controversies between us are ignored.”¹

As we have seen, he had been reproached before for deserting Congregationalism. Now there were Congregationalists to get “mad” that he was deserting Presbyterianism. To us the jealousies of those days are nothing. They meant much then. But Smith was rather exhilarated than depressed by wholesome opposition. True to his character as a mediating theologian, he was eager to bring the churches closer together, and to rally his own Presbyterian friends under the banner of his moderate theology, doubtless with far-seeing thoughts of that Reunion which came a few years later. On March 26, he writes : —

“The Review is assailed *terribly*, which shows that it was needed. But we are in for it with a strong team, and must carry it through.”²

The second number of the Review, which was the first under Smith’s editorial management, opens with an article by himself, in which its programme is distinctly stated. It begins with characteristic words : —

¹ *Memoir*, p. 200 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 201.

“Our Review has been greeted with an unusual amount of criticism in several of the religious newspapers. For our first acquaintance with some of our alleged motives and objects, we are indebted to these journals. But we prefer to be judged in the light of the good old maxim, that the tree is known by its fruits.”¹

The object of the Review, he goes on to say, is not ecclesiastical, but theological. It was intended to represent what was called “the old school of New England theology.” Then followed an account of this school of thought, which deserves transcription, at least in part.

“This theology is common to New England, and to a large proportion of the Presbyterian Church of the country; more than any other, it has given shape to thought, to preaching, and to the Christian life. . . . It was represented by such names as the elder Edwards, Bellamy, Smalley, Hopkins, Burton, and Dwight; among those nearer to our times, it has been ably advocated by Griffin, Woods, Tyler, and Richards. It has been intermediate between the extreme views and tendencies on either hand.”²

He said, contrasting the older system of faith with the extreme New School theology of New England:—

“That made God’s will, and not man’s, supreme; holiness, and not happiness, was its last word; and all moral theories were limited by, and were not allowed to limit, the doctrines of original sin, of atonement, and of justifi-

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 326 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 327.

cation. In that system the revelation of God in Christ, and not the revelation in natural conscience and reason, was allowed to speak the last word, and to shape the definitions of doctrine. In the Person and Work of Christ, that theology has its centre; in the eternal decree of God it has its root and its strength. And there is thus about it an unrivaled sublimity; it awes as well as attracts the soul. It makes man feel that God is the strength of his heart, and his portion forever.”¹

There was at this time — at least so it was felt by many — a domineering tone among the advocates of the extreme New School theology. Smith was not the man to submit tamely to what he thought dictation unbacked by reason. The passage which follows was well understood in New England, and it struck home : —

“It is sometimes assumed, in a very dogmatic way, that the old theology of New England is already decayed and effete, a thing of the past, and past recovery. Some antiquated divines, who speak boldly or cautiously in its favor, are looked upon with respect for their services, and commiseration for their opinions. And all younger persons, who venture to be dissatisfied with the more modern views, are declared to be at war with the settled theology and terminology of New England. This theology is reduced to a few scant phrases, easily understood, easily learnt, easily repeated. If anybody has ever spoken these phrases, even by accident, now or in the past centuries, he is a sound New England divine. And if anybody cannot find in them his ultimate formulas of thought on the highest questions, he needs, first of all, to

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 328.

be put through an easy course of mental and moral philosophy for the improvement of his understanding. And if he says anything which implies distrust of any of these pet phrases, he is at once read out of the charmed circle of the New England divines.”¹

This is racy reading. But for us it has only an historic interest.

The Review distinctly repudiated all purpose to interfere with matters merely ecclesiastical. But it was not confined to theological subjects. A place was to be found for the discussion of themes relating to the history of doctrine, in the church at large and in our own country. It was to be open also to the treatment of literary, philosophical, and scientific topics in their relation to Christianity. From early life Smith had been impressed with the coming of the great struggle between Christianity and the anti-Christian powers. His own experience had shown him how utterly opposed the Christian system is to all merely secular agencies, a redemptive system, wholly supernatural, centring in the Living Christ and his Holy Spirit. In his German life he had come to understand the mighty enginery which unbelief, then allied with the pantheistic philosophy, was bringing to bear against the kingdom of God. With increasing clearness he had come to see how extensive, though as yet subtle and largely hidden, had been the influence of this unbelief on the Christian public. He already had prophetic glimpses of the great conflict between Chris-

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 328 seq.

tianity and the unbelief that claims to be the outcome of a right interpretation of physical science. It was his purpose to furnish a counteracting influence in this Review. The article goes on to say : —

“It is an undeniable fact that much of the modern literature rests upon an anti-Christian view of human society and the destiny of mankind. It is impregnated with a merely humanitarian, when not with a pantheistic bias. In the popular lecture the orthodox faith is often openly contemned; and those who thus stigmatize the cherished convictions of a large part of the community, demand the fullest license for their own speculations; they even profess indignation when their assaults are assailed. It may well be doubted, whether there is not a more intense intolerance lurking in the heart of much of the modern humanitarianism than was ever shown by the strictest orthodoxy. But those who hold to the Christian faith have, at least, as good a right to the utmost freedom of speech, as have their opponents; and this freedom must be exercised more definitely and deliberately, unless we mean to surrender literature and literary criticism into the hands of the enemies of our faith.”¹

Smith then goes on to speak on his favorite topic, the relation of faith and reason. Here the whole conflict with infidelity centres.

“If we leave all philosophy to the opponents of Christianity, we virtually concede that Christianity cannot be vindicated before the cultivated intellect of the age. We must enter into their theories and arguments, so far at least as to show that at their highest venture they come

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 331.

to only negative results ; and that a mere negation is of no force against the positive and independent evidences for Christian truth.”¹

It was in the Reviews of which Professor Smith was the editor and the moving spirit that his own most important articles and essays appeared. These cover a very large range of topics, and were in line with the purposes indicated in the inaugural of the “American Theological Review,” just referred to.² He enlisted in the work a large number of able coadjutors, some of them his own colleagues in Union Seminary, others theologians and scholars of high standing in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. From the first the Review commanded the respect of the Christian world for its high principles, sound theology, scholarship, tolerance, and generous breadth of thought. It did much to give the tone to this kind of literature in this country and abroad. Everything about it was fair and above-board. The names of the authors were given. It never became the organ of a party or the arena for unworthy conflict. The generation of ministers brought up upon this Review and its successors were men of unusual spirituality and largeness of mind. The educational influence thus exerted by Smith was very great, greater even than that through the class-room. For he was the moving spirit of the whole. He was not the leader of

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 332.

² Cf. the list in the *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. vi. p. 347.

a party, — for that he was too large and good, — but he was the rallying-point for a remarkable circle of like-minded men, — like-minded, however, not so much in the details of doctrine as in their general spirit.

He knew how to educate men directly for work like his own. It was a special delight to him to bring out the latent talent of his students and younger friends by assigning them tasks for the Review, translations, book notices, or the like. Some can remember as an epoch in their lives the time when he came with a German book, and asked in his quiet way, “Would n’t you like to translate such and such a chapter for the Review?”

Three features in his Review, not so common in such periodicals then as now, deserve especial attention. The first is the summary of “Theological and Literary Intelligence.” This was for the most part prepared by Smith himself, and gathered from a great variety of sources, foreign and American. Its worth was appreciated at the time, but it now has an historical importance which will make it increasingly valuable to the student of ecclesiastical history as the years go by. Another feature of scarcely less significance was the “News of the Churches and of Missions,” with which may be mentioned, as of like nature, the yearly summaries of the proceedings of the General Assembly.

But the most valuable and unique feature in the Review was the book notices. Here Smith was at his best. His immense learning, his fine critical

power, his wonderful faculty of analysis, his sympathetic appreciation of an author's position, united to give him rare skill as a reviewer. Here, as elsewhere, he was the theologian, measuring everything by his theory of God and divine things. But he was not the mere theologian. Besides the distinctively theological books which he reviewed, he noticed all the principal publications in philosophy, history, biography, and general literature. This work was done with comparatively little help from others. Where in our recent reviews the labor is divided among a great number of men, each an expert in his special department, this many-sided theologian performed his task almost single-handed. It was he who made this feature essential to every well-conducted American theological review.

His skill in this department has been well characterized by his friend, Dr. Marvin R. Vincent:—

“He early revealed the qualities of a great reviewer. Rapidly but firmly he grasped the main positions of a book, stated them with the nicest precision, discerned at a glance their relations to other discussions of the same subject, as well as to the principles of the subject itself, and so fixed the true relative place and value of the volume. He knew *books* well, but he knew *subjects* even better; and it was his knowledge of subjects which imparted the chief value to his estimate of books. He knew, as few others did, whether a book was a real contribution to human thought, or a mere brilliant revamping of old rubbish. . . . His skill in detecting fallacy was only equaled by his felicity in exposing it. . . . He

was just and kindly to books as to men. If he could censure severely, he could also praise; and he praised as one who delighted to find merit and truth, even in an antagonist's work." ¹

His editorial co-laborer, Dr. Sherwood, said with truth, "Sometimes in a single sentence he would lay bare the essential defects of a book, however ingeniously and elaborately they were concealed, or point out its real merits." ²

The value of these book notices is shown by the fact that in almost all instances they have stood the test of time. The cases where he misjudged a book were very few. And even in those cases it was not seldom because he judged by better and higher standards than can prevail in a world where the "survival of the fittest" is to so great an extent a mere survival of what is adapted to an imperfect environment.

It would be interesting, if space permitted, to illustrate the statements just made by appropriate examples. A very few must suffice. Here is a part of the review of Dr. Newman's "Apologia pro Vita Sua:" —

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. Mr. Kingsley in his haste said that Father Newman held that 'truth, for its own sake, need not be, and on the whole ought not to be, a virtue of the Roman Catholic clergy.' When called upon to prove this, he at first tried to throw the burden of proof upon the accused; and

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. vi. p. 282.

² *Ibid.* p. 348.

so a sharp quarrel arose, which has given us, as its result, one of the most interesting and instructive autobiographies in the English language. We have here partly the outward, but chiefly the inward history of one of the ablest Englishmen of the present day, the head and heart of the old Oxford movement. This volume gives us the key to his career. . . . The reasons which Dr. Newman gives for his changes seem trivial and superficial. There is an entire want of thorough grappling with the principles. Philosophical reflection had little to do with the result. . . . It looks like magic rather than reason, conscience, or religion. The story is well and plausibly told. Mr. Kingsley is refuted with great pertinacity and fatiguing prolixity. The style is perfectly clear and bright. An appendix gives the authorities in favor of the 'economy,' that is, lying which is not lying." ¹

A more condensed, apt, and exquisitely truthful review was never written than the following: —

"The Conduct of Life. By R. W. Emerson. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1860. Pp. 288. Contents: Fate; Power; Wealth; Culture; Behavior; Worship; Considerations by the Way; Beauty; Illusions. The first topic gives the essence, and the last topic gives the net result of these inimitable Essays, to which we shall recur again." ²

This has all the brevity, if not the finality, of a judgment-day sentence. An example of the way in which he could turn a review into a brilliant and chivalrous vindication is to be found in his defense of his friend Dr. Gillett's work on the "Life and

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. iii. p. 162.

² *American Theological Review*, vol. iii. p. 412.

Times of John Huss" against what he regarded as the ungrounded and malevolent attacks of the "North American Review." He says of the critic:

"He has used what art and authority he had to condemn a work which he was evidently incompetent to criticise. Long ago John Milton said, 'Almost as good kill a man as kill a good book.' The 'North American' has tried to do the latter, and the failure of its attempt cannot save it from the moral turpitude of the act. The feebleness of its arm cannot atone for the malignity of its will. Had it really possessed the authority which it so arrogantly assumed to exercise, it would have committed a deed the odium of which would have been aggravated by its success." ¹

Considering the position in the world of literary criticism then occupied by the "North American," this was high talk. But Smith was not afraid to speak out. He closes the review thus:—

"The 'North American' has really degraded itself in this matter, and forfeited its title to a seat in the Areopagus of literary criticism. Its first duty is to atone for its wrong by a manly acknowledgment of its error; and then in the practice of that 'modesty' which it justly commends, it may with more consistency, and without exposing itself to the charge of hypocrisy, presume to arraign those offenders against the laws of sound criticism before whom it has itself set so perverse an example. 'It would be far better'—to borrow its own language—'that there were no criticism, rather than such misleading and ignorant parade of judgment.'" ²

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 674.

² *Ibid.* p. 675.

As examples of his best critical treatment of distinctively theological books, reference may be made to his review of Dr. A. A. Hodge's "Outlines of Theology,"¹ and of the elder Dr. Hodge's "Systematic Theology."² He possessed in preëminent measure the ability to put himself at the theological standpoint of other theologians, and to render criticism that was at once kindly and incisive, showing the real points of difference, yet emphasizing the deeper-lying unity.

His critical work was not confined to the short book notice. Or perhaps it would be more true to say that in many cases the book notices so enlarged upon his hands as to become body articles. This was the case with his critiques on Mansel and Sir William Hamilton, his review of Whedon on the Will, and many other of his more important essays.

When we shall come to sum up the work done by the literary men of America during the nineteenth century, it is probable that we shall give Henry B. Smith a place in the first rank of critics. Certainly he will have no superior among the theologians who have entered the field of criticism.

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iii. p. 192 seq.

² *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, April, 1872.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT.

NO account of Henry B. Smith would be complete that did not mention his work for his country in its time of peril. It is not to the men of action who fought the great War through in the field, that the exclusive credit for the final victory is due. The men of prayer and thought also played their important part.

Smith's private and professional life during the four eventful years that intervened between Sumter and Appomattox can be passed lightly over. In fact, for him, as for so many others, the individual interests were swallowed up in the public interests. He went quietly about his duties in the study and the Seminary, keeping up his literary labors and taking his share in the ecclesiastical business of the church. But the great fact of the time was the War.

In the course of this narrative we have had abundant occasion to see that the theological interest predominated in Smith's mind in all his varied activities. Because he lived in the midst of the realities of the kingdom of God, and had reduced these realities and their relations to a system in his

thought, he had a key to unlock the mysteries of the world about him, a standard by which to measure its events, a motive for his own work for his fellow-men. We have seen how this was the case in his teaching of church history. It was his theology illustrated by the march of events. It was the outward, visible, irrefutable evidence of the presence of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit carrying on their redemptive work. And this not in the church alone. Secular history was to him a part of the same great process, an essential element in the work of redemption, to be understood only as seen in the light of Christ.

It is not strange, therefore, that Professor Smith, from a comparatively early period in his career, had clear and profound convictions of the part his own country was to play in the great work of the kingdom. When a student in Germany, he wrote to his parents, July 27, 1839: —

“All my thoughts, wishes, and plans have reference only to my activity in my own beloved country, which I believe, more firmly than ever, to be blessed with higher privileges, and preparing for a more glorious future than any other nation of the earth. . . . For us it is left to decide higher problems, and to test and develop greater principles, than has ever been the lot of any other people. . . . For us are, at least, three great questions to decide: whether the black man and the white can live together in masses, and in equality; whether a free people can, out of and by their freedom, perpetuate law and government; and whether the church can be separated

from the state, and still the state be pure and Christian. In any other people under the whole heaven, to state these as problems which that people were called upon to solve, would startle them beyond measure; the impossibility would be tacitly assumed: and yet *we* are striding forward in the actual solution of them. Through strife and contest, perhaps by the fire and the sword, will this be accomplished; but the God of nations rules in, and by means of, and in spite of — discord, fire, and the sword.”¹

These striking prophecies show how clearly he had laid hold upon the true elements in our great national problem. In his address on the “Reformed Churches of Europe and America,” given in St. Louis in 1855, he further develops the same theme. After showing that the true solution of human history is to be found in that kingdom of God whose end is “the redemption of the world through Christ,” an end which “can only be attained as the whole Christian system penetrates and is applied to the whole of human society and life,” he goes on to show the special fitness of the system of the Reformed churches for the performance of this task, and the importance of the fact that the field on which it is to do this work is our own land.

He proceeds: —

“What a commanding geographical position has been given us for this work, as to no other people! Rome was only in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea; we are in the same relative position to the two oceans, the mid-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 72 *seq.*

dle way between the ancient world of Asia, and the modern world of Europe. Our territory is nearly twice the extent of that of the Roman empire in its palmyest days. . . . And why was all this reserved until now? What destiny is commensurate with such an opportunity? What wonderful purpose of divine Providence, hidden for ages, is to be accomplished in the centre of this new world, which is also older in a large part of its geological structure than any other portion of our earth? What a solemn, yet inspiring trust, is committed to the people of our land!"¹

He goes on to show how the different races have been congregated here, and thus a complex, many-sided civilization built up. On this arena the different principles of our time are doing battle, the humanitarian, the scientific, the speculative, the ritualistic, and the evangelical. And he looks with undoubting faith for the triumph of the evangelical principle, which aims at the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. That this land, so fitted to be the theatre of this great and decisive conflict and the victory of the Lord and his Christ, should be torn asunder, and lose its place among the nations of the earth, was a thought not to be allowed without the strongest protest. Such a result would be the reversal of prophecy, the blasting of the highest hopes of man.

In May, 1857, he delivered an address in Boston, in behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West,

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 119 seq.

which was repeated in October of the same year at the anniversary of the society in New York. It was entitled "An Argument for Christian Colleges." In the course of it he said: —

"While it is indeed true, as a great statesman has said, 'that the life of humanity is so long, and the lives of individuals so short, that what we see is often only the ebb of the advancing wave,' yet the wave itself, when it becomes a billow, cannot be mistaken for an eddy on the coast. With us the brook has indeed become a river, and the river an ocean. . . . Our peaceful institutions have attracted as great a diversity of tongues as those which the imperial eagle subjugated. Immigration flocks hither, not alone from the calculations of prudence, but also borne by such a providential impulse as always defies and enlightens the sagacity of man."¹

And he would solve the great questions pressing upon us by the agencies of Christian education.

He early took his stand on the subject of slavery. As the political conflict which heralded the coming of the Civil War deepened, he spoke out clearly and boldly. In April of the year 1857, he drafted a series of resolutions on the subject, which were adopted by his Presbytery, the Fourth of New York. This vigorous document declares

"that the system of slavery is neither to be viewed as an institution of natural or revealed religion; nor is it kindred to civil government, nor to the relation of husband and wife, nor to that of parents and children; . . . but that, on the contrary, the system of slavery, so far as it

¹ *Argument for Christian Colleges*, p. 25.

gives to man the right of property in man, reducing the slave and his progeny to the condition of chattels, dependent on the will of the owner ; so far as it annuls the rights of marriage ; so far as it forbids the general and Christian education of the slave, and debars him from the reading of the Word of God — is a system which is essentially opposed to the rights of man, to the welfare of the Republic, to the clear position of our church, and to the principles of the Christian religion.”¹

When the crisis finally came, he had not a moment’s hesitation as to which side he should take. His wife says : —

“ From that fateful Sunday in April, 1861, when the cannon of Fort Sumter aroused the nation, he had scanned with a clear eye and felt with a glowing heart the great issues that were at stake.”²

His Review was from the first on the side of the Union. He himself never doubted the result of the struggle. During the discouraging autumn which followed the defeats of the first summer, he wrote to a friend in the army : —

“ In spite of all delays and troubles, I feel an unwavering trust in the issues of this great conflict, but I apprehend that few yet realize the sacrifice it may, *must* cost.”³

The most important service which he performed during the war was the writing of his article on “ British Sympathy with America,” published in the “ American Theological Review ” in July, 1862. With scarcely an exception the British press, both

¹ *Memoir*, p. 433 *seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*

religious and secular, was hostile to the North, and loud in its expressions of sympathy with the South. An article in the "North British Review" was especially obnoxious. Stung to the quick by these evidences of selfish and narrow-minded rejoicing at the misfortunes of a sister nation, Professor Smith took his pen in hand and wrote the most vehement and scathing composition of his life. It was the outcome of that righteous indignation which is angry and sins not, which issues from the depths of outraged justice. The very title is irony. It glows with heat and fairly trembles with power.

The opening words tell the story: —

"War tries and reveals the strongest elements of national character, developing in an accelerated ratio the physical and moral resources of a people. In itself an evil and a scourge, it may become the means of purifying and exalting the popular spirit and of bringing a nation to the fullest consciousness of its historic destiny. It may likewise become an international touchstone, revealing the sympathies or antipathies of other nations. The sentiments that are cloaked in times of peace are often evoked with unmistakable significance when a nation is struggling for its very life. We find out who are our real friends, and who they are that wish us ill, when engaged in a contest that absorbs all our energies." ¹

He does not ask for sympathy as a boon, but claims it on the highest moral grounds.

"A nation contending for order against anarchy, for civilization against barbarism, for freedom against op-

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 487.

pression, has some right to expect that the friends of order, of civilization, and of liberty will cheer it in its struggles and sacrifices. If it is itself willing to risk all, even its very life, for the sake of its vital interests, it may surely hope that those who share in its general principles and aims will pronounce judgment in its favor in clear and welcome words.”¹

Englishmen ought, last of all men, to have been deaf to such a claim. What was the real issue in the War of the Rebellion? He states it clearly:—

“Here is the inmost sense of the strife. The central question in our politics for more than forty years has been, Shall freedom or slavery rule in our national policy? The question now is, Shall a republic, based on the principles of slavery, be allowed to consolidate its power on the soil of this republic? And the question in its final issue is, Shall this continent, south of the Canadian frontier, be controlled by the generous and inspiring principle of free labor, or by the selfish and barbarizing policy of slavery?”²

History has vindicated this statement of the case.

He showed how, up to the beginning of the War, England was on the side of the North:—

“The North was encouraged; the South was blamed. England had freed its colonial slaves, and boasted of its love and sacrifices for human freedom. For a quarter of a century it had been assailing this country chiefly because it was the only Christian power that tolerated slavery at home. . . . All Europe understood that the

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 488. ² *Ibid.* p. 489.

last presidential election turned upon the question of the prohibition of slavery in the Territories — in fact, upon the question, whether the slave interest should be national or local. Abroad, the election of Mr. Lincoln was well-nigh universally hailed as an indication that the power of slavery was broken, and that the free North would exercise in our national councils the supremacy to which it was entitled by its numerical superiority, and by its devotion to free labor, free speech, and human rights.”¹

Then came the change. When it appeared that the struggle was actually to begin, when it became clear that the selfish interests of Great Britain would be promoted by the success of the South, then all the high moral considerations which had previously actuated the British people were forgotten.

“When the rebellion broke out, the whole North felt and said, England will surely give us its moral support. And this on two grounds, if on no other; first, the maintenance of the rightful authority of a constitutional government against the assaults of perjured conspirators and traitors; and secondly, in the interest of human freedom as against the retrograde tendencies and inherent selfishness, if not barbarity, of the slave power. Here we supposed were fixed facts as to the side to which England would gravitate in its political and moral sympathies. But it was soon found that we were imposed upon by the delusions of a dream. As with one consent, the leading journals representing the aristocratic, the commercial, and also the religious opinions of Great Britain, began to show the most inexplicable dis-

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 491.

like of the United States, and to pour out upon it a torrent of abusive misrepresentation and perversion of principles and facts, almost unequaled in the fiercest excitement even of a local political debate.”¹

Only here and there was there an exception, in the case of noble and far-seeing men like Mr. Bright and Mr. Mill.

In some respects hardest to bear was the self-complacent tone in which the English praised their own magnanimity in not interfering in favor of either side, but maintaining an attitude of strict neutrality. The indignant theologian exclaims: —

“When Dante was on the verge of the infernal regions, he heard a sad wail, and turned and asked, who were these. To whom it was replied, that they were the shades of those who were indifferent to good and evil, and deserved neither praise nor blame, and therefore were their cries mingled with those of the rebel angels. The boasted neutrality of England mingles accordant with the fierce war-cry of the rebel hosts of America, bent on our destruction.”²

One after another the prominent organs of English opinion turned against us. It is a heart-rending story, that draws from the patriot a cry almost of anguish.

“And this is the voice of Old England, whom we venerated, as we venerated no other people, and from whose loins it was our boast that we sprung? Is England’s heart turned to hate against us, and has it no public conscience left? We cannot believe it. It is not the

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 494.

² *Ibid.* p. 504.

heart of England's people that thus speaks ; but it is the heart, it is the voice of the class that now rules in state, in church, and in society. Below these there is another class, as yet heard only indistinctly ; but whose voice when it breaks forth will be as the rushing of mighty waters. And that voice, the voice of the people, will be in unison with our own." ¹

Amplly did the following years vindicate this prophecy.

The theologian's faith in the success of his country is not based upon mere sentiment. He believes that it possesses the one perfect form of government, and that this government will succeed because of its inherent strength and justice.

“ Republicanism has shown itself to be the strongest and the safest form of earthly power — the best able to meet a terrible crisis, to rally on the very verge of destruction, to concentrate men and means for the most arduous of conflicts, and to carry on the plans of a campaign, unequaled in vastness and difficulty, with a united, conscious, definite, and irresistible purpose. . . . England is incredulous as to our success, because it does not know the power of a Christian republic in a just cause.” ²

A large part of the article is devoted to the attacks of the “North British Review.” There was something peculiarly surprising and mortifying to Northern people, and especially to the religious people of the North, in the fact that Scotchmen

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 514 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 516.

had turned against them in the hour of need. And yet it was even so, and their literary organ was foremost in the assault.

“The *ingenium perfervidum Scotorum* here expends itself in unqualified abuse of our people, government, and institutions. . . . The arguments of oppression are retailed by the mouths of abolitionists. They strike the freemen of the North with weapons forged by the deadliest enemies of human freedom. Two years since Scotchmen would hardly give a brother’s hand to any minister from a slaveholding State ; and now they reiterate the arguments, indorse the policy, defend the rebellion, and speak soft words about ‘the peculiar institution’ of these self-same States.”¹

At last the ordinary resources of polemics fail.

“In the good old Jewish times it took two men to make a Pharisee and a Sadducee ; modern critics contrive to commingle the traits of the two. Satire alone can reach such cases, and the satire of Mr. Hosea Biglow is not merely theoretical : —

‘Of all the sarse that I can call to mind,
England does make the most onpleasant kind ;
It’s you ’re the sinners, ollers, she’s the saint,
Wot’s good’s all English, all that is n’t ain’t.’ ”²

And so he goes on with the quotation. The men battling in the field were not wielding more powerful weapons or dealing sturdier blows than this slender scholar with the large brain, fighting all Britain from out of his study.

The War had still three weary years to run, but

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 517 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 533.

the far-seeing theologian, with his theology that was a philosophy of history, saw the triumph from afar, and knew how to connect it with the history of mankind.

“Restoration is difficult, but not impossible. It would be impossible were we not contending for good government and righteous laws. It is possible, because justice and freedom must at last triumph in human affairs. And with all the undoubted and undeniable difficulties and dangers that hover around our future path, we would rather to-day, looking only for peace and progressive civilization, for the blessings of good government and righteous laws, cast in our lot with this maligned Union, than with any other people in the world. . . . We are contending in the van of the race upon the major and decisive question of human freedom and equal laws for all mankind.”¹

This article was one of the most influential of Smith's life. It had much effect upon foreign opinion, and was especially an aid and comfort to his countrymen in their hour of trial. If anything was needed to show that he was not a mere recluse, engaged in spinning transcendental cobwebs, this article furnished it. The public opinion respecting it was voiced in the words of his friend, the historian Bancroft: —

“I owe you my hearty thanks for your candid, unsparing, patriotic dissection of British selfishness, and vindication of our aspirations for freedom. I have read nothing in our contest more instructive or more satisfactory.”²

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 537.

² *Memoir*, p. 232.

Though the article just mentioned was Smith's most important contribution to the Review on the subject of the War, it was not his only one. In the number for January, 1863, he published an article giving copious extracts from a recent work of Edouard Laboulaye, entitled "Études Morales et Politiques," in which this distinguished French publicist generously advocated the side of the Union in the great struggle. Smith closes thus: —

"This is noble and eloquent language. It may well inspire us with a firmer faith, not in our righteous cause, but in the welcome we shall receive if we but succeed in this deadly struggle, from the friends of liberty and justice all over the world. And we rejoice that now, as in the times of our Revolution, such words of counsel and of cheer come to us from the land of Lafayette. And these words have about them a Christian spirit and a moral tone higher than was reached by any of the political writers of France in the period immediately preceding its Revolution. And thus they indicate, not merely the progress of liberty, but progress in right views of liberty — that it can be secure and permanent only as founded in Christianity, and pervaded by the Christian spirit and Christian ideas.

"And thus is our conflict itself illumined by a higher light than that of mere natural reason. It is a part of the historic process by which the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord. The victories of truth and righteousness, of liberty and law, are the victories of an everlasting kingdom."¹

The last paragraph is worthy of especial note. It

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 82 seq.

was Smith's peculiarity, shared with him by few, if any, of his American contemporaries, that he knew how to bring the events of his time into such vital connection with the progress of the Saviour's kingdom.

In the Review for April, 1863, appears a critique on Archbishop Whately's reply to Mrs. Stowe's Address to the Women of Great Britain, in which she eloquently pleaded the cause of the Union on the ground that the overthrow of slavery was the one great issue of the War. The archbishop's letter was cold, calculating, indifferent. Smith comments thus upon it : —

“ Such in substance are the reasons which one of the most distinguished and able prelates of the Anglican church gives for being indifferent to the issue of our great contest : and this indifference favors the South. The epistle may not be profound or sagacious, but it certainly is full of meaning. It has a suggestive force. It indicates that the ruling class in Great Britain do not desire the success of our free institutions : that they would rather tolerate the existence of slavery in a separate confederacy than have us again united under one flag, even though it be the banner of impartial freedom.”¹

Already, however, the predictions of the article of the previous year, respecting the deeper feeling among the English people, were coming true. He says : —

“ Happily there is another power in England besides

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 249.

that of the aristocracy ; it is the power of the people, who are fast coming to understand that our victory is their victory, and our defeat their defeat. . . . The masses may for a time be drugged with base fallacies and decoyed by false lights, and for a time seem indifferent where freedom is at stake ; but let them once be informed and aroused, and no power on earth can resist their influence or stay their course.”¹

The conclusion of the article sums up the issues at stake with admirable clearness : —

“The resistless course of events, the ordering of divine Providence, is fast bringing out into clear light the substantial forms of the conflict, and dispersing the mist of partial and selfish theories. The question is, Shall there be on this earth a great and free Republic, where man as man is honored, and labor has its rights and its rewards ? The question is, Shall a caste govern the people, or, can a people govern itself ? The question is, Can a whole nation be educated into the dignity and consciousness of freedom ? The question is, Shall a slave republic be permanently organized upon this American continent ? . . . The conviction is deepening, that, whatever be the cost, this nation must be one and indivisible. It is slavery that stands in the way of our union and triumph. Then let slavery die that the Republic may live.”²

When Professor Smith preached his remarkable sermon as the retiring moderator of the General Assembly at Dayton, Ohio, on May 19, 1864, the War was rapidly advancing towards its conclusion.

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. i. p. 249 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 250.

In the course of this discourse he referred to the great conflict. He said: —

“ We are passing from the Iliad to the Odyssey of our republican history (and under our Ulysses too), in an awe-inspiring and deadly battle between the rational principle of man’s right to freedom, and the despotic maxim that might makes right; and also between the instinct of national life and the heresy of secession, which means national death. All our people and all our churches have felt the thrill of patriotic ardor inspired by the renewed and intense consciousness of that national unity, which is mutely foretold by our very geography and by our common relations to the other nations of the earth; they have all received a new baptism, a baptism of blood, the sign and seal of our republican regeneration. And so they have been bound together as never before. . . . In these throes of agonies of our mortal strife, our minor differences have been forgotten or buried out of sight, and our immortal faith and Christian charity have been vivified and enlarged.”¹

In his report to the Evangelical Alliance, published in the Review of October, 1867, Professor Smith gives an interesting *résumé* of the reasons for and the results of the great conflict. He says: —

“ The course and results of our war have demonstrated, what many even good men doubted, that slavery was its chief cause, as the extinction of slavery was its grand result, necessary alike to our national unity and to our future progress and prosperity.”²

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 273 seq.

² *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 555 seq.

What could better describe the principles that animated our people than the following paragraph: —

“It was not a war for aggrandizement, but for self-preservation; and even those who condemn the former might approve the latter. It was a war not for territory, but for a Republic; to decide the question whether a republican government was really safe and strong, as able to overthrow a rebellion as to repel a foreign foe. In and by the war the nation came to its self-conscious majority, to the full sense of a common and indestructible national life. Its resources had been quietly accumulating, and the fullness of its strength was never known until its very life was at stake. Then the latent forces were disengaged, as by the magician’s touch, and shaped themselves into order, and made the nation for four years a vast organized host. And this was not the doing of the government, it was rather the instinct of the people.”¹

But it is needless to go farther. This short chapter was designed only to show something of the intense and effective interest this theologian took in the great struggle, and the influence he exerted in bringing it to its successful conclusion. More than a quarter of a century has passed since the war-drums ceased to beat and the battle-flags were furled. A new generation has grown up that knows of those inspiring but awful days only by hearsay. We have entered upon an entirely new stadium in the history of the Republic, in which

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 561.

we enjoy the results of all the fearful carnage and lavish expenditure of those times. We have not wholly forgotten the military heroes, whose names have passed into history. Let us not forget the scholar who did his part so faithfully in fighting the battle with the pen, while his countrymen were in the field fighting it with the sword.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATESMAN.

THE great War over, Professor Smith continued his work with new courage and vigor. His health was still for the most part good. If he was sometimes overburdened and discouraged, his mood seems generally to have been a cheerful one. In 1866 he was appointed a delegate to the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, to be held in Amsterdam, and the report on the State of Religion in the American Churches was assigned to him. He went to Europe, for the purpose of attending this meeting, in June, 1866; but the outbreak of the war between Prussia and Austria prevented the Alliance from assembling. His report was sent to Amsterdam the next year, when the meeting finally took place. It was read in part by a substitute, and published in full in the Review for October, 1867. As was intimated in the last chapter, it was largely concerned with our recent Civil War and its effects upon the American churches. It was, and still remains, a valuable contribution to the history of Christianity in our country.

While the war prevented the Alliance from meeting, it did not seriously interfere with Profes-

sor Smith's journey. A little more than four months was passed in delightful travel through France, Germany, Switzerland, and England. In Germany he met his old teachers and friends, — Twisten and Hengstenberg in Berlin, where Dorner also was now teaching; Tholuck, Ulrici, and Müller in Halle; and Kahnis in Leipsic. At Neuchâtel he visited Godet, whom he had formerly known in Berlin as the tutor of the Prince, afterwards the Emperor, Frederic. At Oxford he met Mansel, whose "Limits of Religious Thought" he had reviewed with so much acuteness and vigor six years before.

His letters at this time are full of interest and instruction; and a lecture he delivered on his return, recounting his experiences on this memorable journey, is not only interesting, but of great value for the vivid pictures it gives of men now long passed away. Germany stirred his heart with the boyish feelings. He wrote: —

"Germany I like as much as ever; it has been one of the great wishes of my life to come back here and bring my wife with me, and now it has been fulfilled. It seemed strange as well as pleasant to find my old teachers still in their lecture rooms and teaching students as of old. It made me almost feel young again."¹

The meeting with Tholuck was full of joy. It is interesting to notice how Smith impressed his old friend after so many years. He had become more quiet and self-contained. Tholuck wrote a little later: —

¹ *Memoir*, p. 262.

“Short as was the time of reunion, it was equally dear, partly because we have now the image of your dear wife, partly because your own has been renewed to me. I found no difference from the old one, except that, having forgotten how unlike you and Prentiss were in regard to vivacity, your quietness of manner was an unexpected trait. However, I well know, indeed, how deep are the waters under the calm surface.”¹

But it was not merely Tholuck’s forgetting. It was the change that comes with time and thought and care. Those who knew Professor Smith in later life will remember that quiet, absent-minded way in which he would come into a room, as if his thoughts were far away. But it never took much effort to recall him to the present. He only seemed to be reserved and distant. In truth no warmer heart than his ever beat.

His old power of picturesque description remains unchanged. Nothing could be finer than the picture he paints of Cologne Cathedral:—

“ ‘A hymn to God sung in obedient stone,’ as one of our own poets (Lowell) calls a grand temple, with its ‘great minster towers rising like visible prayers’ (Whittier); as if the stubborn rocks had been reared and shaped in order fair, crystallized to the sound of the most beautiful and solemn strains of music. As it now stands, it is a perfect example of the most perfect period of Gothic architecture, so full of thought, that every detail has its meaning, and yet so practical in adaptation that every detail has its use; so firm in structure that

¹ *Memoir*, p. 264.

were the very walls knocked down, it would still stand securely on its piers and buttresses.”¹

There is something of the poet and the artist in the true theologian. For he who sees the invisible in the spiritual realm must have some power to see it in the sphere of beauty.

Here is his account of the Sistine Madonna: —

“Dresden was almost deserted; few strangers were there this summer. But its galleries were still open, the best for Italian art north of the Alps; and there, in her serene loveliness, was still that most ideal and perfect of all the paintings of the Mother and Child — the Sistine Madonna; alone, as was fitting, in a room by itself, the canvas further unrolled since I had before seen it, so as to show the top and rings of the curtain, undimmed by age, superlative in its tender majesty, hovering between heaven and earth, rapt in contemplation, virginal yet maternal, with those deep eyes that no copy can reproduce, full of solemn wonder, half sad, half jubilant, as if an unspeakable burden were on her soul, yet a burden from which, for the world, she would not be quit. There must be a better and fairer world than this, for here is one of its radiant forms: else the resources of the artist are greater than those of the Maker of the world.”²

The great work of the three or four years that followed the close of the Civil War was connected with the reunion of the separated branches of the Presbyterian Church, and it is with this that the present chapter is especially concerned. We have had abundant reason to see that Smith was farthest

¹ *Memoir*, p. 267.

² *Ibid.* p. 272.

from being the mere recluse and scholar. Even in his study he always had the larger world in view. And he did not confine himself to the study and the lecture-room, but took his full share in the broader work of the church and the world. The Presbyterian Church, with its well-knit ecclesiastical system, affords large opportunity for ecclesiastical statesmanship. From the beginning of his connection with it, Smith took a prominent share in the work of its judicatories and in shaping the general policy of the denomination.

In order to understand the part taken by Professor Smith in bringing about the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, it will be needful briefly to review the history of the separation. From the first establishment of Presbyterianism in this country, near the close of the seventeenth century, it comprised two diverse elements, — one the Scotch-Irish, who were the more rigid party; the other the New Englanders, educated as Congregationalists, and tending to more liberal views in matters of doctrine and polity. When the famous "Adopting Act," by which the Westminster Confession of Faith was made the doctrinal and governmental basis of the church, was passed in 1729, the New England men were opposed to it, and acquiesced only for the sake of harmony. They did not believe in the general principle of creed-subscription. The "Great Awakening," beginning in the revivals of Edwards at Northampton and fostered by the preaching of

Whitefield, resulted in practical differences as to the rightfulness of the revival method and the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, leading to a separation in 1741. For the next seventeen years the "Old Side" and the "New Side" went their separate ways, but in 1758 they came together in happy reunion. The War of the Revolution united the hearts of Christians upon the great political issues, and for many years there was peace in the reunited Presbyterian Church.

After the Revolution, just at the time when the nation was forming and adopting its Constitution, the Presbyterian body knit its government more closely, establishing a General Assembly and dividing the church into a number of Synods. At this time allegiance to the Confession of Faith was reaffirmed, and the Form of Government was so far modified as to adapt it to the republican institutions of the country. As the new century approached, the mission work of the denomination began to assume more importance. The great West was opening up to emigration, and must be supplied with religious privileges. There were at this time only two denominations thoroughly equipped for the work, and these were the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. With a view to harmonious coöperation, the Presbyterian General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut entered into an agreement known as the "Plan of Union," which was so framed as to allow the churches that might be formed under it to adopt

a mixed form of government, half Presbyterian and half Congregational, if they wished to do so. The result was that the homogeneity of the Presbyterian system in the new parts of the country was much broken. The Plan of Union was thoroughly commendable in its purpose ; but in practice it worked badly.

As the century advanced, new complications arose. The Unitarian Controversy broke out in New England, and while it strengthened the general orthodoxy of the churches which resisted the rationalistic influence, it led to new methods of explaining the Christian doctrines, which were regarded by the Presbyterians of the old-fashioned sort as dangerous heresies. The theology of the New Haven School, led by Dr. N. W. Taylor, excited especial alarm. During the same time the voluntary societies attained great importance as agents of the benevolent work of the churches. The Home Missionary Society, from the nature of the case, took a foremost part in the work in the West. Under its auspices large numbers of New England ministers were sent thither, and it was suspected, if not known, that many of them were infected with the dreaded doctrinal errors. As it was claimed that the original Adopting Act allowed much license in subscription, binding those who took it to agreement with the Confession only in "necessary and essential articles," and as the formula of subscription required the acceptance of the Confession merely as "containing the system of doctrine taught

in the Holy Scriptures," the liberal men made no scruple about the doctrinal test, and it was not easy for the more rigid party to touch them. In fact, there has always been an ambiguity upon this point, which has been, in one way of looking at it, a source of strength to the Presbyterians, and, in another view, a weakness. So long as all were substantially Calvinists, it was possible to accept the Confession in a general way, as opposed to Arminianism, Pelagianism, and the kindred errors. But when the Calvinistic system itself began to be modified, the question became a more complicated one. It was thus possible for the Confession to be a snare to conscientious men, and a means of tyranny in the hands of the ultra orthodox. As the doctrinal differences and jealousies grew more intense, resort was had to the church courts. Thus such distinguished men as Lyman Beecher, Albert Barnes, and George Duffield were tried for heresy. They were indeed acquitted, but the result was to exacerbate the already bitter feeling.

Still another ground of difference arose. Slavery, the great national apple of discord, began to divide brethren and embitter ecclesiastical politics. The liberal men from New England who were the pastors of the churches organized under the Plan of Union, or in sympathy with the liberal policy, were, almost without exception, anti-slavery men. The conservative party, though comprising many men who were opposed to slavery in principle and practice, was still predominantly favorable to the

“peculiar institution.” This political and moral question did not appear on the surface to the same extent as the others, but it undoubtedly had a powerful influence in bringing about the crisis.

With such influences at work, it was only a matter of time when the explosion should come. It actually came in 1837, when the conservative party, being for once in a majority, — a rare occurrence in the immediately preceding years, — proceeded to abolish the Plan of Union and summarily to cut off from connection with the General Assembly the four Synods containing the mixed churches and supposed to be most infected with the obnoxious doctrines. In the following year, when the moderator of the General Assembly refused to recognize the commissioners from the excinded Synods, they and their sympathizers formed a new Assembly.

Thenceforward the Old School and the New went on their separate ways. The New School organization was, for various reasons, the weaker of the two, and it was supposed for years that it would be ultimately absorbed into the Old School body on the one side, and the Congregational churches on the other. This did not, however, prove to be the case. The instinct of self-preservation was strong, and the New School men believed that they stood for certain great principles which could be maintained by themselves alone. In the years preceding the War they became consolidated and in some respects considerably changed. As the doctrinal excitement died away, in the absence of

the embittered opposition which had so long fostered it, the majority of the New School men became more decidedly orthodox, in the sense of substantially accepting the Westminster Confession. The Plan of Union failed to work, and the Congregationalists themselves, in their Convention at Albany in 1852, abandoned it. The New School Church found that there were practical difficulties about using the Home Missionary Society for its organ in its work in the West, and finally withdrew from it, forming committees of its own for the purpose of carrying on its missionary work.

In this process of consolidation and modification Smith had taken a prominent part. He had thus laid himself open to the criticism of his old friends in New England, some of whom accused him of disloyalty to the Congregationalism out of which he had come. But he never admitted the charge. Finding himself providentially placed among the New School Presbyterians, he felt it his duty to strengthen them. It was in accordance with his character and principles to build up rather than to cast down. He would not have been himself, if he had not gone heart and soul into the work; and even Congregationalists can see now that it was better for all concerned. It was especially congenial to him to endeavor to unite the New School men in a generous and liberal but orthodox theology. He was, as we have seen, a Calvinist by hearty conviction, able to subscribe to the Confession of Faith without evasion or reserve. He be-

lieved it his mission to teach a mediating theology, harmonizing the extremes of Calvinism. Unquestionably his teaching and influence had much to do with bringing the New School men into such substantial accord with their Old School brethren that no real barrier in doctrine remained between them. Many now living, brought up in Presbyterian families, can remember how difficult it used to be for wise and good New School ministers to give any satisfactory answer to the question, wherein lay the difference between the two Schools, and how often the result of such questions was the confession that there was no essential difference. Thus when the War broke out, there were but two grounds of separation left. The one was slavery, the other the old jealousy. The War removed both. The Southern Presbyterians separated from the Old School side. The hearts of the two Northern bodies were knit together by the common peril. Slavery died at the hands of the Judge of all the earth; and no Northern Presbyterian, whatever his sentiments before the War, shed any tears over its destruction, except those of joy.

Under such circumstances it only needs some great man to speak the word and rally his comrades for the task. Henry B. Smith was the man. With justice he was called "the hero of Reunion."¹ Some movements in this direction were indeed made in the two Assemblies prior to Smith's mem-

¹ By Professor, now President, Francis L. Patton. See Prentiss, *Fifty Years of Union Theological Seminary*, p. 264.

orable Dayton Sermon; but they were not decisive. In May, 1863, he had been chosen Moderator of the New School General Assembly that met at Philadelphia. The Old School Assembly of the previous year had made proposals for fraternal fellowship. It had been too late, however, to bring them before the New School body at that time, and they were not presented until the meeting in Philadelphia. The result was a hearty response, which being communicated to the Old School Assembly, then meeting in Peoria, Illinois, the latter appointed commissioners, who appeared before the Philadelphia Assembly. Dr. Tustin, the leader of the delegation, addressed his New School brethren in terms of conciliation. The following account of Professor Smith's reply is given in his own report of the Assembly in the "American Presbyterian and Theological Review:"¹ —

"The Moderator of the Assembly, in a cordial response, reciprocated the heartfelt expressions of Christian affection; reviewed some of the events that marked the separation; and spoke of the long slumbering desire for such brotherly interchange of Christian feelings. Those that have the same faith, the same polity, the same aims, and the same divine Head, are separated only for a time. Both of these great branches of the Presbyterian Church have the same ancestry and the same history; they rehearse their faith in the words of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. Both adopt the Pauline, the Augustinian, and the Reformed creed, in contrast with Pelagianism, Socinianism, and Arminianism. Both are

¹ Vol. i. p. 492 *seq.*

devoted to our national cause with unswerving loyalty ; both share in sympathy and prayers for that ill-fated race, whose oppression lies so deep among our nation's sins, and whose deliverance and elevation are necessary to secure the peace and unity of our Republic. United now in expressions of mutual confidence and love, we seek not to cast the horoscope of the future. Each branch of the church has its providential work ; for a more complete reunion we await the guidance of Divine Providence."

But Professor Smith was not the man to stop here. The next year, when the New School Assembly met at Dayton, Ohio, it became his official duty, as the retiring moderator, to preach the opening sermon. He grasped the opportunity, and came out with a bold and earnest plea for reunion. It was one of those opportunities that come but once in a lifetime, and of which few men have the courage and foresight to avail themselves. Probably no act of his life was fraught with such great and far-reaching consequences.

The title of the sermon was "Christian Union and Ecclesiastical Reunion." The first branch of the theme was not so familiar as it has since become. He handled it with skill and power. He was not one of those sentimentalists who would have external union at all costs. He recognized the fact that the real bond of union is the Spirit of the risen Christ, and that this bond exists in the midst of all the diversity. He was aware that the different branches of the church have each their historic

mission, and that this might be hindered rather than advanced by premature organic union. He had no sympathy with the demand that all the branches of the Saviour's church should accept some peculiar institution or feature of polity. He said: —

“ Unless all past experience be a delusion, the church can never be reunited on the basis of any claim or pretension, which is the exclusive possession of any one of the branches, especially if it be a principle which, like the papacy, the apostolic succession, or the necessity of any one mode of baptism, involves the refusal of church rights and fellowship to other denominations. These are bars to the very possibility of reunion.”¹

He would have the church move slowly, working first on the foundations, and leaving the superstructure for a more favorable time.

“ Spiritual union must precede external unity; and so, in proportion as all labor for the one end in the same spirit, will they be coming nearer together, marching toward the common centre, with one ensign full high advanced above all other banners of the sacramental host, bearing that One Name, under which alone can be inscribed the words: *In hoc vinces.*”²

Yet he would foster all right efforts in the direction of union. And he rejoiced that there were so many signs that sectarianism was losing its power.

“ Polemics die, but Christ liveth forever. Sects are transient; the church abides. Local and personal feuds

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 269 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 270.

are soon forgotten. . . . The members of the different denominations are coming to look more alike. . . . The Arminianism of the Methodists is of a very different type from what the Calvinists of Europe used to call the 'gangrene,' for it is full of the flame of evangelism." ¹

This tendency to union, he declared, was in accord with the genius of our republic. It was the lesson taught by the great War, then going on. It was of untold importance in view of the two great foes who were assaulting the citadel of our faith, namely, infidelity and Romanism. But the union when it comes must be grounded in Christ: —

"There is no other way to a living and permanent union and reunion; all other projects know not the word that solves the enigma. . . . When our theology, our preaching, and our very lives, say that Christ is our all in all, then we shall meet and flow together." ²

But if the final union of all the separated branches of the Redeemer's church might be far off, there was no reason why there should not be

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 271.

Professor Smith wrote a remarkable letter, in January, 1871, to an eminent Methodist minister, in which he says: "What is it that keeps Methodists and Presbyterians apart? Is it anything *essential* — to the Church, or even to its *well-being*? For one, I do *not* think that it is. Your so-called 'Arminianism,' being of *grace*, and not of *nature*, is in harmony with our symbols. It is a wide outlook, which looks to an *ecclesiastical* union of Methodists and Presbyterians; but I am convinced that it is vital for both, and for Protestantism and for Christianity *vs.* Romanism in this country; and that it is desirable *per se.*"

See the extract from the letter in the *Presbyterian Review*, vol. iv. 1883, p. 563.

² *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 275.

an immediate reunion of the severed portions of the same denomination, acknowledging the same standards of faith and government.

“It is, of course, the reunion of the two main branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country which most directly concerns us. The question is one of direct practical moment. Some think the full time for action has come; all think it wise to discuss the subject in its various bearings.”¹

Yet he would not ignore the difficulties in the way. Better no union than one based on false principles. Still he believed there were no difficulties which could not be surmounted, if all would act in the spirit of the famous maxim: *In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas.*

That the much-to-be-desired end should be brought about in the right way, he would lay down three conditions: first, a spirit of mutual concession; secondly, the acceptance of the Presbyterian system of government in its integrity; and thirdly, reunion simply on the basis of the doctrinal standards, “interpreted in their legitimate grammatical and historic sense, in the spirit of the original Adopting Act, and as ‘containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures.’”² He then surveyed the history of Presbyterianism in this country, showing how the doctrinal and other differences had grown up, and how in late years the chief causes of conflict had been removed. The

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 276 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 278.

doctrinal diversity was once far greater than now. He asked: —

“ May we not differ in some points of technical theology, and still be substantially at one? . . . The questions between us are about shades of orthodoxy, and do not reach to the dilemma, orthodoxy or heterodoxy. Men may agree in doctrine and differ in philosophy. . . . Questions that are important in a class-room may be irrelevant as to a public confession of faith.”¹

With admirable clearness and candor he stated the points of variance which, like the once famous Five Points of the Arminian Controversy, were separating these Christian brethren. They concerned the “imputation of Adam’s sin, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, the nature and limits of the Atonement, ability and inability, and Christian perfection,” — questions of philosophy rather than of theology, scholastic rather than practical. Looking back at them, after the lapse of more than a quarter of a century, in the light of our present discussion of questions that touch the very essence of Christianity, we can only wonder that Christian men were ever separated upon such paltry issues.

His survey completed, he comes back to his favorite thought, the master tone of his whole personal and public life, the central principle of his theology: —

“ After all, Christ alone can be the author of our peace, and make of both one, breaking down the middle wall of partition. When we can read our differences in the

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 284.

light of his wisdom, and adjust our conflicts in the spirit of his love, and shape our doctrines by the illumination of his Spirit, we are no longer at variance, we are already one; we are no longer ignorant, we are already wise. When the skeleton of our theologies is clothed upon with his life, and becomes like his matchless and radiant form, when theology is Christologized in all its parts, and finds its central principle in the God-man, our Saviour, then we shall know the full reality of all which else we vainly strive to utter.”¹

And then he boldly and unequivocally claims the liberty of the New School men:—

“Our ground has always been that both parties may and ought to live under our standards in peace and quietness. . . . But if it be claimed that the only basis of union is our acceptance of the theories of external imputation, unqualified inability, and a partial atonement, even if we held to these dogmas we could not accede to the terms; for they annul the very principle of a broader ministerial fellowship, without which no reunion could be lasting. We cannot afford to enter a communion which would exclude Edwards and Dwight, Richards and Woods.”²

With respect to church government, he took strong Presbyterian ground. Though he had been warmly attached to the Congregational system, when living in New England, and did not exchange it for Presbyterianism without some questionings and difficulties, he did not think it advisable, or even possible, to mix the two systems. He had

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 287.

² *Ibid.* p. 288.

come heartily to accept the Presbyterian form of government. He regarded it as especially adapted to the work of the Christian church in a country like this. It was his conviction that a strong system is best fitted to cope with the influences antagonistic to the evangelical faith.

Finally, like a prophet, he unrolled the canvas of the future, pointing to the high results which would be achieved if the union were effected:—

“If we can but be reunited, what a wide pathway is open before us, what a magnificent work of Christian evangelism—among the teeming population of our western prairies; in our ample territories with their untold wealth of silver and gold; in the new-born States that skirt the broad Pacific main; among the freedmen of the South still to be educated for freedom; among the diverse races of foreign birth, flocking even now in crowds to our ports, and who can be moulded into one people only by our common American Christianity; over all the broad expanse of this imperial republic, which will be ambitious for material gain and earthly conquest, as never was another people, if it be not penetrated and fashioned by the gospel of Christ as never was another people, and which was baptized into Christ by our godly sires in its earliest prime, that it might lay the glories of its youthful strength, and the conquests of its manly prime, and the fruits of its world-wide commerce at Immanuel’s feet, and help to carry the tidings of his salvation to the ends of the earth.”¹

During the same meeting Professor Smith, as chairman of the Committee on Church Polity, pre-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 294 seq.

pared a declaration on the subject of reunion. This was adopted by a unanimous vote and transmitted to the Old School Assembly, then in session at Newark, New Jersey. This was the first official step in the direction of reunion. It declares:—

“That as the churches represented by this Assembly did not inaugurate the separation, so, too, they hold to no principles and views, and would impose no terms inconsistent with a full and cordial reunion, whenever and wherever the will of the great Head of the church, as indicated by Divine Providence, may open the way for us all to meet together again on the same basis on which, of old, our fathers stood; and that we should rejoice in such reunion as a pledge of the future prosperity, and an augury of the accelerated growth of the kingdom of Christ through the length and breadth of our land; and that it is our united and fervent prayer to our common Master, that He would so remove all hindrances as to make a plain path for our feet, whereon we may walk together, being of one heart and mind, in the ways of the Lord.”¹

Professor Smith gave himself to the work thus initiated with tongue and pen. When in May, 1866, the two Assemblies met in the city of St. Louis, he was a member of the New School body, and, as chairman once more of the Committee on Church Polity, drew up the response to a communication of the Old School Assembly, proposing the appointment of a joint committee for conference on the great subject. He was not a member of this

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 591 seq.

latter committee, but was a moving spirit in the work as it proceeded. His own account of the meeting of the Assembly, published in the Review of July, 1866, contains an earnest plea for the accomplishment of the enterprise that lay so near his heart: —

“Slavery is out of the way. Old jealousies are dying out. The spirit of returning love and unity is abroad in our churches. United, we can do a work for Christ, second to that done by no church in the United States. Every wise Christian man, who loves his church and his land, will pause long before he speaks the word that would hopelessly sunder those two great churches that are now holding out to each other the hands of amity and unity.”¹

The joint committee accomplished their task in the winter and spring of 1867, and their report, which was almost unanimous, was presented to the two General Assemblies at their meetings in May. It was proposed that this report should not be finally acted upon immediately, but should be laid over until the meetings of the Assemblies in 1868, that there might be time for full consideration, before any definitive action should be taken. It was not long before doubts began to be expressed on the Old School side as to whether the doctrinal basis was sufficiently explicit to exclude heretical views from the reunited church. This doctrinal basis was thus stated in the report: —

“The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. iv. p. 501.

ecclesiastical basis of our common standards ; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, 'as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures ;' and its fair, historical sense, as it is accepted by the two bodies in opposition to Antinomianism and Fatalism on the one hand, and to Arminianism and Pelagianism on the other, shall be regarded as the sense in which it is received and adopted." ¹

These doubts voiced themselves in an article in the "Princeton Review" for July, by the venerable Dr. Hodge. He claimed that

"the true principle of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith requires that those who profess to adopt the system of doctrine therein contained should sincerely receive in their integrity all the doctrines essential to the *Reformed or Calvinistic System*,"

and that

"however numerous may be the orthodox members of the New School Presbyterian Church, that church, as an ecclesiastical organization, never has and does not now adopt and act upon that principle ; and therefore, that union between the two churches under these circumstances would be not only inexpedient but morally wrong." ²

This article called Professor Smith to the front. In the October number of his Review he came out with an answer that is in some respects one of the most masterly efforts of his life. He utterly repudiated the charge that the New School men sub-

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 627.

² *American Presbyterian Review*, vol. i. p. 581.

scribed to the Confession in the loose sense which Dr. Hodge ascribed to them, claiming that their principle of subscription was precisely the same as that of the Old School. He indignantly denied all imputations upon their orthodoxy. In none of Smith's writings is the polemical tone more strong. He said: —

“In all the heat of the fierce controversies, thirty years ago, no more reckless or distorted representations of the New School positions were ever penned than have just appeared in the “Princeton Review.” We say this deliberately, for we must say it. We owe it to ourselves not to be silent under such imputations. Principles are ascribed to us which we have uniformly disavowed, and doctrines we have never cherished. If the New School and the Old School be as here represented, all talk about reunion is a waste of breath.”¹

With regard to the subject of subscription, he claimed that the New School men, like the Old School, as represented by the “Princeton Review,” took the middle, and only justifiable, ground between the theory that the Confession was to be accepted in its *ipsissima verba*, and that which would require its acceptance only for “substance of doctrine.”

“The right theory is found in a simple and honest interpretation of the ordination formula, ‘that we receive the Confession of Faith as containing the *system of doctrine* taught in the Holy Scriptures.’ This declares that the system of the Confession is the system taught

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 634.

in the Bible. The system of the Confession, as everybody knows, is the Reformed or Calvinistic system, in distinction from the Lutheran, the Arminian, the Antinomian, the Pelagian, and the Roman Catholic. No one can honestly and fairly subscribe the Confession who does not accept the Reformed or Calvinistic system.”¹

The “Princeton Review” had accused the New School men of holding that it was only necessary to adopt the Confession as containing “the essential doctrines of Christianity, and nothing more.” This Smith utterly denied. He says : —

“Here is a broad and plain charge, and on it we take a plain and sharp issue. Our Christian honor and integrity are assailed, and we cannot let it pass in silence. The charge is false and groundless. There is no evidence for it, either in the records of our church, or the declarations of our leading representatives. It is a lawless fiction, imputed to us by one who is not our representative.”²

He then proceeds to state fairly and moderately the doctrinal differences between the two schools, declaring them to relate to non-essentials.

“Within the metes and bounds of the ‘fair historical’ sense of the Confession of Faith, certain, somewhat undefined, differences in the mode of explaining its individual doctrines have always been recognized and allowed by the Presbyterian Church in the United States, as well as by all other Reformed churches. These allowable differences must, of course, be such as do not impair the

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 643.

² *Ibid.* p. 644 *seq.*

integrity of the system, as distinguished from Lutheranism, Arminianism, Pelagianism, etc., nor vitiate any one of the doctrines that make up the system. But within these limits there have been, and still are, very considerable diversities.”¹

These differences have been stated in the account given of the Dayton Sermon. Professor Smith declared that to attempt an adjustment of them as a condition of reunion would be unwise.

“Both parties already have the same Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the best extant. All that we can do is to accept them in their essential and necessary articles, with a recognition of possible, though guarded, diversities of explanation, the system and doctrines remaining in their integrity.”²

In the light of the present movement in the direction of the revision of the Confession, it is interesting to note what Smith says on the subject, though it is to be remembered that the revision he had in mind was not one which should simplify the Confession and remove from it the more rugged features of Calvinism, but one which, to use his own phrase, “should seal the final form of orthodoxy.” He said:—

“We must be content to wait for this till the church is wiser and better and more united; until, in fact, somebody can give us a perfect form of faith in unison with a perfect system of philosophy, adjusting all antagonisms. A united Presbyterianism may possibly, on the eve of

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 648.

² *Ibid.* p. 650.

the millennium, breed such a theologian, but the time is not yet." ¹

The "Princeton Review" had asserted that the New School Church admitted to its ministry men who openly denied essential doctrines of the Confession, "such as original sin, inability, the atonement as a real satisfaction to the law and justice of God." Smith asks indignantly: —

"Does the 'Princeton Review' know more about the real opinions of the New School than we do ourselves? The Searcher of hearts could not be more positive than is the Review on this point, where it must get its information chiefly from us, and where we directly contradict it. . . . The charge is reckless and base. If the 'Princeton Review' does not know better, it ought to know better." ²

And then, having discussed the doctrinal differences, he burst forth into a confession of faith, which is so important for the history of the man that it must be given entire, long though it is: —

"Apart from theological technicalities and philosophical explanations, we are one in accepting that grand old system of faith, Pauline, Augustinian, and Reformed, which has been the vital substance and stay of the church in its main conflicts with error and unbelief. We believe in the one only Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in one Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, divine and human, consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity, and consubstantial with us men

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 651.

² *Ibid.* p. 652.

according to his humanity ; and in the Holy Ghost, the lord and giver of life, who alone renews and sanctifies our fallen human nature. We believe that God created all things from nothing, by the word of his power ; that in his all-wise providence He sustains and governs all his creatures and all their actions ; that by his decree all things stand, that in his wise, holy, and eternal purpose, all our destiny, for time and for eternity is embraced, — yet so that violence is not done to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. We also confess the essential doctrines, which make the distinguishing and vital substance of the Reformed system, — original sin, as derived from Adam, since we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression ; total depravity, which makes us averse to all good, and unable, of ourselves, to repent and believe, — yet so that this inability is moral, rooted also in our personal responsibility, and stricken with our own and not merely a foreign guilt ; the atoning work of our Lord, not symbolical and governmental only, but also a proper sacrifice for sin, and thus a satisfaction to the divine justice as well as a revelation of the divine love ; the covenant of redemption, wherein this atonement was made so general as to be sufficient for all, and to be offered unto all, and so particular as to be effectually applied in the salvation of believers ; personal election unto everlasting life, and the final perseverance of those who are effectually called. Justification only by the righteousness of Christ, regeneration only by the power of the Holy Ghost, sanctification, progressive here and completed hereafter, and endless life in Christ, we equally confess and believe. With all the diversities of the imperfect and jarring speech of earth, there is amongst us

a substantial accord in that which makes the unison and melody of the one language of heaven." ¹

And then he throws the burden back upon the other side.

"The chief responsibility for reunion now rests with the Old School. God in his Providence has laid this task upon it, and momentous results are pending on its decision. Perhaps it is the most important question it will have to decide for the next generation. . . . We both have a great work to do, together or apart. If you say, together, we will join you heart and hand. And if you say, apart — so be it." ²

The effect of this article, with its impassioned logic, was very great. It was printed in pamphlet form, and extensively circulated. The affair had come for the time into the hands of the two eminent theologians, and the New School theologian had the advantage. The only question that remained was, whether Professor Smith might be regarded as accurately representing the sentiments of the New School body. An opportunity soon came for him to show that this was the case. In November of the same year, under the influence of the reunion movement, a "Presbyterian National Union Convention," composed of delegates from all the Presbyterian bodies in the country, and not confined to the Old and New Schools, was held in Philadelphia. A committee was appointed to consider the subject of union, and to prepare a plan for such union.

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 656 seq.

² *Ibid.* pp. 660, 662.

The second article in their report declared that "in the United Church the Westminster Confession of Faith shall be received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures."¹ It was at this point that Professor Smith intervened with a stroke of statesmanship which will always be memorable in the annals of Presbyterianism. It is thus described by an intimate friend,² who was also a delegate to the Convention: --

"It was late in the evening at the close of the second day, and the question was just about to be put, when Professor Smith . . . arose and said: 'Mr. Moderator, it seems to me that, in this article, we have reached the central point, and that here we need to be careful and circumspect, because we have come to the article where there is the most controversy. There will be the most difficulty in respect to the terms of subscription as to the sense in which we assent to the doctrines presented, and receive the Confession of Faith as containing the doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures. I move that the following words be added to that article, namely: It being understood that this Confession is received in its proper historical, that is, the Calvinistic or Reformed sense.' The proposition took the Convention by surprise. Some did not see the need of it, others feared it would raise a new and unnecessary discussion. But the mover persisted. To a friend who suggested to him that some would prefer to have him withdraw it, he replied, 'I have offered it, and the Convention may dispose of it as they like, vote it down if they do not like it.' His ob-

¹ *American Presbyterian Review*, vol. i. p. 582.

² The Rev. Jonathan F. Stearns, D. D., of Newark, N. J.

ject . . . was, first, to meet the objections to organic union then contemplated, on the part of a considerable section of the Old School body, of which the ‘ Princeton Review ’ was the representative ; and, second, to test, in an open and explicit manner, the position of the New School on the subject of accepting and adopting the Confession. In this latter view its success was most signal. There had been no concert. The mover acted on his own responsibility. But when the question was put to the New School portion of the Convention every man except two (46 ayes to 2 nays) immediately voted in the affirmative.”¹

The Convention failed to bring about organic union between the different members of the larger Presbyterian family. But the “ Smith Amendment,” as it was called, did its work in securing the mutual confidence needed for the reunion of the Old and New Schools. Thenceforward there was no question as to the orthodoxy of the New School men and their good faith in urging the reunion.

In the Review for January, 1868, appeared two articles from Professor Smith. The first was of a historical character, and was entitled “ Presbyterian Division and Reunion, in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States.” The other was a review of the Union Convention of Philadelphia. In the latter he again argued the cause of reunion. He wrote : —

“ The logic of the case is clear. And the logic of the Christian mind and heart tends surely in one direction. Division is costly ; but union is above price. Division is

¹ *American Presbyterian Review*, vol. i. p. 583 seq.

sometimes defensible ; union is a good in itself, and needs no defense. When united, it is only a stern necessity that should sunder us ; when divided, it is only a stern necessity that should keep us from reuniting.”¹

From this time the work went steadily forward. Smith, though not a member of the Reunion Committee, was in constant communication with its members, and aided the good cause with his pen, especially by numerous articles in the “*Evangelist*.”² He was a member of the General Assembly at Harrisburg, when the final report of the Reunion Committee was adopted.

But it was not to be permitted him to witness with his own eyes the final scenes in the work in which he had played so important a part. When the two Assemblies met in New York the following year, he was in Europe, a sick man, trying to gain sufficient health to continue his professional duties. His colleague Dr. Skinner wrote him at that time : “No man has done as much as you have in consummating our glorious reunion. I sympathize with the high rejoicing with which your soul cannot but be filled by the perfect and wonderful success of your labors.”³

When, in 1870, the desired consummation was finally attained, he was still a wanderer in a foreign land.

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. vi. p. 138.

² See “Old and New School Reunion” in the *Evangelist* for January 23, 1868 ; and “Presbyterian Reunion” in the same, February 20, 1868, and June 18, 1868.

³ *Memoir*, p. 308.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST.

THE last eight years of Professor Smith's life were a constant struggle with disease, ending only with his death. We have seen that a similar struggle preceded his entrance upon the active work of his life. As he looked forward at that time, he had no expectation of a long life or a laborious one. But he had actually had more than a quarter of a century, unbroken by any long disablement, in which he had done a work surpassing in intensity and achievement that of most of his contemporaries. Now the break had come. Looking at it from the human side, it is not hard to understand it. It was the result of overwork. So frail a frame as his could not permanently bear the strain that had been put upon it. Day and night he had thought and planned and toiled. His life had seemed to be more in the spirit than in the flesh. But the end was inevitable, and it came. The persistent insomnia that gave him such exquisite torture during his last years made its appearance. He had reached the limit of his physical powers.

When we look at the fact on the divine side, it

is not so easy to explain it. For we cannot doubt that this was all ordered by God, who might have had things different, had He desired; who might have so restrained him that he would not have been permitted thus to use up his vital powers. To us there is something profoundly strange and sad in this failure of a life for lack of the mere physical basis, just at the time when the spirit was at the very height and fullness of its power. What might not this man have accomplished, what might he not even now be accomplishing, had his health and life been spared? To get any comfort, we have to fall back upon Smith's own Calvinism, and find the solution of the problem in the sovereignty of an all-wise and all-holy God. And as for this long discipline, coming at the close of a life so well spent and useful, we are equally at a loss for an explanation. Perhaps, if we could see the other side, and know the work God has beyond for such men to do, we might discover in it the preparation for high and great tasks, and it might be as clear to us as is the discipline of those early years, which were an indispensable preparation for the work we have been reviewing.

The break came in the early days of 1869. For a few weeks he tried to struggle on. But it was of no use. It was deemed best by his physicians and friends that he should go abroad. His faithful friends — and few ever had such friends as he, whom he knew how to “grapple to his soul with hooks of steel” — made generous provision for his

needs. He wrote, "I have got to go off; I am worn and wearied, taking life hardly — often wishing rather for death."¹ In the latter part of February he set sail for the Old World, in company with his wife and son. Mrs. Smith writes: —

"As before in his youth, the friends whom he left — some of them the same friends — doubted whether they should see his face again; doubted, even, whether he would live to cross the ocean. So deep and widely-felt was the solicitude on his account, that it might almost have been said of him, as of the Apostle, that 'prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.'"²

The limits of this sketch do not permit any detailed account of the year and a half he spent abroad in the only partially successful search for health. The chapter on "Europe and the East" in Mrs. Smith's *Life of her husband* is one of the most interesting in that delightful work. The full extracts from his letters there given afford an insight into his character and life invaluable to those who would know the man as he was. The invalid went to the south of Europe, and before the middle of April wrote from Rome: —

"I am slowly gaining, doing as well as could be expected, having every other night or so snatches of true sleep; but I am working up from the roots, the process is slow and painful. I have been stranded and am just creeping and staggering toward the green fields and the

¹ To his friend, Dr. Stearns, of Newark. *Memoir*, p. 298.

² *Ibid.* p. 299.

blue skies, with glimpses now and then of a better land beyond and above. God willing, I hope to work through ; if not, it is all well and right.”¹

From Rome he went in May to La Tour in Piedmont, where he spent a considerable time among the Waldenses. The latter part of the summer and the early autumn were passed in Switzerland. He had intended to return to New York in time to take up his Seminary work at the beginning of the term, but the generous action of the Board of Directors rendered this unnecessary, and the state of his health was such as to make it plain that the time for return had not yet come. He wrote to his mother, near the end of September, from the summit of the Rigi Scheideck : —

“ I do hope and believe that I have not got to remain idle another year, for I can ill afford to do that at my time of life, and with so much left undone. But who, after all, knows much about what he really does in this world, or what it will amount to? How soon the waves of forgetfulness roll over almost everybody ! How easily our places can be supplied, and that is, after all, a comfort.”²

The autumn and early winter were passed in Heidelberg, in the company of his family and near relations. In January he started for a tour to the East. This memorable journey through Egypt and Palestine was made with his old friend Dr. Park and his colleague Professor Hitchcock. That these three theologians should have a glorious time

¹ *Memoir*, p. 302.

² *Ibid.* p. 311.

together was inevitable. Smith and Park stood in the front rank of American systematic theologians, making with the venerated Hodge of Princeton a triad of which any country might be proud. In the doctrinal and ecclesiastical conflicts of the preceding years, the theologian of Andover and the theologian of New York had not maintained their early intimacy; but now they were brought close together in the familiar intercourse of this delightful journey. The second week of February found the party in Egypt. In March they were passing on camel-back through the desert. Smith wrote: —

“I cannot say that I like a camel personally as I should a horse, but I respect him very much. The walk of a camel can be endured, but his trot is cruel.”¹

The account he gives of the journey is exquisite.

Good Friday and Easter were spent in Jerusalem. It was the fulfilment of a lifelong dream to follow in the steps of “those blessed feet” which “were nailed for our advantage on the bitter cross.” He writes to his wife: —

“This, dearest, is an event in one’s life; everything seems here to bear more directly and profoundly upon the question of our salvation, and of the fact of a personal Saviour, incarnate for our sakes. Whatever superstitions or even frauds abound in the traditions of the rival factions, the grand historic facts still remain; and I hope that I do really believe in Christ more than ever before, and believe less in mere tradition.”²

Early in May they were in Damascus, a fort-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 333 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 337.

night later in Beirut, among the missionaries, some of them his own students. Late in June Professor Smith was in Munich, once more with his family.

The journey had been a delightful one, but it had not accomplished its main purpose. He was still a sick man. The summer was spent in Switzerland, where he made encouraging advances toward health. It was the summer of the Vatican Council and of the outbreak of the Franco-German War, in both of which he took an intense interest. By the latter part of August he was able to write: —

“I feel myself quite convinced that I can get along well enough with my usual routine in the Seminary, if the directors and students do not expect too much of me at first. I must work back by slow degrees. These two months here have done me great good. I feel well.”¹

By the middle of October he was once more at home and starting in his cherished work in the Seminary he loved so well.

The year passed with no important incidents. He was still far from well. His insomnia dogged his steps, and any over-exertion disabled him. But he was able to do his work, and for that he thanked God. The winter was saddened by the death of his colleague, the beloved and venerated Dr. Skinner, whose saintly influence, after all these years, still clings like an aroma around Union Seminary. The summer's rest brought him a

¹ *Memoir* p. 351.

modicum of health, and he began his work in the Seminary in the autumn of 1871 with renewed hopes. But before the winter was over, his health once more failed, and two months were lost from his Seminary duties. Growing stronger as the spring advanced, he was able to finish the year. It had been a hard struggle, but he had managed to pull through.

The Seminary year of 1872-73 was marked by increasing discouragements and failures. His feeble health was insufficient to bear the strain put upon it, and though he clung to his work with indomitable courage, the weak flesh was too much for the willing spirit. His old enemy, insomnia, came back upon him, and the remedies he employed, under medical advice, to overcome it, affected him even more disastrously than the disease itself. With long intermissions, during which he was unable to perform his Seminary duties, he battled on until the spring, and then broke down so completely that it became impossible to complete the tasks of the Seminary year. It was a terrible discipline, more terrible for him than it would have been for most men, inasmuch as his life was so entirely bound up in his work. But the same assured knowledge of the great Christian realities which lay at the basis of all his public efforts gave him power in the midst of these deep personal troubles. His wife writes : —

“ The sufferings of his weary brain were at times very great, and from them there was no safe relief ; but these

were times of the utmost patience, gentleness, and tenderness. The humblest members of his family felt this, and responded to it with rare devotion. And the less he could receive help and comfort, the more desirous he seemed to give them to others. Never, probably, in all his years of constant pain and weariness, did he once think of these — he certainly never spoke of them — as a reason for withholding any service from any applicant. His unselfish, uncomplaining, prayerful endurance through the long night-watches could not well be imagined by those who saw him daily at his post.”¹

The summer brought little relief. Still he was in his place at the beginning of the Seminary year in the autumn of 1873, and endeavored to perform his accustomed duties. In October the Evangelical Alliance met in New York. He, more perhaps than any other man, had been instrumental in bringing about this memorable meeting, and had anticipated it with much eagerness. The establishment of the American branch of the Alliance had been largely due to his efforts. He had been appointed chairman of the committee to report to the meeting of the Alliance that was to have been held at Amsterdam in 1866. As was noticed on a previous page, his report was prepared, and he went in person to deliver it. When the meeting, postponed on account of the war in Europe, was actually held the following year, he was not able to be present; but his report was presented and read in part before the Alliance. It concluded with an invitation

¹ *Memoir*, p. 364.

to hold the next meeting in New York. This invitation was accepted, and in January, 1869, just as his health was failing for the first time, the American branch appointed him "by acclamation to go to Europe as their representative, for the purpose of making arrangements for the expected General Conference in New York, the following October, a chief object being to secure the best representative men from different countries. Later came the request from the committee that he should go at once."¹

In pursuance of this commission, he visited many prominent men while he was abroad, and corresponded with many others upon the subject. The Franco-German War prevented the meeting of the Alliance in 1870. But in 1873 it assembled in New York. How eagerly Professor Smith had desired it is shown by a remark of his just before his departure for Europe in 1869, that "when Reunion and the Evangelical Alliance were accomplished, he should feel that his work was done."² But now that the long-deferred object was attained, he was unable to take any prominent part.

"So far as his strength allowed, he attended its sessions. His house was open, day by day, and he enjoyed the society of many friends, European and American, at his own table. But his prepared paper on Pantheism was not read, and the only public part which he was able to take in the great assembly was to pronounce the benediction at the close of one of the sessions."³

¹ *Memoir*, p. 296.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 367.

Until the latter part of November he succeeded in giving his Seminary lectures. Then the break came once more. It had come earlier year after year. It was not hard to see what the result would be, if energetic measures were not taken to insure recovery. His physicians insisted upon entire rest. He therefore gave up the hope of further work for the time, and went, with his wife, to the Sanitarium at Clifton Springs, N. Y. Here he soon began to rally. But before there was time for any real improvement, he was compelled to face the sharpest trial of his life. It can best be stated in the words of Mrs. Smith: —

“Meanwhile the exigencies of the Seminary must be provided for. For years, with the utmost tension of his enfeebled powers, his work had been irregular and incomplete. The students were now urgent in their just demands for instruction in this important department. His New York physicians gave, at the best, no encouragement for the next year. There were phases of his disease which well-nigh shut out hope. The strongest efforts had been ineffectual to secure a temporary substitute. On leaving for Clifton, in his extremity, he had intrusted the matter of the resignation of his chair to the judgment of three of his friends, the Rev. Drs. Stearns, Adams, and Prentiss. With great reluctance and pain, after consulting with the President and other members of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, they decided that it was best, both for the Seminary and for himself, that he should retire.”¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 371 *seq.*

The letter of resignation was written on January 13, 1874. On the next day it was accepted by the Board of Directors, who, in their Minute made at the time, expressed their profound sense of the value of Professor Smith's services, and their deep regret at the circumstances which rendered the step imperative. They unanimously appointed him Professor Emeritus, under salary from the Seminary, and provided that upon his recovery such work should be assigned to him as he might be able to perform. His friend and colleague, Professor W. G. T. Shedd, was appointed his successor in the chair of Theology.

The heart knoweth its own bitterness. Probably no trial of his life was half so great as this. It was the apparent overthrow of his life's work, just at the time when he might have been accomplishing the most important part of it. It was a hundred times harder than to have died in the harness. But he bore it like the Christian theologian he was. Nothing could be finer than his generous letter to Dr. Shedd. He said:—

“The Seminary is to be congratulated upon your accession to the chair of Systematic Theology. Under all the circumstances I was, of course, obliged to resign, however reluctantly, and besides you there was no second choice. I am sure that your appointment will be greeted all through the church with great satisfaction. It is a self-sustaining department, if the fit man be in it. May you make up for my imperfections, and strengthen as well as adorn the chair.”¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 374.

A few days after the resignation he wrote to his friend Prentiss : —

“ I think I see everything more and more clearly, and I feel better and stronger for it. I am looking away more and more from the incidents and accidents, and trying to read God’s purpose in it, and that seems to me clear. I needed the chastisement ; I pray it may do me good, and cause me to live wholly and only to my Master. . . . I have no special fear about the future ; the Lord will provide. I humbly hope that He who has spared me will not forsake me ; that He will, in very deed, deliver my life from destruction, and let me yet see his goodness in the land of the living.” ¹

As the spring approached, his health improved. In February and the early days of March he wrote his article on “The New Faith of Strauss,” one of the best pieces of work he ever accomplished, though unfortunately the promised second part never appeared. A little later he spent a few weeks in New York, but found it advisable to return to Clifton. He did not obtain the relief he sought. The summer was passed partly in New York, and partly on the coast of Maine, and did not to any great extent change the situation. It was not deemed safe for him to resume work in the Seminary in the autumn, though he spent a few weeks in New York during September. The most of the autumn and winter were passed at Clifton fighting the desperate fight for health with but partial success. The spring of 1875 brought

¹ *Memoir*, p. 373.

somewhat brighter prospects, and the summer — spent largely in the company of his beloved brother, now stricken with a fatal disease — so far invigorated him that he felt able in the autumn to deliver a weekly lecture to the students of the Seminary. This was a part of his course on Apologetics, of which more detailed mention is to be made a little later.

In its effects upon others this course of lectures was a great success. For the time, however, it was too much for his enfeebled health. Yet rest brought back more strength, and in the spring of 1876, he was able to resume the course on Apologetics. He also accomplished besides a considerable amount of literary work. This spring was saddened by the death of the brother to whom we have referred. Nothing could be more touching than the account he gave his mother of this brother's last hours.

“I recall all his brotherly love for me and care of me when I was weak and low; how he helped and strengthened me; and I thank God for all this. No jar ever came between us. And then at length, he told me of his malady, and at the same time of his renewed consecration to Christ. And so we walked together till he has fallen by the way — fallen to rise again. When and where shall we meet again? Father, Fred, mother, and you, our second mother, to whom all our hearts were bound: a few months more, and we may all meet again.”¹

¹ *Memoir*, p. 398.

But we turn from this sad picture — sad on its earthward side, though bright on its heavenly — to the active work which in part belongs to this period and is most appropriately described here. The lectures on Apologetics sum up the best thought of Smith's later life, and form a centre around which may be grouped some of the finest essays that proceeded from his facile pen.

He had been strongly impressed, from comparatively early life, with the conviction that a great struggle between Christianity and infidelity was imminent. His Unitarian training and his remarkable conversion had given this conviction a reality which it does not have in the minds of most Christian men. Not that he identified Unitarianism with infidelity. No man ever more clearly recognized the difference between the two than he; no one was ever more ready to admit the elements of Christian truth which Unitarianism contains, and to welcome every approximation to evangelical Christianity. But he did believe that the Unitarians make philosophical and practical concessions to infidelity which are fatal if consistently carried out. Accordingly, his conversion to orthodox Christianity did not merely give him some new dogmas; it furnished him with a new philosophy and a new theory of life. He came to see that not only is Christ the practical centre of the Christian life, but that in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And as he looked out upon the world, and saw the strength of the oppo-

sition to Christianity, he was deeply affected with the thought of the coming conflict between Christ and the anti-Christian powers.

At that time Christianity had passed through one great struggle, the effects of which were still felt. It was the struggle with deism. In the previous century it had wrought sad havoc in Great Britain, and had been overcome in part by philosophy, but still more by the revival of the religious life. In this country deism was rampant after the Revolutionary War, and had been overthrown by influences similar to those which led to its downfall on the other side of the ocean, — especially the great revivals which marked the closing years of the last century, and brought forth such rich fruit during the first third of the present.

When Smith went abroad, he came into contact with a different kind of infidelity, richer and stronger in every way than deism, the pantheistic philosophy of Germany, which was working with such wonderful success in the spheres of speculative thought and of historical criticism. No wonder that this now seemed to him the great enemy of Christianity, and that he stated the issue, as he repeatedly does in his writings, as — Christ or Spinoza.

But during the latter part of his life a new adversary had made its appearance. In 1859 Darwin published his “Origin of Species,” and thenceforward the opposition to Christianity assumed a new aspect. This last onset upon the Christian faith was

ostensibly scientific, but actually, like all such assaults, philosophical. The agnostic system, identical with neither pantheism nor materialism, but with a side turned towards each, began to gain the power it has since attained. Smith was quick to see the approach of this new enemy, or of this old enemy in new form. He recognized its true character, when it first came in friendly guise. In February, 1860, he published his article on Mansel's Limits of Religious Thought. It is a piece of masterly philosophical criticism, laying bare with unsparing hand the fatal concessions made by the Christian philosopher. It was followed a year later by his equally powerful article on Hamilton's Theory of Knowledge. Smith was not blinded by the fact that Hamilton and Mansel advance their agnosticism in the interests of revelation, and believe that where reason is silent faith can speak. He writes in the article on Mansel: —

“ Reason being proved impotent — we must believe! This may be very well for those who do believe already; but how will it work in the case of those who do not? How can we convince such of the necessity and reasonableness of belief, when reason gives a negative response on the same points which faith affirms? ”¹

He says of Mansel's utterances respecting the inconceivability of the Infinite and Absolute, “ It is the language of the school of materialism and atheism. ”² The position that we cannot know

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 10.

² *Ibid.* p. 14.

anything that is not finite and related amounts to this, "that we can know only what we are;" and this is "one of the most mischievous positions in philosophy and theology."¹ He sees the fatal inconsistency of the system.

"The reasons assigned for the impotence of thought are just as valid in proof of the impotence of faith. This must be so, unless belief transcends consciousness; and that it does, we do not suppose that any sane mind would say."²

Finally he says: —

"On the principles of this volume we do not see how Mr. Mansel can meet and confute either the pantheist or the atheist. How could he rationally prove to them the existence of an Absolute, Infinite Person, when he has told them that, in the eye of reason, Absolute and Person are contradictory to each other? How could he rationally prove the Being of God, after saying that all the terms by which God is defined, Infinite, Absolute, Substance, First Cause, involve us in irreconcilable contradiction? . . . We cannot gain our cause against such subtle disputants by sacrificing the very basis on which alone a rational knowledge of God is possible."³

In the article on Sir William Hamilton's Theory of Knowledge he deals with the same great subjects. Hamilton had said, in strange anticipation of Herbert Spencer, whom he would scarcely have chosen as the prophet of his doctrines, that "the last and highest consecration of all true religion

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. ii. p. 15.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* p. 27.

must be an altar — To the unknown and unknowable God.” He too would save his system by giving to faith the power which he denies to reason, of knowing the Absolute. Smith says : —

“The main question respecting Hamilton’s system is, whether the method and arguments by which he reduced reason to utter contradictions do not also prevent the possibility of a rational faith? In undermining the rationalists, has he not also undermined the believer? Over the grave of reason can he erect any other than a sepulchral monument to faith? If the infinite and absolute are annihilated, reduced to nothing. in the eye of reason, has not the eye of faith also lost the very objects of its vision?”¹

He shows that if Hamilton had only applied the same theory of knowledge to the spiritual realm which he had vindicated so successfully in the realm of sense, he would have avoided the errors into which he has fallen. He asks : —

“If in perception, as Hamilton so cogently shows, we are immediately cognizant (even conscious of) an external reality; are we not also cognizant, in as direct a way, of what is above the limitations of time and sense? . . . By a higher right than can be claimed in the philosophy of perception for a real knowledge of its objects, we may also claim that reason beholds its objects with an unveiled face.”²

On such principles he shows the futility of Hamilton’s theory of the relativity of knowledge, which has played such a part in the agnostic speculations.

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 306.

² *Ibid.* p. 313.

The same underlying philosophical questions are taken up in part in Professor Smith's article on "Mill's Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy,"¹ which deals especially with the theory of knowledge, and which Mill regarded as of sufficient importance to answer particularly in the third edition of his work.

In the year 1860 appeared the famous Essays and Reviews. This year, says Pfeiderer, "may be regarded as an epoch in the history of English theology, corresponding to the year 1835 in the history of German theology. The storm which this collection of essays by various authors called up in England had great similarity with the commotion produced in Germany by Strauss's 'Leben Jesu.'"² As one reads to-day these effusions of Temple, Williams, Powell, Wilson, Goodwin, Pattison, and Jowett, one wonders at the commotion they caused. They are far from being profound, and there is nothing in the style or manner of treatment to commend them. The views advanced have become so familiar, even in the midst of our orthodox communions, that they have ceased to surprise us. They were in part the outcome of German theology, in part of the liberal movement indigenous in England, which had been gathering force below the surface, a movement that stood in close relation to the new theories in physical science

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. iv. 1866, pp. 126-162.

² *Development of Theology*, p. 387.

and the corresponding changes in philosophy. To understand it fully it would be needful to go farther back than our own times, or farther forward; for we have not yet seen the end.

To Professor Smith it was a sign of the times full of perilous omen. Accordingly, in 1861 he published one of his most elaborate articles, entitled "The New Latitudinarians of England."¹ It is of great value to those who wish to understand his apologetical position. It was through and through orthodox, not in the narrow and scholastic sense of the term, but in the large and true one. At the beginning of the article he states his apologetical creed:—

"The nature of the Christian defense has been unvarying on all the main points on which it rests and must rest, as the one divine system of redemption. Though the doctrines and polity of the Church, internally, have been subject to change of form and restatement, to meet heresies, schisms, and objections, yet, as against infidelity, the attitude of Christianity has been uniform, simple, and unchanging. It has always claimed to be a specific, divine revelation, supernatural in its origin, announced in prophecy, attested by miracles, recorded in inspired Scriptures, centring in the person and work of the God-man, and having for its object the redemption of the world from sin. It presupposes a personal God, and anticipates a future state of reward and punishment. On these positions it has always stood: here it has been exclusive—exclusive just because it is a final and universal system. As soon as it abandons

¹ *American Theological Review*, vol. iii. 1861, pp. 312–357.

these cardinal positions, it abandons its claim to supremacy and ultimate authority, and is resolved into some more general movement, into some philosophic generalization. Its revelation is specific, and not to be resolved into general reason; its Book is inspired, and no other Book is thus divinely inspired; its prophecies are out of the category of historic conjectures or morbid clairvoyance; its miracles are above and beyond the course of nature; its Redeemer has, as the God-man, a specific and unmatched dignity, and there is no other such union of divinity and humanity; and his is the *only* name given under heaven amongst men, whereby we must be saved. The Christian faith claims, and has always claimed, that there are limits here which cannot be passed, without passing outside of the sunlight into a penumbra or the shades; that the mere abstract and generalizing notions which philosophy would substitute for these realities, are ghostly shapes, without essential vitality or reality. They lack the signature of life: there is no divine breath within them. They are the masquerades of imagination, and not the living forms of real truth.”¹

He cannot accept Dr. Williams's doctrine of the Scriptures, which reduces their inspiration to “the voice of the congregation,” and gives up the predictive element in prophecy. He utterly rejects his idealizing of the Christian doctrines, which resolves the realities of faith “into mystical and unmeaning generalities.”² He points out the inconsistency and untenability of Professor Powell's denial of the internal evidences of Christianity, de-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 168 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 190.

declaring that to call in question the miracles and to base the evidence of Christianity solely on the internal proof is suicidal. While paying his tribute to the grace, felicity, and candor of Jowett's essay, he wholly dissents from his naturalistic principles of Biblical interpretation, denying that the Scriptures can be treated in precisely the same way as other books, and declaring that in their interpretation "revelation and inspiration come in with a controlling influence."¹

His final judgment of the *Essays* is severe, but unquestionably well-considered : —

"The same process of destruction and reconstruction here applied to Christian fact and doctrine logically leads to the rejection of all that is supernatural, to the denial of a personal God, of immortality, and even of freedom and distinctive moral obligation."²

His article on Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, published in 1863, may be passed over with brief mention. The book itself was superficial and in no true sense scientific. It attracted some attention in its day, but is now without influence. Its peculiarity is the attempt to explain human history on physiological principles. What led Smith to write against it was its materialistic tendency. After stating the main propositions of the volume, he says : —

"We have dwelt upon them more fully because they fall in with some tendencies of the times which the

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 207.

² *Ibid.* p. 211.

author may not wish to favor, but which such vague and unscientific treatment of the most momentous theories surely encourages. . . . The undoubted drift of his theory is to . . . enthrone physical laws as supreme.”¹

When in 1863 Ernest Renan's "Vie de Jesu" appeared, it cut Smith to the quick. It was not merely that it wounded his religious sensibilities at the most vital point; it was an assault on what he believed to be the central fact of Christianity, the centre of its doctrine and the stronghold of its defense. He was fully aware of the superficiality of this book, with its strange mingling of sentimentality and frivolity. But he recognized in it an important sign of the times, and knew that it would have a great influence over the unthinking masses, whose faith was already beginning to be undermined by the skeptical tendencies of the age. He had seen the power of Strauss's assault upon the doctrine of Christ, and although he knew Renan to be a man of much smaller intellectual and critical ability, he rightly divined that his book would not be without disastrous effects. His review was published in January, 1864,² when the Civil War was at its height, and one can mark in it something of the martial tone and spirit of the times. Smith goes directly to the root of the matter, namely, the naturalistic assumptions of the book. Renan had declared that "in the name of uniform experience

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 349 seq.

² *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. ii. 1864, pp. 136-169.

we banish miracle from history.” Here was the fundamental error. It gave occasion to the theologian to introduce his own views respecting the nature and proof of miracles. A miracle he defines as “a work of divine power, introducing for a moral end phenomena counteracting and surpassing the mere laws of nature.” He continues: —

“If God be a conscious, personal intelligence, he may thus intervene; if man’s moral wants demand such a revelation, the intervention becomes probable as well as possible. If the superhuman work is performed by one in whose testimony we can confide, it becomes credible. It does not violate the law of causality; it only interrupts for a wise end the mere natural sequence of phenomena. It is nature, used by divine will and intelligence, to promote a moral end. The alleged uniformity of experience against the miraculous virtually assumes the point in debate. Natural sequences are not inviolable. A personal will violates some of them every day. An absolute will may violate all of them, and not contradict any rational truth. . . . As to the miracles of the Gospels, we have, in the testimony of Christ and the apostles, a higher authority than that of any possible congress of savants, judging by the eye of sense.”¹

The following passage states the object of Renan’s book: —

“The Church has its ideal — the God-man, living a life perfect in holiness, combining all human with all divine perfections, dying for the redemption of the race, rising from the dead, ascending to the right hand of the

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 409 seq.

Majesty on high, and there wielding his regal sceptre — the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. And when a naturalistic criticism can substitute for this matchless person, another radiant though earthly form, equally consistent with facts, and equally harmonious in itself, then its highest work would have been achieved; and then, and not till then, may it begin to vaunt that supernaturalism has been expelled from the annals of the race. And this is the task which Renan undertakes to accomplish.”¹

He follows Renan through his work with unsparing criticism, pointing out at every step the inadequacy of his method. In the closing paragraphs of the article he gives free course to his glowing thought, in adoration of his Master and Redeemer.

“Nothing in all literature and all philosophy equals this sublime and radiant idea, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is written on the open page of the divine oracles, it is impressed upon the soul of the believer, it is drawn out in the theologies of the church, it is hymned in penitential and jubilant psalms, in its substantial lineaments it is omnipresent in the history of the world, it unites time with eternity, and it explains the marvelous and controlling power of the Son of God in the annals of our race, whose highest destiny is to be found in coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”²

And thus he reaches the conclusion, which is the

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 418.

² *Ibid.* p. 440 *seq.*

core of this article, viewed as a contribution to Christian apologetics : —

“Naturalism must expel Christ from the heart and the church, from the conscience and the life, before it can expel supernaturalism from human history.”¹

Mention has been made, in the present chapter, of the circumstances under which the review of the “New Faith of Strauss” was written.² Smith had been in Germany shortly after the publication of the “Leben Jesu,” and in the midst of the excitement called forth by that famous book. He had carefully watched the career of this leader of modern unbelieving thought, and had seen how by the logic of his convictions Strauss had been led steadily onward and downward from the semi-Christian Hegelianism with which he had started. Now, after nearly forty years, in his final confession of faith he took the position of bald naturalism and atheism. He was a typical man, one of the ablest of his times, thoroughly honest in his unbelief, without shifts or evasions. His career was a recapitulation of the course of anti-Christian thought in our age. As such Smith aimed to present it. He regarded it as the *reductio ad absurdum* of unbelief. He declared : —

“Infidelity sometimes ‘serves the law it seems to violate.’ Logically and ruthlessly carried out, it reveals its

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 441.

² *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. iii. 1874, pp. 259-298.

inmost nature, and sets before the vacillating half-believers just where their skepticism tends. A thoroughgoing and uncompromising atheism or pantheism may thus unwittingly render essential service to the Christian faith. In putting forth its full strength it may unveil its essential impotence. Thus this last volume of one of the ablest modern antagonists of our faith shows the utmost that can be said against it, without reserve or qualification. It exhibits the old and the new faith in their sharpest antagonism. We see what we must give up if we abandon Christianity, what we have left if we accept the new belief. It is, said Strauss in substance, Atheism or Christianity : there is no logical middle ground. This is the vital sense of his 'Confession.'"¹

The most significant feature of Strauss's book is its "attempt to combine all the elements of opposition to Christianity and religion into one system."² Idealism and materialism, Smith affirms, are not the opposites they sometimes seem to be, but different poles of the same naturalistic view of the universe. The two are capable of combining, and do actually combine, — in proof of which he points to Herbert Spencer. "The real power of Strauss's book consists in his insisting upon the compact, and showing how it may be carried out." The first question which Strauss asks is, "Are we still Christians?" his second, "Have we still any religion?" The first is answered in the negative. Starting from his pantheistico-materialistic theory of the universe he declares the Gospels mythical and Christ an en-

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 446.

² *Ibid.* p. 452.

thusiast and fanatic. The second is also practically answered in the negative ; for although a semblance of religion is maintained in the sense of dependence upon the universe, the existence of God is denied, and immortality, with all the other essential truths of religion, abandoned with it. The outcome of it all is, to use Smith's words, that the rational belief which is to supersede Christianity gives us : —

“An unconscious Universe instead of the Father of all ; Fate instead of Providence ; a sheer submission to destiny instead of love to a holy and wise and loving God ; the laws of nature instead of the law of righteousness ; self-reliance instead of pardon and trust ; the law of evolution instead of an Incarnate Redeemer ; and in place of immortality utter oblivion. All religion, all morality must be refashioned ; for all ideas of reason, yea and reason itself, all ethical precepts, yea and conscience itself, can have no absolute and permanent worth ; since they are but evanescent and necessary products of that o'ermastering Force, which is above all, and through all, and in all. And as no man can grasp its nature, so no man can foresee what may or may not be yet evolved out of the recesses of its unfathomable, unconscious, and irrational being.”¹

The statement of such a view is its best refutation. It does not and cannot furnish men the help and strength and comfort which their religious nature demands.

Two other questions Strauss asked and tried to answer, namely, “What is our conception of the

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, p. 486.

universe?" and "What is our rule of life?" These Smith intended to discuss in another article, but it was never written.

The lectures on Apologetics, had they been completed according to Professor Smith's plan, would have gathered together in systematic form the materials in defense of Christianity so richly presented in the articles that have been mentioned. But he never completed the ample task he laid out, and what we have is but a fragment. The loving care of Dr. Karr has preserved for us what was left, in the form of outlines and notes for the class-room. To those who knew Smith, and can read between the lines what this imperfect sketch omits, the little volume is of inestimable value. But it arouses a feeling of keen regret that the theologian did not live to do the work himself, as he would have known how to do it.

The plan is large and comprehensive. The great spiritual struggle between Christianity and the forces opposed to it, Professor Smith declares, is concentrated upon three decisive points. These are: —

"A personal God and his moral law and government; a living Christ and his redemptive work; and the Christian system, church, and life as the highest and best form of religion — the absolute religion for man." ¹

The scheme is thus given for the system of apologetics, which includes, in accordance with the

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 9.

three subjects just stated, Fundamental, Historical, and Philosophical Apologetics.

The first division, treating of the grounds of theistic belief, is not commonly included in apologetics, which is confined to the evidences of Christian truth. Yet there is good reason why it should be organically connected with the others, especially in view of the form taken by the assaults of unbelief in our day. It may also be questioned whether, to make the scheme complete, there should not have been added a fourth division, namely, Practical or Experimental Apologetics. In the Introduction to Christian Theology, Professor Smith gave a place to the evidence of Christian experience, and it was in accordance with his whole mode of thought to recognize it. There seems to be reason, therefore, why it should find a place in his scheme. This would be especially appropriate in view of the fact, which he so happily states, that "the main characteristic of the present attack upon, and defense of, Christianity is, that it is all along the line."¹ The evidence which is concerned with the ultimate reality of Christianity, as a present living fact, ought not to be omitted.

The lectures deal with only a part of the large subject mapped out, namely, under the first division, the Supernatural and the question of its cognoscibility; and under the second, the subject of miracles.

First, he takes up the nature of the Supernatural.

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 11.

In distinguishing it from Nature, he does not, like many modern writers, notably Horace Bushnell, place man on the higher side of the line. He believed that the advantages thus gained for thought are more than counterbalanced by the disadvantages. Nature is the realm of the finite, and therefore includes man. "The true real Supernatural, in its essence, is the Absolute, the Divine."¹ "If man be essentially supernatural, how shall we distinguish between God and man radically?"² Having thus defined the Supernatural, he comes to the question of its reality. This is evinced by the fact that it is a necessity of religion, a necessity of thought, and confirmed by well-nigh universal testimony. In proving it a necessity of thought, Smith's realism, so prominent in his philosophizing, comes clearly into view.

"Discernment upon this fundamental point depends upon the invaluable mental habit of seeing *things* as they are — not seeing words instead of things — not the vestigia nor the simulacra nor the larvæ of things, but the actual realities. All the 'idola' of Bacon stand in the way of this immediate vision of the reality; yet it is the first condition of all true knowledge."³

In a remarkable note he says: —

"The knowledge of Reason consists of the vision (intuition) of the absolute Idea in the beginning — of the absolute Ideal at the end. Herein, if anywhere, lies man's intellectual likeness to God and the pre-pledge of

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.* p. 21.

³ *Ibid.* p. 26 *seq.*

his immortality. Gazing with open eye upon the Infinite and Eternal, full of awe, but full of knowledge (and of love), constitutes the fullness of our being. The idea of Pure Being, of an Infinite Kosmos, is the object of profound wonder to every great thinker or sage. This is evident in all the schools from East to West, and the sentiment underlies all our scientific researches to-day. It is also the elemental idea of the Christian 'new birth' — the 'new simple idea' of Edwards — yet here more *concrete*, viz., the knowledge of God face to face — the sense of the *Supreme Reality*. It is a perpetual possession of the religious mind, avouched by all experience, and of it no skepticism can rob the believer. And more than this: the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord — the knowledge of God Incarnate is real knowledge." ¹

This opens the way for the proof of the manifestation of the Supernatural.

"The Supernatural is the ground and source of the natural; so that in one sense *all* the natural is but its manifestation." ²

It may come and stay as the natural, as when life enters the world, or when man makes his appearance. It may come and go, as in the case of prophecy and miracles. It may both stay and go, as in revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures.

"The Bible remains. The supernatural in it stays — as natural, it may be said. But its truths are ever upheld and applied by the same omniscient power that first

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 28.

² *Ibid.* p. 35.

announced them — to illumine and to sanctify mankind.”¹

All the theories of the universe imply the existence and manifestation of the Supernatural.

“All have the same problem. All grant, in some sense, a supernatural, a *prius* to creation — some mode of primal being, even if unknown. All philosophy raises an altar to the unknown God. Whom ye ignorantly worship Him declares Christianity to you.”²

This brings us to the crucial question, Can the Supernatural be known? And here he comes to close quarters with the agnostic speculations of our time, as well as with the pantheistic. The fundamental position of the agnostics, and of all who deny that we can have knowledge of God is, “that all knowledge comes by observation of phenomena (sensations), and by generalizing those phenomena.” He says: —

“This is the root of nescience in respect to God. If we can only know sensations and generalize them, of course we cannot come to the cause of those sensations. All beyond must be pure zero.”³

But he goes on to show that we do know far more than sensations.

“There is a material impact, *and also* a feeling of resistance, not material, but conscious — a resisting self, a person, an Ego — involved.”⁴

And this conscious knowledge cannot be derived

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 37.

² *Ibid.* p. 45.

³ *Ibid.* p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 53.

from phenomena. There is a knowledge, too, of necessary ideas. The fundamental principles of the inductive philosophy do not correspond to fact. In like manner he deals with the assertion that all knowledge is of the relative, and that we cannot know the Absolute; and that our knowledge of the Infinite and Absolute is merely negative; opposing these positions with the arguments so successfully urged in the articles on Hamilton and Mansel.

Not less ably does he deal with the pantheistic assertion that we can have an absolute knowledge of God.

“A knowledge of the Absolute is not absolute knowledge. . . . To show that Pantheism is the final and exclusive system for man would involve the proof of the following three points at least: (1) That man knows the Absolute; not as knowing *that* it is, but *what* it is. . . . (2) That man can develop the Relative from the Absolute, the Finite from the Infinite, and this by a necessary or demonstrative process. . . . (3) That there is only one spirit (absolute and infinite) in the universe, and that all other existences are its modes or modifications.”¹

The great difficulty is to find a developing principle.

“As soon as we attempt to pass from the abstract and indeterminate idea of being to any of its modes, *e. g.*, the material and spiritual, the real and the ideal, we need some *primum mobile*, some developing power, to account for the developing process. Whence this power? It cannot be deduced from the idea of being; it must then

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 65 seq.

be hypostasized as inherent in being. That is, in order to start, we must have a principle of movement, an act, as well as being. And as it must be an activity equal to all the effects; the Absolute Being itself must contain a causality adequate to each and all the specific effects, of wisdom, power, and moral order manifest in the universe; and how can it contain this, without itself being wise, powerful, and good, *i. e.*, a conscious moral intelligence? ”¹

The way is thus opened for the proof of the divine existence. This is developed from the point of view of man's instinctive belief in God, which is the

“first point in the *ascensio mentis ad Deum*. . . . The starting-point, the *point d'appui*, the fulcrum is in man's native belief, in the fact that *man is made in the image of God*.”²

The existence of this belief or instinct is proved by historical evidence, the so-called *consensus gentium*; by psychological evidence, derived from an analysis of human nature itself, showing that the highest exercise of each and all men's powers is in religion; and by the philosophical evidence, which derives its significance from the fact that God is the sum of the categories, the idea of ideas, that which is ultimate in human thought.

The theistic argument itself is only briefly treated. Two factors in it are distinguished, the intuitional and the experiential. The idea of God is innate, “not as complete and distinct, but irresistible men-

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 67 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 75.

tal and moral tendency. . . . The proofs are the development of this idea, in all its necessity and relations.”¹ The multiplicity of the proofs does not imply that any of them is unconvincing, but is due to the universality of the idea. “All the proofs are one proof or chain of argument.”² They are given in their traditional form, first the *a priori*, and then the *a posteriori*. The chapter ends with these words : —

“After all, true knowledge of God is a living, vital knowledge, gained only from communion with Him. It is the highest spiritual vision of the soul. The loss of it is spiritual darkness and death. This we are never to forget and never deny. Religion is not a theory, not metaphysics, not demonstrations — but a life, the life of God in the soul of man.”³

This brings us to the inmost heart of the proof of the divine existence. But if this is the highest kind of knowledge of God, then why should it not find a place in the evidence? Smith does not use all the material which lies ready at his hand.

The chapter on the supernatural as the miraculous is one of the best in the book. Professor Smith was fully aware of the importance of miracles in religion. He says : —

“Give up the Scripture miracles, and logically you give up Creation. . . . Belief in a personal God and in miracles really stand or fall together in any consecu-

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 85 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 86.

³ *Ibid.* p. 90.

tive logic or theory. . . . Here is the battle-ground on the question of the Supernatural in History. Here, moreover, both Christianity and Theism are in the sharpest contrast and contest with the two reigning schools of modern anti-Christian thought — the pantheistic and materialistic — the idealistic and the positive (materialistic — realistic). The impossibility of miracles is with them as an axiom — is the one unproved datum of all their criticism and philosophy.”¹

His definition is admirable: —

“Miracles are: direct works of divine power, superseding or using second causes (the ordinary course of nature) for a higher end — for a higher and better manifestation of God — the end for which God made the world.”²

He would not have them regarded as violations of the laws of nature.

“In relation to nature, a miracle is in it, yet not of it, is from a higher source, another power than is seen in the sequence strictly natural.”³

He would not have the weight of the evidence rest upon the less evident miracles of the Bible.

“There may be, and is, a great difference among them, and some ‘wonders’ may be explained by natural laws. Only — there *are* some indubitable ones, some manifestations of divine power which no possible advance of science can explain. There are *Test Miracles*, which admit only of the alternative: Miracle or Fraud, *e. g.*, The raising of Lazarus. We should not care if there were only one — that is enough.”⁴

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 91 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 104.

³ *Ibid.* p. 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*

The volume closes with a pathetic reminder of Professor Smith's nearly approaching end, the outline of his intended Ely Lectures on Evolution. It is called an outline, but it is only a collection of notes and jottings. There are few men whose rough notes would be of such value. Smith had been deeply interested in the subject of evolution. The idea, which lies at the bottom of so much that is best in modern thought, had long been familiar to him. His German philosophy had taught him how powerfully it could be employed by the opponents of Christianity and theism. When it appeared in a new and quasi-scientific form in the Darwinian theory of organic evolution, his attention was immediately attracted to it, and he gave the subject his best study and thought. His view of the whole question is large and tolerant. In our day the world has come around to Darwinian evolution, and the danger is that Christian men will make too great concessions to it, concessions that will imperil Christianity itself. At the time of which we are speaking this was not the case. Smith's words are the more brave and generous. He says : —

“ In evolution, we must concede — and appropriate — all that is proved true, as we have often done before. Those hurt the good cause who stoutly maintain the unbending literality of their own interpretation of the sacred text, and anathematize all who will not repeat their formulæ. There are some who, if a Christian utters the word evolution, accuse him of playing into

the hands of the infidel and the atheist. Those Evolutionists who are not Christians, just want Christians to say that *all* evolution undermines the Bible, and that *every* form of Darwinism is Atheism.”¹

Besides the materialistic and pantheistic forms of evolution, he recognized a theistic and Christian form, which

“contains all of fact and truth which is found in the others, and supplies their defects, in the recognition of a personal, conscious intelligence.”²

It was characteristic that he looked below all surface questions to the deep principles involved. He said: —

“The subsoil of all the hypotheses with which we have to deal is in the old question: Is the universe to be viewed *sub specie mundi*, or *sub specie æternitatis*? Are we, *e. g.*, to bound our view of all organisms with ‘the four organogens,’ carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen? This is the battle of Armageddon, and here we encounter the Anti-Christ.”³

And so the “metaphysical background” became of vital importance. The fight was a philosophical one, the question to be decided, Force or Mind, Mechanism or God?

“It is the position of our antagonists that Force is all. But this very word, Force, connotes not a phenomenon, but its *cause*. The phenomenon is discerned only through and by *motion*; and this motion again is never dis-

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 174 seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 175.

³ *Ibid.* p. 178.

cerned — and no man can define it, except by a paradox — something which both is not, and is. So true it is that the roots of phenomena are in the noumena — of the unintelligible in that which is discerned only by Intelligence, an Idea of Reason. Moreover, by every law of psychology, of logic, and of philosophy, Mind is what we know nearest, most and best. All else is comparatively inaccessible. The thing-in-itself, the substance which we know, and alone directly is — *Mind.*”¹

Going to the subject with the desire to discover and accept all that is true in the positions of unbelieving science and philosophy, he finds that they pay their tribute to Christianity.

“The proposition can be maintained, that modern science, so far from setting aside the ultimate questions which philosophy propounds and Christianity answers, has in fact made them *grandeur than ever*. Never did the Universe (so far as known) so much demand the knowledge of God. The points will become more numerous on which the new science defers to the old theology. Heredity, as we have seen, is obliged to open new ground for reverence of the doctrine of Original Sin; Pessimism emphasizes the truth that the race is under a moral condemnation; Indestructibility is a shadow of the doctrine of Immortality; Evolution paves the way for the view of man’s higher destiny; the doctrine that the end of the world must come, and that by fire, finds new illustration in our latest science.”²

The fragment closes with words that have often been quoted: —

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 181.

² *Ibid.* p. 191 *seq.*

“One thing is certain — that Infidel Science will rout everything excepting thorough-going Christian Orthodoxy. All the flabby theories, and the molluscous formations, and the intermediate purgatories of speculation will go by the board. The fight will be between a stiff, thorough-going Orthodoxy, and a stiff, thorough-going Infidelity. It will be, *e. g.*, Augustine or Comte, Athanasius or Hegel, Luther or Schopenhauer, J. S. Mill or John Calvin. Arianism gets the fire from both sides; so does Arminianism; so does Universalism.”¹

To use this language in any contest on narrow scholastic or sectarian issues is to misconstrue its meaning. The orthodoxy of which Smith here speaks is not that of a school, but the orthodoxy of the Christian Church, which is something higher and better than that of any school. He had in mind not mere doctrine, but the great Christian facts which doctrines strive, with more or less of success, to describe.

Such were some of his last thoughts as he looked forward to the great conflict, in which he was not destined to bear a part, but which he knew must sooner or later come. As was his wont, for he was in all things the theologian, he viewed it *sub specie æternitatis*. It was not far to go, when he entered into the full communion and knowledge of the things unseen and eternal themselves.

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 194.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROMOTION.

THE spring and summer of 1876 were spent in the hard struggle with disease. Sometimes he seemed for a while to be the victor, but generally the battle was against him. Yet he bore it patiently, with quiet Christian acquiescence. The early part of the summer was spent in New York, the latter part on the coast of his native Maine. In September he returned to his home. At first he seemed better. In October he resumed his work in the Seminary, giving a weekly lecture on Apologetics. Later in the autumn he received the appointment to deliver the lectures on the Ely Foundation in Union Seminary, of which mention was made in the last chapter. He seems to have felt that this task, which he gladly undertook, would be his last. He said, "After this is done I think I shall be ready to go."¹ But he did not realize that the end would come so soon.

Early in December he caught a severe cold, but was not at first confined by it to the house. On December 12th, he gave his last lecture in the Seminary. On the afternoon of the 16th he at-

¹ *Memoir*, p. 404.

tended the meeting of the "Chi Alpha," a ministerial club that was dear to his heart, but returned home with his cold increased.

Then came weeks of suffering which he endured with touching patience and resignation. At length, worn out with pain, he fell into a state of semi-consciousness, which lasted for weeks, yielding at last to entire unconsciousness. While still in the full possession of his faculties, and afterwards as his powers were failing, he gave constant evidence of the reality and strength of his faith. The convictions which had been the motive power of his life supported him in the hour of his extremity. One night he said, "——, dear, I have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have tried to serve him, in spite of everything." "And you do now?" was asked. "*Yes, with all my heart,*" was the reply. "And you can commit everything to God?" was asked at another time. "*Yes, everything.*"¹

On Wednesday morning, February 7, 1877, Henry B. Smith was called home.

A few years before, he had used words at the funeral of his beloved colleague and friend, Thomas Harvey Skinner, which, *mutato nomine*, may well be taken as the description of his own entrance into life: —

"To him 'dying was but going home.' Peacefully he passed away as a child to its rest. He has gone where there is no more winter; there everlasting spring abides. He is with the patriarchs and apostles and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 407.

saints and brethren he loved so well; and yet he hardly sees them in the impassioned vision of One whose name is above every name, and whose image was upon his soul. He has heard the welcome, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ And over his grave we can only say — mastering our grief — Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”¹

“He gave his honors to the world again,
His blessed part to Heaven, and slept in peace.”

Two days later the funeral services took place. First there was held in the chapel of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church a gathering of the men most closely related to Professor Smith, — the Directors, Faculty, Alumni, and students of the Seminary, the representatives of other institutions, the Presbyterian ministers, and the clergy generally. At this service the exercises were of the most tender character. Later came the funeral itself, in his own church, the Church of the Covenant. Of this assembly, his friend, Dr. Prentiss, says, “It represented whatever is highest and best in American culture and scholarship.”² Here the religious services were held and the more formal addresses made by his pastor, Dr. Vincent, and by his friends, Drs. Goodwin and Prentiss.

He was buried in Northampton, Mass., the “fairest village on the banks of our noblest river,” — as he described it, when he was still a New Eng-

¹ *A Discourse in Memory of Thomas Harvey Skinner*, by George L. Prentiss, etc., Appendix, p. 111.

² *Faith and Philosophy*, Introductory Notice, p. xi.

lander, in his Andover address, — so long the home of the greatest of our American theologians, to whom Smith looked up with such profound reverence.

It remains only to describe some of the more prominent traits in the character of Henry B. Smith.

The basis of all that was high and good in his life was his piety. This was earnest and sincere. As in few men, it was a part of the very life itself. The mother's consecration was confirmed by that wonderful conversion at Bowdoin College, which changed the whole tenor of his existence, and made of him a new man. It was simple, genuine, childlike faith that was henceforth the motive power. The Christian facts became the prime realities of his life. They remained as unmovable as the granite mountains of his native State. The central and living Reality was Christ. He lived in his strength. The mystical union with him was the source of his spiritual life and power. He lived in communion with him. His faith was not a mere assent on grounds of probable evidence. It was a personal trust, which involved an assured certainty. And because he had been involved in erroneous views of Christ in early life, and led to question his divinity and the reality of his atonement, there was in his relation to the Saviour a personal love, a loyalty, a chivalrous fealty, that is unique. He was Christ's man. It was thus that

his theology came to have the Christological character peculiar to it. The personal relation to the Saviour gave rise to the theological principle.

It was a very simple piety, wholly without affectation or cant. He made no display of it. He did not talk easily of his religious states and feelings. On the contrary, he was reserved in this, as in all things; and more reserved than in other things, because this was so sacred. But one could not come to know him without soon beginning to understand that this was the foundation of everything. It came out in many ways, and was all the more impressive because it was the unconscious outcome of his life, the aroma which it exhaled even when turned toward other things. It appeared in his prayers. His students felt it in all their dealings with him, and this, even more than the profound scholarship which they so highly respected, was the secret of their admiration for him. It appeared when men went to him for advice. It was the high Christian motive which always animated him. Nothing could have been more like him than the words he uttered on one of the last days of his life, when his mind was wandering and he thought himself with his students, the advice, "not to seek a high place, but to take the position that is offered."¹ It was because the "position that is offered" is the one God gives.

His piety showed itself also in his work. Few men have had a higher ambition than he, but no

¹ *Memoir*, p. 408.

man ever knew how to hold his ambition more entirely in subjection to Christ. It was thus that in his public life he was enabled to be so free from even the appearance of self-seeking. And so the highest places and responsibilities came to him, according to that deep principle of Christ, that to him that hath it shall be given.

His piety, always strong, grew more intense and deep as the end drew near and the shadows of deep suffering fell upon him. All his associates marked the change. His friend Prentiss says : —

“Those who knew him most intimately had, of late, often observed in him an unusual tenderness, humility, and sweet gentleness of spirit ; he seemed to cling closer and closer to Christ ; his prayers were full of holy fervor and unction ; and his religious talk, in the fellowship of his Christian brethren, was at times marked by a tone of wondrous elevation, beauty, and pathos.”¹

He was ripe for heaven. But it is only a life-long piety that can ripen thus. The last sermon that he ever preached, like the first, was on Christ. The last word of prayer that was heard to fall from his lips was the name of the beloved Son.

So much has been said of his intellectual qualities that it is not needful to add much here. God endowed him in the beginning with the finest powers, and he used the talents given him to gain other talents. If ever a spirit was “finely touched” and “to fine issues,” it was his. His memory was strong and retentive. His power of analysis was

¹ *Faith and Philosophy*, Introductory Notice, p. x. *seq.*

remarkably acute. Few men have had such ability to think a subject through. He knew how to hold a knotty point in philosophy or divinity before his mind in unyielding grasp, until he knew it through and through and on every side, knew how to define it, separating it from every other kindred subject, and how to divide it into all its parts. His was not the kind of a mind that moves over the surface of a subject, casting all sorts of new and suggestive lights upon it, but leaving it unexplained in its inmost nature and its essential relations. Such a mind often gets the reputation of genius, and the power it possesses is certainly not to be despised. The truth thus brought to light often finds entrance into popular thought when other methods would fail. His mind was of the less brilliant, but far more useful kind, that does the work slowly and thoroughly, and then knows how to express the result clearly and simply. To those whose own minds are confused Smith's writings may often seem abstruse ; but those who have sufficient training to follow him in his reasonings are delighted with the crystalline clearness of his thought. It was this habit of thinking things through that made him so broad and truly liberal, and yet at the same time so strong in his convictions. It was this that kept him from trying to found a school in theology. The old truth which he had mastered by his own thought was better to him than any half truths could be which would derive their value only from the fact that they were different from other

men's truth. So, though we may not always agree with him, we always respect him. It was inevitable that a man like John Stuart Mill should single out Smith as an antagonist whose arguments must be answered. It was this habit of his mind that made him such an admirable teacher, and renders the mere fragments he has left behind so much more valuable than many men's elaborate works.

He was a true lover of learning. Holding it in strict subordination to the great object of his life, which was to seek first the kingdom of God, he yet loved learning for its own sake. His own attainments were many-sided and accurate. Having gained much from the Germans, and highly estimating their methods of study and literary work, he labored hard to bring his own countrymen to a like appreciation of the higher walks of scholarship and the better and more scientific methods. No man of our times did more to raise the standard of theological scholarship. No man has done more by his own example, and his contagious enthusiasm, to incite our young theologians to scholarly work. The men to-day occupying the most responsible positions in our theological and literary institutions, or foremost in literature, can many of them look back to impulses received from this eager and high-minded scholar as the beginning of what has been best and highest in their work.

In his own manifold literary activity he showed a finished mastery of the art. His style is always clear, because his thought itself is always clear.

He had that fine literary tact which knows how to select the right word and phrase to express the idea. He had the full use of the vernacular, especially in its stronger and more homely Saxon forms. Though no man knew the terminology of his science better than he, or could in need make a better use of its technical words, yet he loved to employ the simpler language of common life, and this gave his compositions a power they could not otherwise have had. His writing was adorned by the due use of figures, for he was naturally poetic. In some of his earlier writings he is almost too free with such ornaments, and his style is unnecessarily diffuse. But for the most part he kept them under control. Yet to the last his diction is rich and picturesque, and his thought illustrated by apt metaphors and similes. We see him at his best, not in the works published since his death, which are so largely made up of notes prepared for the class-room and intended for extemporaneous enlargement, but in the more elaborate and finished articles in his Review, or the addresses he gave on public occasions.

He was a true lover of books. His life was spent among them. His labors as librarian of the Seminary, often very great, were labors of love. The *incunabula* of the Van Ess Collection were the object of a personal affection and pride that showed what a genuine man of books he was. His own study was filled with them. He knew them as he knew his friends. The beautiful description

of his study, given by his pastor, Dr. Vincent, has often been quoted, but it must be given once more, so true is it to the remembrance of many who have been there, and who cannot find such happy words of their own with which to describe it.

“ Who can forget that room, walled and double-walled with books, the baize-covered desk in the corner by the window, loaded with the fresh philosophic and theologic treasures of the European press, and the little figure in the long gray wrapper seated there — the figure so frail and slight, that, as one of his friends remarked, it seemed as though it would not be much of a change for him to take on a spiritual body; the beautifully moulded brow, crowned with its thick, wavy, sharply-parted, iron-gray hair, the strong aquiline profile, the restless shifting in his chair, the nervous pulling of the hand at the moustache, as the stream of talk widened and deepened, the occasional start from his seat to pull down a book or to search for a pamphlet, — how inseparably these memories twine themselves with those of high debate and golden speech and converse on the themes of Christian philosophy and Christian experience.”¹

The words just quoted present us with the picture of the man as he appeared in the later days of his life. Of about medium stature and, as has been stated, very thin and frail, his presence was not imposing. It was the face that attracted, and this rather when he was conversing than when in repose. There was, especially in his later years, a

¹ *Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, vol. vi. 1877, p. 286 *seq.*

quietness and reserve, which prevented those who did not come into the closer relation with him from understanding him as he was. Sometimes, when called down from his study, he would enter the room with an abstracted and listless look that seemed to argue an indifference which he was in reality furthest from feeling. But when the interchange of conversation began, the face would light up, the eager soul would come into the eyes, and the full beauty of feature and look would appear. His voice was not strong, and in the pulpit he seemed, at any rate during the latter part of his life, to lack animation. He was not, therefore, a popular preacher ; but the matter was so rich and meaty, so profound and spiritual, that those who could adapt themselves to his undemonstrative manner always found themselves amply repaid.

A soul so pure and good could not be without its lighter and more joyous side. There is a wit that comes out of an evil heart and that bites and stings. Such was Voltaire's. Men enjoy it ; it tickles their carnal nature. We may admire it, but we do not respect it ; often we have occasion to fear it. But there is a better kind of wit, that belongs not to the fallen nature, but to the soul as God made it and meant it to be, that springs from a good conscience and a true love to our fellowmen. It is the overflow of a good heart, seeing not only the more sober side of life, but also its incongruities and absurdities, not in the spirit of malevolence, but of hearty good-will. Such was the wit which Smith

had so abundantly. Perhaps it would be better to call it humor rather than wit; for it does not show itself so much in brilliant sallies and quotable *bons mots*, as in a light and delicate pleasantry which played through his thought and found utterance even in his most sober talk and composition. Only now and then was it so barbed that it wounded, and then the wound was generally deserved. Often it was only the droll look in the corner of the eye that showed the full depth of his meaning. Professor Fisher says: —

“I recall the quick laugh and the merry side-glance which more than once accompanied an incidental reference to a certain pottering, affectedly solemn theologian within the circle of his acquaintance. There was not a word of comment respecting him; only the slight significant pause and ripple of laughter.”¹

Some of his students during the winter of 1872 will remember a debate or public exercise in the chapel of the old Seminary on University Place, at which he presided, and when he spoke of a certain view of Christ's person, a heresy which the early church condemned, as newly presented in Henry Ward Beecher's "Life of Christ," and the inimitable expression with which he dryly added, "Mr. Beecher is a great *preacher!*" Sometimes this humor showed itself in the midst of earnest and solemn argument, as when in his famous article on Reunion, turning upon the Princeton men, he said: —

¹ *Independent*, November 4, 1880.

“Much as we love and honor Scotland, we cannot there find the perfect type for our free and growing church. The Scotch bag-pipe doubtless discourses most excellent music, and we like to hear it; but we do not care to be restricted to it, especially when it is out of sorts; and we seem to have heard some loftier and more inspiring strains.”¹

Perhaps there are some living who will remember a pleasant Sabbath service in a parlor of the “Pension Müller” at Gersau on the beautiful *Vierwaldstätter See*. Canon Westcott was conducting the exercises according to the liturgy of the Church of England. When the contribution was to be made, Professor Smith, in the absence of any other suitable person, volunteered to carry around the plate (perhaps it was the hat). This duty performed, instead of taking the money to the table that served as altar, he carried it to a neighboring window and quietly returned to his seat. The poor Canon fidgeted about in helpless dismay, finding no rubric to define his duty under such awkward circumstances. Finally, one of the ladies of the party hurriedly whispered the situation to the delinquent Professor, and he brought the unblest offertory to the priest, with a look so droll that it lingers in the memory to-day with all the freshness of its first inimitable comicality.

For all that his work was so largely in the region of pure thought, Smith had a richly poetic nature.

¹ *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, vol. v. p. 662 seq.

It shows itself in the exuberance of some of his writings, and in the fervor of his discourses and letters. Truth was to him not an aggregate of notions, but a living organism of facts. He had the seer's vision. This was what gave him such a grasp upon spiritual truth. This lay at the bottom of his love of nature. Few men have such a profound sense of beauty in scenery. He intensely enjoyed the wild life of the forest and mountain. His one best way of relaxing the tension of his overstrung mind was to bury himself for a few weeks in the country, and roam with the children over the hills and through the woods and by the seashore. There are in some of his letters from Europe and the East very striking descriptions of scenery. He was extremely fond of flowers. One who stood closest to him says :—

“Only one of the many notices of Professor Smith has made mention of his ‘poetic nature.’ But those who knew him best can never forget the vein of tender romance, deep hidden and not often coming to the surface. Perhaps few even of his friends knew of his love of poetry, his copying and quoting it, making his special gifts in choice volumes, his love of the old Latin hymns and their best translations, such as Neale’s ‘Celestial Country’ and Mrs. Charles’s ‘Vexilla Regis,’ and those of later date. Faber’s ‘O gift of gifts, O grace of faith’ was his special favorite. We called it *his* hymn. Charlotte Eliot’s ‘Just as I am,’ etc., he quoted with great fervor at the close of a sermon.”¹

¹ Letter to the author.

A man may be known through his friends. It is not every man who has the capacity for drawing men to himself and binding them fast to his own life. Such men as he, engrossed with books and studies, often lose touch with the world, and become strange even to their intimates. This was farthest from being the case with Smith. From boyhood onward he was always attaching friends to himself. And he kept the old when he gained the new. Men like Goodwin and Prentiss were bosom friends through all the vicissitudes of his life and theirs. Nothing could be more touching than the tributes these men paid him after his death. Dr. Goodwin said at his funeral : —

“ You, my friends, have known Dr. Smith as the man of vast and varied acquirements — the finished scholar, the great theologian, the profound and acute philosopher, the accomplished and beloved teacher, the learned and eloquent divine ; you have known him as the faithful and helpful colleague and companion, as the trusted and trustworthy ecclesiastical leader, as the pure, humble, noble Christian man. I have known him as — *Henry*. And ‘ Henry ’ has meant for me all that you have thus known, and unspeakably more ; — ‘ Henry ’ — a name whose very sound vibrates upon my ear with tones sweeter than any melody, whose thought is associated with the dearest memories, with the warm and unvarying love of a long life-time.” ¹

Almost the last word he uttered was to this friend, who visited him as he lay on his death-bed.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 418.

“Do you know me, Henry?” “Yes, I know the finest thread of that intonation, and respond to it.”¹

Dr. Prentiss says: —

“I looked over again, not long ago, those two gems of literature — Lord Bacon’s essay on Friendship, and the chapters of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* on the same subject. A good deal of what these two master-intellec-
tels of the race say about it would strike most readers of the present day, I am afraid, as somewhat visionary. Friendship, of the sort there described, is, to the many, one of the lost arts. They know not what is meant by such intimate union and such devotion to another self. It requires a genial depth and sensibility of nature, fully to understand these things.”

And then, after quoting from these writers, he adds: —

“I can testify, and others can testify with me, that these notes of a true friend, combined with others of a still higher, more Christian type, were all found in Henry B. Smith.”²

The historian Bancroft was one of his most loyal friends and admirers. It was through his efforts that, at a time of pecuniary need, his house in New York was secured to him, through the donations of generous lovers of learning and religion. This distinguished man wrote of him after his death as

“the boy of Portland in all the vicissitudes of his career, and in all the varied exercise of his great powers and

¹ *Memoir*, p. 408.

² *Ibid.* p. 417 *seq.*

accomplishments, ever the servant of duty, the model of Christian humility, in the midst of his stores of wisdom and his crowd of friends.”¹

And in another letter he declared, “I loved the man.”²

Others might be mentioned, like Tholuck, who did not see him for years, yet cherished throughout life the warmest affection.

Thus lived and died, and entered into the deathless life, Henry Boynton Smith. We sum up what he was and did, when we call him, in the highest sense of the word, a Christian theologian. The sacred science was his joy and crown. Its divine realities were the foundation of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual life. Theology gave him the subject of his lifelong and most loving study. It furnished the branch of instruction to which his professional labors were devoted. In it he found the philosophy that gave system to his thinking and meaning to his work for the church and the world. He believed that Christian theology contains the key of all knowledge, the secret of all achievement, and in that faith he lived. Such theologians are always rare. Their work is a possession forever. Their names deserve to be held in grateful remembrance.

Fain would we follow such a richly gifted soul to the other side. For what have these earthly

¹ Private letter.

² Letter to Dr. Prentiss, February 2, 1878.

studies and keen discipline prepared him? What service does he perform in that world of light and knowledge, where he sees no longer as through a glass darkly, but face to face?

We can ask the questions, but we cannot answer them. He is with Christ and in Christ's service. That is far better. It must mean life and activity. There must be tasks there for such a man to perform, far higher than even the highest here. His true work has just begun.

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