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IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR LEWIS FRENCH
STEARNS, D. D.¹

SEVENTY-SIX years of the active history of Bangor Theological Seminary have now run their course. In the first seventy-five, three members of its Faculty died while connected with the seminary. Each of them was older than any member of the present Faculty, one of them had entered his tenth decade. During the last year one of the Faculty, before he had attained quite half the age of the venerable Dr. Pond, and while yet in the ripening maturity of his powers, entered his heavenly service.

A short year ago, at the seminary anniversary, with pride in him, with hope for him, with expectation of many years of continued fruitful service from him, we rejoiced over his appointment to represent the denomination as well as the seminary at the Council in London. Our pride is now even greater; but since he was smitten so suddenly from our sight and transferred to the higher service, our exultation has turned to grief.

The more important facts of his biography have been made known to you. The boyhood life in Newark, the academy life at Andover, the college life at Princeton, the year in the Law School, the theological training, desultory in form, and which for most men would have lacked unity, for him really a unit, the Norwood pastorate, the Albion College professorship, and his life in Ban-

¹ For the materials for this and other memorials I have written, I am much indebted to Mrs. Stearns for the free access which I have had to the manuscripts left by Professor Stearns, and for other information within her control, but also to friends associated with him at all periods of his life, whose names are too numerous to mention, with the exception of his uncle, Dr. George Prentiss, of Union Theological Seminary.

gor have all been made public. On such an occasion as this our thoughts turn naturally to those elements of his public life and services which commanded respect and confidence, and made him so dear to us and useful to the world at large. Omitting for the most part those things which have already been uttered or may more fittingly be deferred, we must still further confine ourselves to the more noteworthy characteristics of the man. His private relations and affections, the tender solicitude with which in the last days of his power to do so he sent inquiries after the family of a colleague in which there was illness, — these numberless precious memories are left to other times for record.

That which Professor Stearns came to be and was in his public life and services was rooted in what he was as a Christian man conscientiously loyal to the truth. From this loyalty sprang many and diverse characteristics, such as modesty and self-respect, courage, and respectful deference to others. He was modest because he had not the presumption to bend the truth to his liking or purpose. It was his self-respect, as an honest believer in Jesus Christ and in his words, which in the "New 'Double' and New 'Undoing'" protested with unanswerable irony against the imputation of dishonesty in the profession of belief in orthodox doctrine. He was courageous because of his faith in the truth as an objective reality. He respected others and deferred to them on the basis of their manhood. The sense of what was due to him as a man, not to him personally, made him just to others, not on personal grounds, but on the ground of their manhood. Wherever he recognized another thinker holding some truth and trying to utter it, he gave respect and sympathy, although he might feel obliged to express decidedly adverse opinions. Thus he was able to write to a friend concerning Harnack's "*Dogmengeschichte*:" —

"I have been profoundly stimulated and much instructed by it thus far, that is, about half way through the first volume. But the book rests upon a dogmatic basis, and that basis is false." "As generally happens when a man treats a subject from an entirely new point of view, — even though that point of view be false, — a great deal of new truth is brought to light." "I am tolerant of Ritschlianism so far as it is likely to be a bridge across to something better, but in itself considered it seems to me a very meagre and unsatisfactory theology."

These are thoroughly characteristic utterances. His attitude toward others was that of sympathetic appreciation of every effort to attain truth and express it on their part, while for himself no-

thing but the absolute truth in thought and word and deed was satisfactory. It was no hyperbole for him to write, as he once did, "I should despise myself to all eternity if I should put anything above my regard for truth and honesty."

This same loyalty to truth was evident in social relations. He recognized the fact that the human race is an organism, and wherever he was touched by any individual member of this organism there he saw a relation and a duty. No person whom I have ever met has made me feel the sense of duties in society and to society as did he. Doubtless it was the conscious, or unconscious, recognition of his principles which made the grief at his removal from us so widespread in this city, and that, too, on the part of many who scarcely ever met him. Our New England conception of social life has tendencies to clannishness rather than breadth of social obligation. May his principles and example abide with us in fresh and increasing power!

It was in his more intimate relations that he shone most brightly. To persons living in daily intimacy with him he showed his best, and by that intimacy bound them with the closest ties. To live with him was to come under strong Christian influence; to habitually discuss with him the great themes of the gospel was in itself a theological education. I may not speak of the sanctities of his home life, which he enjoyed as few of us are constituted to enjoy; but I may speak from an intimacy founded on a life of two years under the same roof and sharing the same table. Here he was frank, genial, showing a pleasant humor gleaming with wit. The nearer you came to him, the more plainly would you see that his Christian faith was his life. It was neither suppressed nor flaunted. It was evident to those who knew him best that his discussion of Christian Experience was based upon elements of experience which filled his own life. Thus the manliness of his life, founded upon loyalty to truth, had its development in personal fellowship with his Redeemer, showing, as many others have done, that the highest possibilities of manhood are reached only through loyal service to Jesus Christ and fellowship with Him.

A typical illustration of his Christian character appeared in his dealing with his call to Union Seminary. It is known that he declined it because of his conscientious honesty. The full meaning of his course could be perceived only by those who knew the ties of association and obligation which drew him toward that seminary, and his loyal affection for its Faculty. He re-

spected them, their position, and their relations to the Confession. The pain to him consequent upon his call was almost unendurable because of the fear that his refusal might be interpreted as a reflection upon them. Such interpretation was not legitimate. His reasons he regarded as not applying to them, and those reasons were never made public by his wish. This loyalty to his providential obligations was, if possible, even greater in the Faculty of which he was a member. In the later months of his life he used to express especial satisfaction in the fact that our entire Faculty had worked together for ten years without any changes. At this point I give the impression which Professor Stearns made upon our brethren of England who met him last summer, as expressed by Dr. MacKenna, Secretary of the London Council : —

“ Dr. Stearns came to England a stranger to almost all, I think absolutely to all, our English delegates ; he left us carrying away the unstinted admiration and affectionate interest of us all. The morning when he read his paper was one of our richest sessions for elevation of Christian thought, wise utterance, and outspoken loyalty to Christ, combined with fearless and open-eyed acceptance of the results of modern knowledge ; and on that morning he was one of the most conspicuous figures. He had a prominent place assigned him and an important theme, and no one could have done better what he had to do.

“ The thing which particularly struck us was his possession of the evangelical spirit, and his frank outspokenness. He spoke as a son of the American Puritan churches, not ashamed of his inheritance ; indeed, he evidently prized it highly. But he also spoke as one who knew that neither the language nor the formulated thought of bygone generations was appropriate to modern men, and he showed us how to reëmbody and reclothe the advancing spirit of Christ in the churches. I think the personal impression he produced was the deepest. We recognized his scholarship, his conscientious thinking, his clear discriminating insight ; but most of all we felt that here was a saint. Saintly thinking, saintly speech, because a saintly man was thinking and speaking.”

We who have been close to him during the later years have felt the truth which Dr. MacKenna has written.

The theology of the man thus described was, as would be expected, the outcome of the religious life and thought of a sinner redeemed by the atoning death of Jesus Christ, and in process of sanctification by the Spirit. Hence the theology contains the mystical element which belongs to a true theology. Starting from his experience as a redeemed sinner, he gathered the chief facts and truths which become manifest in the redemption of the

human race, and put them into the forms of rational statement. In doing this his loyalty to all truth has caused him to be called a mediating theologian, like his teacher, Henry B. Smith. I doubt if he ever thought of himself as such, although he regarded such theologians with especial honor, and followed them more than he did others. That which made him a mediating theologian was not the attempt to mediate between extremes; rather it was his avoidance of partisanship, of special pleading; it was his attempt to know the whole truth rather than the beliefs of a party, and to form his conclusions with a judicial spirit. He recognized the fact that when there is a long standing controversy, neither side has the whole truth; that even if either side is nearly right, the other is not absolutely wrong. He knew, also, that never can the controversy be ended, nor the division be healed, until each side heartily recognizes and accepts the truth held by the other side. It sometimes seemed to him that the majority of people wish to maintain their party rather than to find the whole truth and follow it. Such a day and generation he regarded as unlikely to be contented with the message God had given him. Since he held truths which are claimed as a peculiar possession by contending parties, he is liable to be claimed as a party man. Such a claim has no foundation.

Central in his theology was Christ, — not simply as the incarnate God, the God-man, but as the kingly Redeemer of the race. In his teaching he made the kingdom of God the principle of his theology. It was the kingdom of redemption. Redemption he taught to be no afterthought in the dealing of God with this world; it was the essential element in the divine plan, for God had a plan for this world from eternity. Thus, while the Redeemer was the centre of his thinking, the kingdom of redemption was his formative principle. This appeared in his treatment of the various subjects of theology. Revelation was to make God known as redeeming the race, — even in his Fatherhood. He taught that revelation was not mechanical, but spiritually, organically related with nature, supplementing nature, and thenceforth becoming a part of nature, which had been constituted from the beginning to be so supplemented.

In apologetics the subject of Christian Experience was one which he had made peculiarly his own. Some critics have neglected the fact that in the discussion of any single branch of a subject, this branch must receive a treatment apparently disproportionate, and they have criticised his book as neglecting

other apologetic arguments. In his written lectures the apparent disproportion is the other way. His presentation of the evidence for Christianity from the miracles of the Bible is singularly rich and suggestive. He taught that miracles were not violations of the laws of nature, but they were operative in nature, conforming to the order of nature so far as they come into relation to that order; that they were not merely mechanical proofs of revelation, but were more than credentials of the revelation, because constituent elements and a most significant part of the revelation itself. Miracles were the outward and tangible manifestation of the God of grace and truth, signs of the kingdom, and they had for their object the restoration of the true order of nature which sin had disturbed; thus they were the first fruits and pledges of the redemptive work, putting man into his proper relations with nature. "Every miracle is a sign and instrument of that restoration." In the Old Testament miracles of judgment the powers of nature were restored to their true office in the punishment of sin, while the miracles of mercy in relieving suffering were emblems of God's redemption from sin, or symbolic of Christ's redemption from the deeper diseases of sin, deriving their significance from the connection which exists in the world between disease and sin. He said:—

"A miracle is an event in external nature which cannot be accounted for by physical forces or human agency, but by its redemptive nature and purpose reveals the God of grace." "Their value as proof lies in the necessary connection in which they stand with God's revelation of grace and in their self-evidencing character as themselves revelations of God. . . . In them we see the God of grace present not only in the spiritual but in the material sphere; they fill out the full conception of revelation. They make God and Christ known to us by the best and highest kind of demonstration. I do not scruple to say that miracles to-day, judged in this light, have a higher evidential force than when they were first witnessed."

This statement is a sufficient illustration of his theology in its freedom from mere scholasticism, and in its firm grasp of the meaning of the old verities.

No theme of his theology was closer to his heart than that of the person of his Redeemer of the world, the object of his devotion, of his loyalty and warmest love, for to him Jesus Christ was indeed the supreme truth. As a pastor the preaching of Professor Stearns had been spiritual food; such was his theology.

From the theology we turn to the thinker who developed it.

Respecting him these words have come to us: "We looked to him to be the Congregational standard-bearer, our representative theologian." "We have lost a leader who, since the Council in London, has been looked up to with more of confidence and hope by the denomination at large than any other man." There is reason to believe that a widespread expectation had arisen since the London Council that he would give form to the theology which represented the best thought of this generation. We know that more than one seminary had come to look with covetous eyes upon our professor of Systematic Theology.

What had caused him to be so regarded? What had brought him to this position of influence? Again must we see that it was his open-eyed loyalty to the truth in Jesus Christ. For him loyalty to the truth required industry to know the truth, reverence for the truth, obedience to the truth.

Professor Stearns did not look upon himself as a scholar, hardly as a thorough student. His words to a colleague, "I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed," deceived for a short time. He did dig, and the same industry which in his seminary life mastered Dr. Hodge's theology in addition to the work of junior year, also led him here to make himself thoroughly conversant with Biblical and historical theology, with philosophy, ethics, and scientific subjects, even to a greater extent than they were needed as auxiliary to his own department. He would say that he did not expect to examine a work such as Driver's "Introduction," as is done by the specialist in Old Testament study, and then proceed to examine it with a thoroughness and insight which an Old Testament specialist would rarely outdo. Such was the work which he did under the limitations of semi-serviceable eyes. These limitations compelled him to meditate upon his learning, so that he developed in a high degree the art of reflection, — that art which is indispensable for the mastery of a subject. Another work which promoted clearness and definiteness to his thought was the patient rewriting of his lectures. This he did three times, because he thought it a necessity for the proper fulfillment of his duty as a teacher.

With all his industry he did not believe that intellectual labor alone could attain the truth. He believed that only by coming into sympathy with God, by becoming pure in heart, could one know God and divine things. He held that sin had disordered the whole man, intellect as well as will, and that Paul was right in saying "the things of the Spirit of God . . . are spiritually ex-

amined." Thus his attitude toward the Bible and divine things was reverent. The flippancy sometimes shown by men who are loyal to the truth was painful to him. He wrote during the last term of his life's work : —

"We have just been wrestling with the subject of inspiration. . . . I have a great deal of sympathy with the conservatives in their main contention. It is not right to give the plain Christian world the idea that the Bible is defective. *Maxima reverentia debetur pueris*. It is this lack of reverence in our Biblical scholars nowadays, reverence toward Christian men and women as well as reverence towards God, that works the mischief."

He himself has told us how real truth was to him, that it was the food of his spiritual life, when he wrote respecting the recent books of Dr. Samuel Harris : —

"These two last works seem to me to rank among the noblest statements of the theistic philosophy ever written. They have been to me ever since their publication a source of constant intellectual and, I may add, spiritual delight."

It was such reverence which led him to accept any truth, for example, evolution, not, indeed, the philosophic theory incompatible with theism, but the scientific theory within the proper limits of a working hypothesis. The central truths were those to which he bowed most humbly, and to which he yielded most complete obedience. Here, again, his conviction was that he who would know of the teaching of Jesus Christ must choose to do his will. This readiness to receive truth from any quarter, and to hold it, never waned; wherever he recognized it, reverently and loyally he accepted it. I cannot regard it as possible that he would ever have changed in this respect. Year by year he saw more clearly that all other truths were but "broken lights" of Him "in whom are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden." He was accustomed to say that the questions of philosophy were answered by theology, though in the terms of theology and not in those of philosophy. Thus he had a growing conception of the significance of the old truths by which Christianity has made its conquests, namely, those concerning the redemption from sin wrought out by the God-man. He perceived more clearly that the church of Christ has always had real knowledge of this supreme truth of Christianity, even though the knowledge has not been complete and the expression has not been adequate. At the close of life, confessing himself a great sinner, he testified to the

surpassing greatness of his Saviour, and twice added, "I die in the old faith."

He has left on record the fact that his faith was attained only after trial, conflict, wounds. This faith constantly became more precious to him, and he strove more strenuously against every mode of thought which derogated from the honor of the Redeemer, or belittled his redemptive work. Thus as the years passed he might have seemed to grow more conservative. With this increasing apprehension of the gospel he had also an increasing knowledge of the race for whom the gospel came, and of the significance of the truth for his own day. He understood, as many do not understand, the real difficulties which hinder men from yielding to the claims of the gospel. In his earlier desire to be generous he often regarded the difficulties as residing in the intellect; later, he saw clearly that these difficulties did not so often result from defective knowledge, or from the misrepresentations of religion, as he had once wished to believe. He would sometimes say that this or that person failed to accept the truth because his heart was not right.

In order to perceive his development in theological thinking, one may note his recently published criticisms on the theology of Henry B. Smith, whom he regarded as more nearly his master than anybody else. They were (1) that Dr. Smith never fully developed the Christocentric idea of his theology, nor (2) did he do justice to Christian experience and the Christian consciousness; (3) he held that the tendency to sin with which all men are born renders them liable to punishment, and (4) he burdened his theology with determinism, as has usually been done in Calvinism. These criticisms indicate some of the more marked features of Professor Stearns's own theological progress. Much of this growth ripened after he began to teach theology.

Among the most noticeable changes is the radical one which came to pass in his ethical philosophy within the first two years of his teaching. He came here with the deterministic doctrine of the will which Calvinists have commonly held to be necessary in order to maintain a doctrine of decrees and of the moral order of the world, on the assumption that the divine foreknowledge is possible only under the same conditions as finite foreknowledge. To the end of life Professor Stearns held to the divine plan as firmly as any Calvinist ever did, but he saw clearly that we have no right to limit the divine foreknowledge by the conditions of cause and effect: that a deterministic doctrine of the will is not necessary,

either to the doctrine of decrees or to the moral order of the world, and that the attempt to state the doctrine of human freedom in terms of deterministic philosophy was dealing with words and not with realities. He said : —

“On the deterministic hypothesis it is impossible to see how a holy being should fall. Yet Adam did fall.” “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 [Henry B. Smith] wrestling with the difficult problem, and coming to the lame conclusion that ‘we cannot account for Adam’s fall psychologically.’”

Elsewhere he wrote : —

“If we can believe that all things have found a place in His plan, — that nothing has been beyond its scope, that even human sin and human opposition to Him have been from the first permitted and provided for, that the triumph of the kingdom is sure, — then we shall be strong and effective workers for God. This is the secret of Calvinism in the days of its vigor.

“Logic never discovers truth, it only analyzes it. When we work our logic machine beyond the point of knowledge we are apt to deceive ourselves. Here has been the error of Calvinism. Its logic has been perfect, but it has often used it where it had no facts to work upon.

“The error of Calvinism has been that it has either taught a deterministic theory of the will, or else has emphasized the inability of the fallen man to the extent of making the sinner a passive instrument in the hands of God.”

He loved the inspiring hopes and assurances of a Calvinistic theology, but, as these utterances show, he was not blind to the defects. I am not certain of the precise time at which he parted from the deterministic ethics, but I am inclined to think that it was in the quiet of his return voyage from the Azores, in 1882, — an opportunity for quiet reflection, of which he afterward spoke with great satisfaction, when, as he said, he “thought through” several subjects. Soon after, he began to oppose his former philosophy, and continued to do so with increasing vigor and earnestness, as may be seen from the third chapter of the “Evidence of Christian Experience.”

This revolution in his thinking, while illustrating beautifully his loyalty to the truth, represents but a small portion of his development as a thinker. A more perfect type is found in the genesis of his volume on “Christian Experience.” The year previous to his election to the chair of theology in this seminary, he was con-

sidering an essay on the subject. In his inaugural there are decided premonitions of the book, and for him this "vision splendid" never "faded into the light of common day." An examination of the three drafts of his theological lectures would reveal much similar development.

The increasing volume of interest in Old Testament criticism had constantly excited his interest. During the last few months of his life he made a thorough study of Pentateuchal criticism, as presented in Driver's "Introduction," Wellhausen's "Prolegomena," and similar writings. This he did in the only way possible for mastering the subject, — with Hebrew Bible, Lexicon, and Concordance at hand. It can hardly be said that he had had time to form conclusions definitively even in his own mind. His tentative conclusions, as uttered the day before his final illness, were that the assertions of the school in question went beyond any proof presented, and, in his own words, "the position of the Wellhausianer is feeble," although he could not say that he was convinced that the traditional view was the true one.

I must not fail to speak of certain developments of thought which he never was able to put into form. The last draft of his lectures he used five years. He hoped to rewrite them entirely in another year. He had come to feel it necessary to reconstruct his system with a somewhat qualified formative principle. It may be that his recent careful examination of the Westminster Confession, as expressing a system of theology, had given more definiteness to his conception of religious truth as a whole; possibly the writing of the life of Dr. Smith, and the consequent study of that system of theology, had brought Professor Stearns to a further stadium of thought; perhaps the experience and the thoughts stirred at the London Council had ripened his convictions; whatever be the cause, a few months since he expressed the opinion that too much emphasis had been placed upon the kingdom as a formative principle in theology, and more stress ought to be laid upon the idea of redemption. The remark excited surprise, but my memory of conversations with him, together with a study of his various writings accessible, have revealed something of his meaning. His theology had been Christocentric with the kingship of Christ emphasized.

He had taught that redemption was no afterthought, originating in the crisis brought on by human sin; it was no makeshift to meet the emergency of an unforeseen catastrophe; but it was the eternal thought of God for the race of man. This world of

redemption may be but a province in the kingdom of God. The theology for this world, for its development, is to have redemption as its formative principle. The kingdom is a true idea, it is an imperial thought, it stirs the pulses with its greatness of suggestion, but, even when you say kingdom of redemption, it hardly leaves the emphasis where it ought to be in a theology for this sinful human race whom the redemption of Jesus Christ alone can save. Nay, even the grandeur and inspiration of the idea of the kingdom may divert from the regeneration and sanctification of the human race, without which it will never see the kingdom of God. Indeed, in the thought of the ultimate goal it is possible to disregard these essential conditions so far that Christian life loyal to the King may be shallow in neglect of the Redeemer. If, therefore, the priestly office of Christ be kept in the forefront, and the idea of redemption be made supreme as being the consummated thought of the New Testament; if the idea of the kingdom be made the background, as it is in the more developed New Testament teachings, as the consummation to which redemption will tend; this, I suppose, would be the formative principle by which he would have rewritten his lectures. In short, he would have transferred the emphasis from Christ the King to Christ the Redeemer.

Another subject upon which he had reflected deeply was an apologetic based upon the Atonement. In fact, this subject was one which he considered as an alternative to that which he did choose for the subject of the Ely Lectures. At that time he wrote a friend: —

“What do you think of ‘The Argument for the Truth of Christianity derived from the Doctrine of the Atonement’? If the Atonement is — as undoubtedly it is — the central doctrine of Christianity, so that the cross is not only the symbol of our faith, but the exponent of its inmost and most essential meaning, then there ought to be in it a stronger evidence for the truth of the whole system than that which can come from any other source. Instead of maintaining a continual attitude of defense respecting this central doctrine, acting as if we ourselves doubted its reasonableness, we ought, like Paul, to run the standard to the masthead, and draw our great proof of the truth of Christianity from ‘Christ crucified,’ even though it seems at first ‘unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.’ If we can show that ‘the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men,’ then we base our evidences upon the solid rock. I recognize the difficulty of all this, especially the difficulty of mediating between the Christian con-

sciousness and the natural consciousness with regard to a doctrine which is in a sense esoteric ; but I can't help thinking that I see light with regard both to the matter and the form of the argument. Very likely I should fail, but the very attempt would open the way for some one else. Sooner or later the argument must be brought into prominence. The old external evidences from miracles and prophecy are now inadequate ; the popular thought of our day treats them with scant respect. The argument from Christian experience is impregnable, but it is of limited applicability. Christianity has got to stand or fall by its essential doctrines. We have got to show that in the moral and spiritual sphere, to say nothing of the lower spheres, they constitute the only practical working hypothesis, that is, the only hypothesis that will correlate and explain the facts. I seem to see a renewal of Constantine's vision, with the flaming cross pointing the way to the apologetics of the future ἐν τούτῳ νικᾷ. The doctrine of the Atonement is the doctrine of the Cross."

The work so nobly conceived has been reserved by God for some other servant of his. May he soon appear. In these and many other ways, prolonged life and strength would have enabled Professor Stearns to give the world much ripe fruit of thought.

For several years he had been considering the advisability of preparing a compend of systematic theology for class-room use. Doubtless if he had lived he would soon have done so. We remember also, though, that nothing fairly representative of the theology which, as a whole, he taught, has ever been given to the public. I earnestly hope that this will not long remain the case.

It would be wrong to overlook the fact that the growth of the thinker was due in part to the growth of the Christian. The sense of constant discipline, in his physical limitations, in the fear of utter disability for work, in the disappointed longing to do that which he could so well have done with a robust physique and especially with sound eyes,— this and other disciplines had driven him closer to the Master he loved, and made him more and more a man of faith, as he was called by his colleague who conducted the first seminary prayer-meeting of the term which is just closing. The tone of that faith may be learned from the "Life of Henry B. Smith," just published, which by its touches of unconscious autobiography illustrates many points of the character of our colleague better than I can describe it. Since the theology of Professor Stearns was so vitally connected with his religious life, the truth he taught was deepened and enriched by his experimental knowledge of God and divine things ; and in his later years his ripeness of character and knowledge was attracting notice.

When he took his professorship in this seminary, the work of teaching was not new to him. Already he had had the varied experience of teaching in a private school, of the pastorate, and of a college professorship. Into his college and seminary work he carried the spirit and accepted the obligations of the pastorate. The same interest in those under his care which he felt for his Norwood church, and which made him the object of their affection, also bound him in the tenderest personal relations with his students, both in college and seminary. In college he speedily convinced the students that he was their friend, by his justice and truth, and won them so that he was trusted by them with every kind of confidence. The same sympathetic nature which enabled him to lead the timid, shrinking lambs of his flock into the church also enabled him to deal wisely with immature students. The same forbearance and forgiving spirit which when a college student enabled him heartily to forgive an indignity put upon him by accident on its acknowledgment, also, according to the testimony of his classes, enabled him to deal magnanimously with such occurrences as did not befit the time and the place.

The problem before the teacher of systematic theology has its own elements of difficulty. No other theological teacher comes so close to the inner sanctuary of the soul. It is a man's systematic theology, if he has one, which determines the character of his teaching. Biblical learning is the essential of true preaching; historical learning should be a corrective of one-sided or erroneous preaching, and a confirmation in right preaching; homiletic training develops effective preaching; but it is to systematic theology that you must look for the character of preaching. The problem of the teacher of systematic theology is to help men to form habits of sound thinking, giving the Bible its true place, using the teachings of history to show the tendencies of vagaries, of one-sided theories, and of the true doctrine, and to develop habits of broad, deep, and candid thinking. The temptation is to lead men to think just *what* the teacher thinks. The effort of Professor Stearns was to lead men to think *as* he did, candidly, and each for himself. This problem in itself is difficult if the class is homogeneous. Rarely is a class so. There are students with well-trained minds; the student with untrained mind; the timid student, who fears to take a step except beside one upon whom he may lean; the self-confident, sometimes almost arrogant pupil, who is more ready to give than receive instruction; the clear-headed, the confused, the one-sided, the many-sided

the progressive, the reactionary, and the pseudo-progressive, who has been caught in the cant of self-styled liberality. There is also the pupil who is dazed by the access of light, in whose thought the garment of the truth has been the truth itself, the guidance of whom presents the most difficult problem of all. His fellow-students rarely understand how delicate a problem is being solved in their presence, and they not seldom, through their well-meant efforts, add to its complexity. The maieutic art of Socrates is the supreme accomplishment of the teacher of systematic theology. Success of the highest type, and of the finest quality, is achieved only by the teacher who at once apprehends the vital importance of his work and sympathizes with the student in his limitations. These facts, and their importance, were realized by Professor Stearns in an unusual degree. The testimony of his classes, always given heartily, gladly, proves how wisely, how kindly, and how successfully our colleague accomplished his work. I doubt if a single student ever did honest work under Professor Stearns and did not receive the kind of help that he needed. The reason for this was that Professor Stearns was a man of prayer and of thought; and he thought with intellect and heart how to help these men, and then he prayed over them and gained his power. The best power a teacher gains over the taught comes from his solitary communing with God. That may be said of Professor Stearns which he said in his recent "Life of Henry B. Smith," that the fruit of his teaching was to send out men free from crotchets. It may also be added that no man was ever encouraged in "offering to the Author of Truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie."

As a teacher and as a writer, he believed it possible to treat profound subjects in simple, plain, direct language. Even in his exposition of theistic philosophy, a subject for which a person needs to gird up his loins, the reader finds no difficulty arising from the style itself. The fact proves how thoroughly he had made his thought his own, for the majority of the thinkers whose works he studied, especially those of Germany, have apparently little conception of the value of a style which presents the thought directly and clearly to the mind. Professor Stearns regarded the thinking not clear unless clearly expressed.

A few words at least are due respecting the service he has rendered to this seminary. Something we have always recognized, memory now recalls more, and doubtless will continue to do so

in the future. The sense that no man liveth unto himself caused him to enter heartily into the best traditions of this seminary, as he did into all providential allotments. He learned to call himself a New School theologian of New England. New England theology is the richer for his service. His emphasis upon the mystical or spiritual elements of truth is the needed corrective for the rationalistic tendency of so much of our New England thought; his teaching of the solidarity of the race and of human life is what is needed to counteract our individualistic tendencies in thought and life, and to give that ethical character to the teaching of the redemption of Christ which some of our thinkers have not attained. He enriched our thought by holding the theology he taught close to human life in its entirety, as developed from the Scriptures and under the Holy Spirit in all ages to the present. He also put into the front a sounder theistic philosophy than has been prevalent in New England since the days of President Edwards. Other teachers, among them one of his predecessors, now teaching in another seminary, have contributed much to the same end. Professor Stearns's service to this seminary will abide, for he has left, as representing the philosophy taught in this seminary during the past ten years, probably the best sketch of a theistic philosophy to be found.

He has also helped us in this seminary to respect ourselves somewhat more highly. We have little immediate connection with the great centres of life; the stronger tide of human movement at the present is from the East to the West. The geographical position of this seminary is such that its history and its work are little known. Those who do not understand the place and value of the seminary are apt to display a certain condescension and an assumption that what is unknown is not worth knowing. Under the pressure of such facts, in the days of weariness or discouragement that sometimes come into every life, we have been tempted to accept the estimate of ignorance as being true to the facts. Our brother has helped reverse all this. He made strikingly evident the fact that a man might here receive a training in theology for preaching the gospel not second to that given elsewhere, either in freshness, breadth of vision, or in thought truly abreast of the times.

As to the services of Professor Stearns in such administration of the seminary as falls to the lot of the Faculty, it must be considered sufficient at this time to say that its importance cannot be easily estimated, and its loss cannot soon be made good.

To his students, and I may add to all, he rendered a permanent service in inspiring with a greater readiness to see the other side. *Audi alteram partem*, was a not infrequent suggestion. Men seem naturally to gravitate into partisanship; his influence was steadily against it.

Among all the services which he rendered this seminary, the most lasting, I trust, will be the benefit his colleagues have received from his noble and broad ideal of the character and duties of a professor in a theological seminary. What his ideal was may be gathered, in part, from his last volume, where he recognizes the broad and symmetrical intelligence and rich spiritual character which should be found in theological teachers. Part of the reluctance with which he came here was due to that high standard of piety which he regarded as belonging to a man in his chair, and which he thought could be his only through suffering, and from this he naturally shrunk. We should have been callous, indeed, if we had received no inspiration from a man at once so conscientious, so honest, so devoted to duty, and so reverent toward its responsibilities.

How much we had come to lean upon him, I think we have been reminded numberless times within the past term. I do not believe that it had never occurred to us that we should lose him so suddenly, and by death. We must make our own the reverent faith with which he deplored the apparently untimely death of his teacher. With a conviction that Dr. Smith had accomplished "the task that God needed him to do in his kingdom," he wrote: —

"We cannot doubt that this was all ordered by God, who might have had things different had He so desired. . . . To us there is something profoundly strange and sad in this failure of a life for the mere lack of a 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."

"For what have these earthly 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."

These words are more than an example for our faith; they are a message to us. The end that came so suddenly is mysterious, it can be explained only by divine wisdom. Was it not, indeed, a promotion? Was not his earthly work finished? We may not speak of his death as untimely; we dare not symbolize his life by a broken shaft, rather by the completed column with finished capital, at once strong and beautiful. Together with the public at large we mourn the failure of the hopes which we had been led to cherish; yet we may not say that we have lost him, for "he being dead yet speaketh," and he has not ceased to be our colleague. As our predecessors still live by means of the atmosphere of peace which they made the tradition of our seminary, will not he also live here by an atmosphere, henceforth even more than in the past, redolent with piety and earnest devotion to truth? From his last published words we shall accept his message and honor his memory, with a studious care to emulate his faithfulness to duty and his loyalty to the Redeemer; thus can we go forth into the future of this seminary, carrying on with added zeal and wisdom the work to which his life and ours have been consecrated.

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THE ETHICS OF CREED CONFORMITY.

"THE Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion" was the title of a notable essay a generation ago. There are but few signs of any abatement of that aversion yet. The dissonance of dissent makes fully as much noise as the assonance of assent makes harmony in the world of theological dogma to-day. Even the assent is not as cordial as could be desired. Many who profess to like plenty of solid old dogmas swallow them with wry faces. "What is the truth?" asked Lady Chettam of Mrs. Cadwallader, in "Middlemarch." "The truth? he is as bad as the wrong physic, — nasty to take and sure to disagree." Many, again, who complain of the old fetters, are prepared to forge brand-new creeds to fetter others in turn. Others, more disgusted, are ready to apply to all dogmas Dr. O. W. Holmes's *jeu*