

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

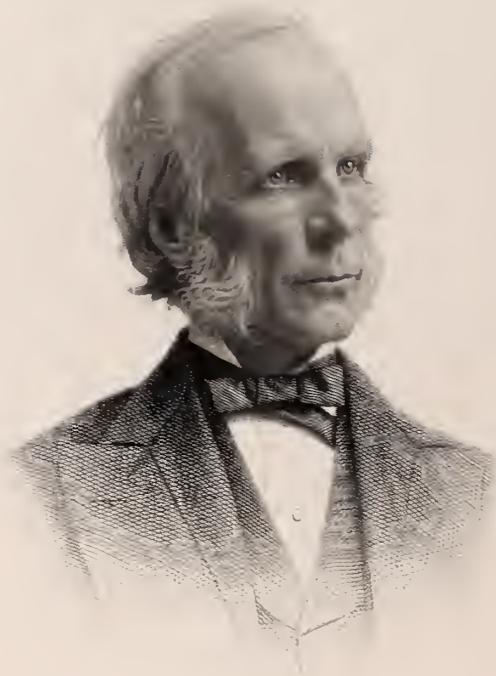
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I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD.

IN a scientific age like ours, something will be gained if we can show that Christianity is amenable to the Experimental Method. This method has very largely made the modern world. It received its great exposition and impulse from Lord Bacon, and is sometimes called the Baconian method. It consists of three stages: first, the collection of all the facts procurable upon the subject in hand; secondly, the casting about for some happy hypothesis to explain the facts; and, thirdly, the verification of the hypothesis by experience or experiment.

Now it so happens that Christianity may be made amenable to this method; and, that there may be no mistake about this being the Founder's intention, let us look at one declaration He made in the days of His flesh. His enemies had, strange to say, argued themselves into the idea that He deserved to be killed because He had made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day (John vii. 23). They illustrated in doing so the fact that, if we only set ourselves to it, we can argue ourselves into anything. The history of human thought shows that there is nothing too absurd, nothing even too diabolical, to be reached by argument. But Jesus has a better method to suggest than this one of everlasting discussion; and it is contained in the words, "If any man will [willeth to'—Revised Version] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). He does not say, "If any man will *discuss* God's will in all its length and breadth, he shall know of the doctrine;" but if he will *do* it, he shall reach



W. G. T. Shedd

V.

WILLIAM GREENOUGH THAYER SHEDD.

IN the last number of the REVIEW there was published a notice of the late Professor Shedd; and the announcement was made that the present number would contain an article embodying a brief account of his life, and an estimate of his character and work.

William Greenough Thayer Shedd was born in Acton, Mass., June 21, 1820. His father, the Rev. Marshall Shedd, was at that time the minister of the parish church. Marshall Shedd was the son of a New England farmer, and the thirteenth of a family of fifteen children. The *res angusta domi* not only made, in his case, a liberal education difficult of attainment, but postponed its commencement until he had passed the period of boyhood. But he sprang from a people whose ambitions persist, and who have always been able to overcome great obstacles of time and circumstance in order to achieve them. He entered Philips Academy at Andover, but not until he was twenty-one years old. After completing his studies there, he went to Dartmouth College, and was graduated the valedictorian of his class. He lived the life of an able and faithful minister of the Gospel and labored to give his son every facility for procuring an education like his own.

Dr. Shedd's American ancestors were New England Puritans. No theologian accepted more heartily or defended more ably than he did the view, that, to use his own words, "the seed or principle of a man's character is in existence before him." He has told us more than once, "that in order to have a full comprehension of individual character we must go back to the species of which the individual is a part. It is the species that explains the sinful disposition with which all are born." He held also that these remarks are measurably true of the character of a nation; that every national character is the result of what has preceded it. The Puritan character, which Dr. Shedd thus derived from his ancestors, he has delineated in an essay with that title. Genetically, he describes it by the term "Old English;" and "the fundamental trait upon which all its excellencies rest, and by which even its faults are to be explained," he says, "is spirituality of mind." This spirituality of mind is not, however, that which is denoted by the

word "regenerate;" but is an inherited disposition that "leads its possessor to believe in the invisible world, and to refer to it in both his thoughts and actions." * This other-worldliness, this tendency to live in view of the unseen, and to reckon with, even when not obeying, the categorical imperative, is so obviously a typical trait of the Puritan that it is selected by the brilliant Frenchman, Taine, for special emphasis, in the section in which he tells us that Puritanism is the basis of the old English character; and Lord Macaulay, in the earliest of his essays, says the same thing, in what Matthew Arnold calls "his own heightened way." Of course, this single trait, if the "fundamental," is not the sole distinguishing trait of the Puritan character. The Puritan history is not in any adequate sense to be explained by it alone. There is a sense, indeed, in which the tendency to live in view of the invisible must be "fundamental," as Dr. Shedd says it is in the Puritan, if it exist at all. Every real trait is fundamental. It interpenetrates and modifies the action of all other inherent tendencies. But it was not unmixed other-worldliness that characterized the Puritan in either Old England or New England. He never, like an ascetic solitary, wholly turned his back upon the world that now is. His character has always had its due share of this-worldliness. In particular, it has been largely and specially qualified by two traits; one of which separates him sharply from the sentimental German, and the other as sharply from the easy-going Southron. In the first place, he has never permitted mere sentiment to overbear what Dr. Shedd's teacher, Coleridge, calls "the active virtue," prudence, which at its basis is "a regard for self, even if it is self projected into the future;" and in the second place, from his first appearance in history, whatever ability he has possessed, he has always held well in hand and directed steadily towards an object, by the force of a strong and persisting will. The place of the Puritan in history—and I have in mind the Scotch as well as the English Puritan—cannot be accounted for if to his religious spirit are not added, as coefficients in securing it, his sagacious prudence and his resolute will. It was from such an ancestry that Dr. Shedd sprang.

Dr. Shedd, on his father's side, belonged to the sixth of the generations living in this country. The immigrating ancestor, Daniel Shedd, settled in Braintree, Mass., in 1642. On his mother's side, Dr. Shedd belonged to a family quite as well known in New England as his father's. His maternal grandfather, Obadiah Thayer, was an eminent Boston merchant in the East India trade; a man of means of liberal education and culture. On the marriage of his daughter, his only child, to the Rev. Marshall Shedd, he retired from business and made his home with her. With this grandfather, Dr. Shedd,

* Shedd, *Literary Essays*, p. 229.

when a boy, lived in intimate intercourse; and the grandfather encouraged all the boy's higher and nobler aspirations. In 1831, the family removed from Massachusetts to Willsborough, Essex county, N. Y., on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, where Mr. Thayer had a large property. Young Shedd was prepared for college at a school in Westport, in the same county, and remained there until he entered the University of Vermont, at Burlington, in 1835. His industry and enthusiasm in study were notable; so was his high moral tone. He acquired quickly and entered the University of Vermont when fifteen years of age.

It was while at the University of Vermont that Shedd was brought under the teacher who more strongly than any other influenced his entire life. This was the Rev. Dr. James Marsh, at that time the Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy. Dr. Marsh had been tutor at Dartmouth—the college of which he was a graduate—and Professor of Languages and Biblical Literature at Hampden Sidney College, Virginia. For seven years he had been President of the University of Vermont. In the maturity of his powers, not long before Shedd's matriculation, he resigned the executive office to fill the chair he now occupied. Dr. Marsh was one of the ablest teachers, if not the ablest and most original teacher, in the country in this department. The philosophical system which up to this time had been most influential in America, was that of Locke. It divided the interest of philosophical students in America with the Scottish philosophy, as presented in the works of Dugald Stewart, whose treatise on the *Active Moral Powers of Man*, Dr. Porter tell us, was in this country the most influential of his works, "on account of its bearing on the theological and ethical controversy that was beginning to excite general attention in this country." For in New England, then as always, the theological subjects which awakened the deepest interest and provoked the keenest debate were subjects in anthropology, like the nature of sin, and the remains of moral power in the natural man. Dr. Marsh not only entered into these discussions with interest, but imported into them a new and influential element. He attacked the reigning psychology and philosophy, whether English or Scottish, and "proposed as a substitute the new and more profound spiritual philosophy of Coleridge, Kant, Jacobi, and of the Platonizing English theologians of the seventeenth century." The essay, in which this attack and proposal were embodied, was his *Preliminary Essay to Coleridge's Aids to Reflection*. He eulogizes Coleridge's endeavors to show "the consistency of the peculiar doctrines of the Christian system with reason, and with the true principles of philosophy;" and asserts that Coleridge has

proved, to quote Coleridge's own words, "that the scheme of Christianity, though not discoverable by reason, is yet in accordance with it—that link follows link by necessary consequence—that religion passes out of the ken of reason only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon, and that faith is not bound, it is continuing."* He cordially adopts Coleridge's distinctions between nature and spirit, and between the understanding and the reason.

Dr. Marsh left behind him a small but valuable literary product, which has been gathered and published with a memoir by the late Prof. Torrey.† These *Literary Remains* comprise several papers; among which are a letter on the Arrangement of the Sciences, a paper on the nature of Life, a brief treatise on Psychology, one on the Human Will and the Spiritual Principle in Man, and one on the Relation of Immortality to the Reason and Conscience. They reveal clearly the system of fundamental truth which he taught; and, in the clearness and strength and spirit with which they are written, they go far to explain the strong influence he exerted on the minds of his students, and justify the intellectual respect and admiration with which they regarded him. One is not surprised, after reading them, to find that Prof. Shedd, when twenty-five years old, describes Dr. Marsh "as one of those eloquent and superior spirits, few and rare in our earthly race, who have an instinctive and irresistible tendency to the supernatural;"‡ or that a few years later, when referring to Dr. Marsh's edition of the *Aids to Reflection*, he says, "that Dr. Marsh's premature decease, in the full vigor of his powers, and the full maturity of his discipline and scholarship, is the greatest loss American philosophy has yet been called to meet."§ Besides being an earnest and intelligent student of philosophical subjects, Dr. Marsh was a profoundly religious man, whose vivid religious experience expressed itself finely in his letters, and in his intercourse with his students.

For four years young Shedd was trained by this teacher. The philosophical system he then studied and adopted as his own, he held to the close of his life. Moreover, his contact with an intellect as strong and sincere as Dr. Marsh's imbued him with the philosophic temper and habit of mind. Into whatever other department of study he entered, he carried with him both this system and this temper and habit. Dr. Marsh not only gave to Shedd a system: he introduced him to the teachers who had taught both himself and his

* *Coleridge's Works: Aids to Reflection: Prelim. Essay*, by J. Marsh, Vol. i, p. 73.

† *Memoir and Literary Remains of President Marsh*, Boston, 1843.

‡ *Theological Essays*, p. 52.

§ *Literary Essays*, p. 272.

teacher, Coleridge. He made Shedd, before he left college, a student, not of Coleridge alone, but of Plato and Kant; so that when he entered Andover, he may be said to have carried with him a theory of the universe, which he grasped with an intelligence unusual in one so young, and which he held as a profound conviction.

I have the impression, however, that this philosophical habit of mind, which was thus early achieved and was perhaps the most valuable result of his association with Dr. Marsh, was distinctively an acquired habit; and, that in some measure at least, it overbore another tendency. His most noticeable gift was the gift of literary expression, and the strongest of his early intellectual affections was his affection for literary form. No one can read all that Dr. Shedd has written without feeling how deeply interested he is in literary style in the larger sense of that phrase, how lovingly he has studied its great masters, how carefully he has formed his own upon the noblest models, and by what genial labor he early attained a style of "simple, statuesque beauty." It is quite clear, I think, that but for his philosophical discipline at the formative period of his life, Dr. Shedd's literary product would have been mainly within the sphere of language and letters. The modification of his strongest natural intellectual trait by this philosophical culture has given to Dr. Shedd's literary essays a distinctive tone. It made him by eminence a Puritan man of letters. He is one of the few consistent Puritans who have "been drawn upon and drawn out by literature and art," and his discussions on these subjects show what the literary product of New England might have been, had the literary classes there maintained their interest in philosophy and theology.

It is in harmony with his character as a man of letters, whose character, as such, has been modified by a powerful philosophical influence, that he writes of the condition of the intellectual classes of this country, as follows: "A higher type of intellectuality is greatly needed in our new America. Strictness and not laxity should characterize our style of thinking, our speculative theories, our judgments, and our tastes. There is imminent danger of the contrary. An easy and indulgent theory of refinement and education is formed amongst us, and unless counteracted, the only civilization of this Western Continent that is worth anything will go to destruction. There is just now a great clamor and demand for 'culture,' but it is not so much culture that is needed as discipline. We are not so sound and healthy a people as we were a generation ago. The true course is to look these facts in the eye and to act accordingly. In 1802, a great poet, English to the bone, and loving his country as he loved his own flesh, called England 'a fen of stagnant waters,'

and invoked the stern shade of Milton to raise her up, and give her manners, virtue, freedom, power. The American Republic needs to-day a similar fidelity, and a similar affection from all her true sons." * This character of a *litterateur* strongly affected by philosophical studies he never loses when writing on an æsthetic or literary subject. He never detains himself or the reader long with the criticism of mere form. It is the *nature* of beauty that he delights to expound, and a *theory* of eloquence he is interested in defending. Not his method only, but his opinions show the same modification of the literary man. He not only subordinates the beautiful to the true and the good in art, philosophy and religion, but he asserts that only through this subordination does beauty attain perfection and achieve a power to impress permanently; only thus does it become a joy forever. Eloquence becomes real in view rather of its ethical than of its æsthetical element. When he writes of English studies he praises the literature of the era of Elizabeth, and in comparison, somewhat unduly disparages that of the reign of Anne. He commends to students and artists discipline, reticence and temperance; and almost the only qualities he eulogizes are their legitimate offspring: severity, chasteness and grandeur. What the educated classes most need, in his view, are strength and reserve. "They must be reticent," he tells us, "and, like the sculptor, chisel and re-chisel until they cut off and cut down to a simple statuesque beauty in art, in literature, in religion, and in life." †

Though the most powerful influence exerted upon Mr. Shedd, while a college student, was philosophical, it did not exclude others. From the beginning he showed that he possessed not only remarkable powers of acquisition, but a mind that was finely active and possessed of wide and various intellectual sympathies. He was fortunate in having as his classical teacher the late Joseph Torrey, a man of a large and accurate scholarship; who, while best known as the translator of the Church History of Neander, revealed his sincere love of the classics in his endeavor to awaken in his students an appreciation of classical literature as literature, and the influence of the classics upon himself in his lectures on the "Theory of Art." Moreover, the fact that Coleridge was the philosophical writer to whom Shedd was first introduced and the native bent of his own mind prevented the absorption of his intellect in philosophy to the exclusion of literary studies. The essay in which Dr. Shedd has given expression to his maturer judgment of Coleridge, while devoted entirely to expounding Coleridge's position as a philosopher and theologian, itself shows both that he did not neglect the literary side of Coleridge's work, and that he held him in

* *Literary Essays*, Preface.

† *Literary Essays*, p. 35.

the very highest esteem both as an originator of modern poetic forms and as one of the profoundest of literary critics. He says of him, that "he has done more than any other literary man, with the exception of Wordsworth, to form the poetic taste of the age, and to impart style and tone to the rising generation of the English poets; and as a literary man has done more by far than any other one to revolutionize the criticism of his age." * While the college student was becoming a Coleridgean in philosophy, he was imbibing from Coleridge an ardent love of literature, and was learning to determine for himself what is loftiest and profoundest in English literature and to value and enjoy it. Thus, before he left college, the two most distinctive traits of Dr. Shedd's intellectual character as revealed in his later writings already existed, not only as strong mental tendencies, but as tendencies finely nurtured and fed; I mean the philosophical and literary traits.

He was graduated at the University of Vermont in 1839. He had not yet chosen his profession. The year succeeding his graduation he spent in New York city, engaged in teaching, and endeavoring, no doubt, to determine in what profession his duty lay. His duty revealed itself during the winter of 1839-40, after he made a public confession of his Christian faith and united with the Presbyterian Church of which the Rev. Dr. Asa D. Smith, afterwards President of Dartmouth College, was the pastor. He believed himself called to the ministry, and during the same winter he decided to study theology.

In 1840 he entered Andover Theological Seminary and remained there for three years, graduating in 1843. The venerable Dr. Edwards A. Park is the only member of the Andover faculty of that day who survives his pupil. The Chair of Systematic Theology was filled by the elder Leonard Woods. Dr. Woods had long been Professor of Theology; having occupied that chair from the founding of the Seminary in 1808. When Mr. Shedd entered Andover, Dr. Woods was approaching the term of his active career. For more than a generation he had educated a large proportion of the ministry of New England in this department. The system he taught was known in New England as "Old School," to distinguish it from the "New Divinity" taught by Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor at New Haven. Moses Stuart, who is entitled to be called the Father of Biblical Theology and Criticism in America, held the Chair of Biblical Literature. Prof. Stuart had as his associate Dr. Edward Robinson; who became the eminent Biblical Explorer and Geographer, and Professor in Union Theological Seminary; and whom Dr. Shedd succeeded as Professor of Biblical Literature in the latter institution.

* *Literary Essays*, p. 273.

An active and heated debate was going forward at this time between the champions of the Old and those of the New Divinity; and Dr. Shedd, like every other student, was soon on one of the sides. Without at all abating his sympathetic interest in the philosophy of Coleridge, he adopted as his own the "Old School" system. He was led to take this side, partly, at least, because of the two it seemed to him to be the more historical and the less provincial. Already he felt strongly the influence of what he afterwards called "the historic spirit." During his life in Andover, both for the purpose of learning the German language and because he was already interested in the history of the development of Christian opinion and the formation of Christian institutions, he read, in the original, Neander's Church History; and as a result of this historical study he learned to value, more and more, and for that reason, the theology that had shown its vitality by its persistence. It would seem that "the historic spirit" which, as he afterwards said, "engenders criticism and skepticism towards a newly discovered truth," must be held responsible for the strong determination towards high orthodoxy of this young student, who, nevertheless, came to Andover saturated with the philosophy that underlies so much of the Broadchurchism of England. It would be easy to quote from many of Dr. Shedd's essays and discussions statements that show the high value he assigns to the criticism with which history meets individual speculation. One quotation must suffice. In the inaugural discourse which he delivered in 1854 as Professor of Church History in Andover, he says: "That which has verified itself by the lapse of time, and the course of experiment, and the sifting of investigation, is commended as absolute and universal truth to the individual mind, and history bids it to believe and doubt not. But that which is current merely; that which in the novelty and youth of its existence is carrying all men away; must stand trial, must be brought to test, as all its predecessors have been. Towards the opinions and theories of the present, so far as they vary from those of the past, the historical mind is inquisitive, and critical, and skeptical, not for the purpose, be it remembered, of proving them to be false, but with the generous hope of evincing them to be true. For the skepticism of history is very different from skepticism in religion. The latter is always in some way biassed and interested. It springs out of a desire, conscious or unconscious, to overthrow that which the general mind has found to be true, and is resting in as truth. But the skepticism of history has no desire to overthrow any opinion that has verified itself in the course of ages, and been organically assimilated, in the course of human development." Thus the speculative spirit and the historical spirit, as early as the years

in which he was receiving his theological education, balanced one another, and no doubt the latter checked what might have been the undue influence of the former. It was the union of these two spirits that led him, during his seminary career, to immerse himself in the study of two of the greatest theologians of the Latin Church; and to neglect somewhat the New England divines. Dr. Shedd was not a New England theologian in the special sense in which that phrase is so often used. Jonathan Edwards' vigorous intellect strongly impressed him, as it impresses every one who comes in contact with it; and, like every subsequent theologian in America, he felt, and was not slow to acknowledge, his large indebtedness to that great divine. But he never loved and valued the discussions of the successors of the elder Edwards, as Dr. Park did; nor could he ever have written so sympathetic and appreciative a review of Nathaniel Emmons as the review written by Dr. Henry B. Smith. Besides, both his own Platonizing tendencies and his delighted perusal of Neander's Church History led him, even while a student of theology, to make Augustine of Hippo and Anselm of Canterbury his great preceptors. And how commanding was the influence of these two men upon his theologizing, all know who are familiar with his discussions of Theism and of Original Sin.

From the seminary he went into the pastorate. After preaching for a single Sunday in its pulpit, he was invited, in 1843, to become the pastor of the Congregational Church in Brandon, Vt., and continued its pastor for two years. His preaching at once showed the distinctive qualities which it always maintained. Not a few of the sermons in the two volumes of sermons he has published were written and preached while occupying this pulpit. In 1845 he left the pulpit for the professor's chair, becoming Professor of English Literature in his *Alma Mater*. Here he remained for seven years, leaving it to occupy for a short time a kindred chair, that of Sacred Rhetoric, in Auburn Theological Seminary, to which he was called in 1852, and which he resigned in 1854.

This period—between 1845 and 1854—is one of the most fruitful periods of Dr. Shedd's literary life. His work as a teacher compelled him to engage in studies for which his native gifts fitted him. The literary spirit, though somewhat depressed by his philosophical studies, was still strong within him; and his love of literary form made the work he did genial work. He was no ordinary rhetorician; and his conception of the art of rhetoric was made profound by the philosophical habit he had cultivated, and by the large culture his industry had achieved. He steeped his mind in literature as literature; and soon became known as a writer who, even in theological discussions, did not lose his character as a man of letters.

His essays of this period are among his most interesting and stimulating discussions. Though some of the papers were published later, all that he has written on æsthetics, literature and preaching was composed at this time. His style during this period is in some respects his best. He writes out of a full mind and a full heart. His fine and severe taste shows itself in every paper. Besides the noble work on Homiletics, written while Professor at Auburn Seminary, it was during this period and before he was forty years old, that he produced all of his *Literary Essays*; of which "The Nature of the Beautiful and its Relation to Culture," "The Influence and Method of English Studies," "The Relation of Language and Style to Thought," "The Ethical Theory of Rhetoric and Eloquence," "The Characteristics and Importance of a National Rhetoric," and the paper on "Coleridge as a Philosopher and Theologian" are among the best and the best known.

In 1854 he was called to the chair of Church History in Andover Theological Seminary, and continued in this position until 1862. His teacher of sacred rhetoric, the Rev. Dr. Park, now Professor of Systematic Theology, welcomed him cordially to Andover, although they belonged to different schools of New England theology. It was felt by all most deeply interested in Andover Theological Seminary—so, at least, I have heard—that the elder Calvinism should be represented in the faculty, and that an opportunity should be given to one qualified to do so to expound and defend it from one of the chairs. Of Dr. Shedd's ability, attainments and teaching gifts no one had any doubt; and he had already announced his theological position on one of the questions oftenest in debate in New England—namely, the nature of sin, and particularly of original sin. His views had been presented in an essay published in the *Christian Review* for January, 1852, as a review of *The Christian Doctrine of Sin* by Julius Müller. In this paper Dr. Shedd put himself distinctly on the platform of the elder Calvinism. The doctrine of the Reformed theology that sin is a state of the soul in which every man is born, and that this sin is guilt, was defended with exceptional thoroughness, ability and learning. And though, when he stated his view of its relation to the first sin of the parents of the human family, his explanation differed widely from that of the Covenant theologians of the seventeenth century; the essay, on the whole, embodied the high Calvinistic anthropology, and left no doubt in the minds of those who intelligently read it as to the position the writer occupied in relation to the then current debates among the New England theologians. The deep, practical interest of the writer in the doctrine of sin was also evident. It was obviously a doctrine which, if he were called to stand in the pulpit,

would underlie and support his preaching of the Gospel. That he regarded it as a truth of the very first importance for the preacher, he made plain, not only throughout the essay, but in the weighty and solemn words with which he concluded the discussion. "If the Church and the ministry of the present day need any one thing more than another, it is profound views of sin; and if the current theology of the day is lacking in any one thing, it is in that thorough-going, that truly philosophic, and, at the same time, truly edifying theory of sin, which runs like a strong muscular cord through all the soundest theology of the Church."

Prof. Shedd was now "midway upon the journey of his life." Though he had matured early, his intellect had not developed with unhealthy haste. To his remarkable powers of acquisition were joined a clear and commanding intelligence; an intellectual personality of such distinctness and power as always to impress its own character upon his acquisitions; a calm intellectual temperament that enabled him to look at truth in an atmosphere untroubled by passion; a sincere desire to know the truth on the most fundamental themes; a disposition to hold his opinions as convictions; and a power of clearness, strength and grace in the statement of abstract truth, in which he was excelled by no English-speaking theologian. He was a teacher in his native State, and in the most influential divinity school of the communion in which himself and his ancestors were reared. His opinions on questions in debate were perfectly understood; and he occupied a chair from which, as well as from any chair, he was able, as he was expected, to state and defend them. It was to be anticipated that such a man, in such a position, would often be called to declare himself on subjects of public interest to the great religious community of which he was a member. When he did so, he gave expression to his views with great distinctness. Three of the doctrinal papers published in his volume of *Theological Essays* were written during this period. Two of these are exceedingly interesting when read in the light of his position and of the times. One of them, called "Symbols and Congregationalism," delivered in 1858 as a discourse before the Congregational Literary Association, is an earnest plea for a stronger theological feeling within the denomination, and a more distinct fidelity to its historical symbols. In unfolding "the necessity that exists in Congregationalism for a stronger symbolic feeling, and a bolder conformation in creed statements," he points out the dangers to which the Congregational system of church organization, whose great merits he recognized, was exposed from its inherent individualism; and in the spirit of history—the spirit with which he was so strongly imbued—labored to lead his fellow-Puritans "to join their theologizing

upon the symbols" which had organized Puritanism in its New England form. His fear of individualism, and his conviction that it was unequal to the task of building up a theology, he confesses in strong language. "To shut up a single individual," he says, "with the mere text of the Scriptures, and demand that, by his own unassisted studies and meditations upon it, he should during his own lifetime build up a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity like that of Nice, of the doctrine of the Person of Christ like that of Chalcedon, of the doctrine of the Atonement like that of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions, of the doctrines of Sin and Predestination like that of Dort and Westminster, would be to require an impossibility. The theorizing spirit of the individual divine needs, therefore, to be both aided and guided by symbols. In proportion as individual thinkers can bear in mind that the church which they honor and love has already earned a definite theological character, and has given expression to its theological preferences in its own self-chosen creed, they will come under a unifying influence. Their differences and idiosyncrasies, instead of being exaggerated by themselves or their adherents, will be modified and harmonized by the central system under which all stand, and to which the whole body has given assent."

The other paper is his essay, entitled "The Atonement a Satisfaction for the Ethical Nature of both God and Man." It was first published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October, 1859. It was written when Dr. Shedd was in his fortieth year, in view of the fact that modifications of the *acceptilatio* theory of Scotus were common, not to say prevalent, throughout New England; and with the conviction that the doctrine of Atonement must be correlated to the doctrine of Sin. Whoever wishes to see Dr. Shedd, as a theological writer, at his very best, should read this essay. His mind never wrought better than when in this paper he analyzed the emotion of remorse, for the purpose of showing that the emotion of man's moral constitution towards sin is the same in kind with the emotion of God towards sin; and, in order to explain the wrath of God, discriminated indignation in the conscience from indignation in the sinful heart—showing that the former emotion is not either in its essence or in its effect upon a holy being an unhappy feeling; and that, above all, it is a judicial emotion; allied, therefore, to the ineradicable sentiment of justice in man and the eternal attribute of justice in God, whose inlay and content is the Law, which the Atoner satisfies. Not less interesting and important than the first part of the essay—in which he grounds the necessity of the Atonement in the moral constitution of God and man—is its concluding discussion, in which he holds forth the Atonement as wholly the act

of God Himself. "The mercy of God," he says, "consists in substituting *Himself* incarnate for the creature, for purposes of atonement. Analyzed to its ultimate elements, God's pity towards the soul of man is God satisfying His own eternal attribute of justice for him." The whole of this part of the essay is pervaded and shaped by the thought that the Atonement is a transaction begun and completed within the Deity, who satisfies His own ethical nature.

Long after this essay was written, Dr. Shedd, in conversation with the writer of this paper, expressed his admiration for William Ellery Channing. Referring to Channing's objections to the doctrine of the Atonement, he said, in substance, that Channing's misapprehension of the Christian doctrine started with the misconception that the Atonement in its essence is the placation of God by man. He added, that the point of departure, in all defenses of the Atonement against this common misconception, should be, that in its inmost essence, it is an intra-Trinitarian transaction; that emphasis should be placed on the truth, that, instead of being the placation of God by man, it is the placation by God of His own justice; and that the Incarnation should be set forth as instrumental to this placation of God by Himself. On this truth, in respect to the inmost nature of the Atonement, Dr. Shedd's mind rested with confidence and joy. Perhaps the two brief statements of earlier theologians which he loved to repeat more often than any others, are the statement made by Augustine in his *Confessions*: "How hast Thou loved us, for whom He that thought it not robbery to be equal with Thee was made subject even to the death of the cross; for us to Thee both *Victor and Victim*, and therefore Victor because the Victim; for us to Thee both *Priest and Sacrifice*, and therefore Priest because the Sacrifice:" and this statement by John Wessel; "*Ipse deus, ipse sacerdos, ipse hostia, pro se, de se, sibi satisfecit.*"

While Dr. Shedd was often called upon to preach in the churches of the vicinity, and was then, as always, recognized by the more thoughtful and intelligent members of the congregations he addressed as a great preacher; it was in the class-room that his most important work was done. He wrote a course of lectures on the general history of the Church, and a course of lectures also on the history of doctrine. Almost all of Dr. Shedd's published works are occasional papers and addresses and sermons written for periodicals or congregations, or lectures prepared for his classes. The lectures on the general history of the Church he never published. Soon after beginning his work as teacher of Church History, he found an admirable manual in Guericke's *Textbook*, and this he translated and used in his class-room, in connection with the

lectures he had written. The circumstances of his election to the Chair, as well as his own tastes, led him to spend more time on the history of Christian Doctrine. After his resignation at Andover, while pastor of the Brick Church in New York, he prepared his lectures on this subject for the press, and published them. In this way, he became the author of "the first attempt in English literature to write an account of the gradual construction of all the doctrines of the Christian religion." In the preface to this work, he recognizes the fact, which some of his critics afterwards seized upon, that "the work betokens subjective qualities, perhaps unduly, for a historical production." He acknowledges that "he has paid more attention to the orthodox than to the latitudinarian drift of thought," but justifies himself on the ground that "it is impossible for any one author to compose an encyclopædic history, and that every work of this kind must be stronger in some directions than in others." His own profound interest in the Nicene Trinitarianism, the Augustinian Anthropology and the Anselmic Soteriology, he acknowledges is the cause of the relatively large attention he pays to these. "They are the centres," he says, "from which I have taken my departures."

The History of Christian Doctrine, thus composed and published, was welcomed by the theological public as a work of exceptional ability and interest. The attention which, by its sympathetic criticism, it directed to that great trinity of theological minds, Athanasius, Augustine and Anselm, did a great work in enlarging the outlook of the American theological mind, which had had its attention directed too exclusively to the seventeenth-century school divines, and to the theologizing psychologists of New England. Dr. Shedd, in this work, did another important service. He re-awakened the interest of American theological readers in the works of the great theological writers of the English Church, who had been set aside to make room for the modern Germans. It will not be out of place, just now, to quote what he says of his obligations to them. "To the dogmatic historians of Germany of the present century I am greatly indebted, and not less so to the great lights of the English Church in the preceding centuries. These latter have been unduly overlooked amidst the recent fertility of the Teutonic mind. Though comprising no continuous and entire history of Christian doctrine, and even when investigating a particular subject, oftentimes doing it incidentally, the labors of Hooker and Bull, of Pearson and Waterland, are every way worthy to be placed beside those of Baur and Dorner. The learning is as ample and accurate, the logical grasp is as powerful, and the judgment more than equal."

During the eight years Dr. Shedd taught at Andover, he came into intimate contact with his students. I have heard many of them, some of whom have become eminent, testify to the stimulating character of his lectures. This stimulating quality was probably increased by the theological differences within the faculty. The Professor of the History of Doctrine felt obliged, or, at least, at liberty, to defend the opinions he held. Quite as notable was the influence of his own culture and discipline and his high ideal of the scholar's life, in encouraging his students to make themselves widely and accurately cultivated men. For whatever else Dr. Shedd was, he was a profoundly interested reader and student of what not only he believed to be, but what had by the criticism of years shown itself to be, the greatest in literature. He had a lofty ideal of the clergyman's intellectual life. This ideal he not only actualized in himself, but was persistent in holding up to his students. What in his lectures at Auburn, as Professor of Sacred History and Pastoral Theology, he said officially, he repeated at Andover to individual students, whenever an opportunity offered itself: "That the clergyman should not be content with the average intellectuality. He ought not loudly to profess a choicer culture than that of the community, but he ought actually to possess it. As the clerical position and calling demands a superior and eminent religious character, so it demands a superior and eminent intellectual character. If the clergyman may not supinely content himself with an ordinary piety, neither may he content himself with an ordinary culture." As for the chief means of securing this culture, he was fond of saying that they may all be reduced to one, namely, "the daily, nightly, and everlasting study of standard authors." How well he obeyed his own injunction, the apt and abundant quotations and allusions in every volume he has published bear testimony. And this testimony is confirmed by the grateful recollections of his students of every period of his professional life; and especially the students of the period during which he occupied the Chair of Church History in Andover.

In the address on "Symbols and Congregationalism," from which I have already quoted, Dr. Shedd stated clearly his conviction that theological standards are the best bond of denominational unity. That address was but one of many endeavors on his part to increase in his own communion the reverence for its historical symbols; and to induce the affiliated churches of New England to reassert their loyalty to them. But the tendency of New England thought had set strongly in a different, not to say a contrary direction. The attitude of the Congregational ministry, as a whole, though friendly to the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism, was wanting in

theological enthusiasm; and the disposition to refuse longer to insist on Calvinism as a condition of ministerial fellowship within the communion was rapidly gaining strength. This tendency finally expressed itself in the well-known Declaration of Faith, adopted by the National Congregational Council of 1865. It was adopted by the Council near the spot at which the Pilgrim Fathers landed in 1620. The interval in time, between the date of the Pilgrims' landing and the date of the Council itself, is not greater than the difference between the theological platform of John Robinson and his congregation, and the theological platform formulated by the eminent representatives of Congregationalism who met there as the Pilgrims' spiritual descendants.

Owing to the growing strength of this tendency, with which he had no sympathy, Dr. Shedd, when he was invited in 1862 to become the associate Pastor of the Brick Church in New York city, found it easy to become a minister of one of the branches of the Presbyterian Church; of the other of which he had been a minister while professor in Auburn Seminary. From this date until his death he continued a Presbyterian minister. He felt entirely at home in the Presbyterian Church. Not only was he a high and pronounced Calvinist; but he believed that a Church should be organized by and committed to a system of religious truth; and that in its organization it should provide adequate means to secure the fidelity of its teachers to the system. He believed also that Calvinism leaves liberty enough to the preacher of the Gospel. And while he did not hold that the system is broad enough for the organization of the whole visible Church, he held that it was a theology broad enough to constitute the organizing principle of a denomination; and he believed that American history had already proved the value of denominational churches. That religious communions should be unified by systematic theology expressed in symbols, and not solely or chiefly by forms of government, he was strongly convinced; and he was not at all troubled by the fact that Calvinism organized, and so limited, the Church of which he was a minister. So he says: "The Presbyterian Church is a Calvinistic Church, and it will be the beginning of its decline when it begins to swerve from this dogmatic position. The Westminster Confession, exactly as it now reads, has been the Creed of as free and enlarged intellects as ever lived on earth. The substance of it was the strong and fertile root of the two freest movements in modern history, that of the Protestant Reformation, and that of the Republican Government. No Presbyterian should complain that the Creed of his Church is narrow and stifling." But Dr. Shedd, though himself a high Calvinist, believed that within the limits of a Calvinistic communion

there should be room for a variety of opinion. The only General Assembly of which he was ever a member was the Old School Assembly of 1868; and his appearance upon the platform as a debater in that body was for the purpose of defending the Calvinism of the Auburn Declaration and the expediency of the reunion, because it would bring into one denomination the Calvinists who stood upon that platform and the stricter Calvinists with whom he more nearly agreed. In the *Presbyterian Review* for 1880, he contributes an appreciative and somewhat lengthy review of Dr. Dabney's *Syllabus of Systematic Theology*, which he concludes with the following statement: "Such a treatise as this is an argument for the reunion of the North and South. Calvinism needs and requires the coöperation of all its advocates and defenders. The theologizing of Breckinridge, Thornwell and Dabney should be mingled with that of Alexander, Richards, Smith and Hodge."

I have said that Dr. Shedd appeared in but one General Assembly. He was not a man of affairs in Church or State in the sense in which both Dr. Charles Hodge and Dr. Henry B. Smith were. Neither ecclesiastical nor political movements most deeply interested him; but he was prepared, when occasion required, to state his views; and, of course, he stated them always with clearness and force. He became pastor of the Brick Church in the second year of the war between the North and the South; and in harmony with the most of his fellow-citizens, he did what he could, as the minister of a metropolitan church, to sustain the Government in its prosecution of the war for the integrity of the national Government and the Union. He held that the party of the Federal Government, the party to which he belonged, could appeal to the God of battles that its motives in this war were upright; and that success to the national arms would be a blessing to the entire nation, South as well as North. His pastorate continued but a single year. While in New York, the able and scholarly Edward Robinson, one of his teachers at Andover, who had afterwards been called to Union Seminary, passed away; and Dr. Shedd was invited to the chair made vacant by his death. He thus became, in 1863, Professor of New Testament Literature in Union Theological Seminary; and he held the chair until 1874; when he was transferred to the Professorship of Systematic Theology, the chair which the brilliant Henry Boynton Smith felt obliged, on account of continued ill health, to resign. Dr. Smith's resignation was received and accepted with the deepest sorrow. He carried with him into his partial retirement, the admiration, gratitude and affection of the Seminary he had honored, of all his pupils, of the church he had done so much to re-unite, and of the community of American theological scholars of which he was one of the

most influential and honored members. Happily his retirement was only partial. He was made Professor of Apologetics; and in that capacity prepared a course of lectures, which, though we possess only a brief synopsis, exhibits, as well as any of his publications, perhaps better than any other, the distinctive traits of his genius. It was his last, and, I sometimes think, his greatest gift to the Church. For many years to come it must prove an invaluable treasury to all who shall be called to vindicate Christianity as the absolute religion to human reason.

Dr. Shedd always, if not formally yet really, taught a system of theology. He did so when Professor of Church History in Andover; and he did so now, as Professor of New Testament Literature in Union. He selected the Epistle to the Romans for detailed exegesis in the presence of his class; and the one published work that issued from his work in this chair is his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. He frankly treats the Epistle as an inspired essay in school divinity. Indeed, he so describes it. He says, that "the Epistle to the Romans ought to be the manual of the theological student and clergyman, because it is in reality *an inspired system of theology*. The object of the writer was to give to the Roman congregation, and ultimately to Christendom, a complete statement of religious truth. It comprises natural religion, the Gospel and Ethics, thus covering the whole field of religion and morals." Dr. Shedd's ability is conspicuous in this work, as it is in everything he has written. The "lucid brevity" of his notes makes the volume an unusually interesting commentary. But the ability he displays is rather the ability of the systematizer than the ability of the exegete. He is at his best in those parts of the volume in which, leaving for a time the distinctive work of the interpreter, he discusses the text he is treating as a *locus* in divinity. The most striking studies in the volume are of this character. They are his studies on the first chapter, in which he treats of the depravity of the race; on the fifth chapter, in which he defends his belief, that the total human nature—a specific substance—really sinned in the first pair; and on the sixth and seventh chapters, in which he describes the enslavement of the human will.

In 1874, Dr. Shedd began the work for which his life up to this time had been a preparation: the work of a teacher and writer on dogmatic theology. He was called, as I have said, to succeed Dr. Henry B. Smith. Dr. Shedd writes of him "as one of the finest and best disciplined intellects of this age;" and while expressing the "feeling of sadness that the Providence of God did not give him health and long life to put his thought and his lore into finished form," he adds, speaking of the volume—Dr.

Smith's *Apologetics*—he is reviewing, "Any reader who is at all sympathetic with keen and close reasoning will inevitably shut the book at almost every page, and think awhile with the author, reproducing his processes, and perhaps extending them; and there is no higher proof of mental power than authorship of this kind." Dr. Smith's judgment of Dr. Shedd, as his successor, is expressed in a letter to the latter, written at the time of Dr. Smith's resignation. "The Seminary," he says, "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. May you make up for my imperfections, and strengthen as well as adorn the chair. It suits you too more fully than the one you leave, and will enable you to add your dogmatics to the invaluable works with which you have already enriched our theological literature."

So, with a thorough appreciation of the greatness of the man he was to succeed, and with the benediction of his predecessor, Dr. Shedd began the last, and in his own view, the most important work of his life. For seventeen or eighteen years, he unfolded to successive classes that great system of divinity, which, to quote his words again, "was the strong and fertile root of the two freest movements in modern history; that of the Protestant Reformation, and that of Republican Government." He brought to the work of his chair, a mind as finely disciplined and cultivated on its literary side as that of any teacher of theology in the country; a mind too of extraordinary philosophical and logical power. He brought philosophical convictions and large knowledge of philosophical systems. He brought also special historical and theological knowledge, which he had employed in his construction of the *History of Doctrine*. To these, must be added a conviction of the system's harmony with both reason and Scripture, as strong as that of John Calvin or Jonathan Edwards; a delight in the work for which he must have known that he was eminently fitted; and a power of expression in the sphere of abstract truth that few writers of English have equaled. He began at once the preparation of his lectures. He wrote them with great rapidity, keeping fully abreast of the demands made upon him by his classes. Just as he did in constructing his *History of Doctrine*, he worked along the lines of least resistance; dwelling longest on those subjects which he deemed of the first importance, and which therefore most deeply engaged his own interest as a theologian. His method of teaching was the method of lectures. These he delivered with a quiet earnestness.

He invited his students to question him freely; but he required that each question should be submitted to him in writing; for he held that the criticism to which the questioner would be compelled to subject his inquiry when giving it expression on white paper with black ink, would most often make the question unnecessary. This check on conversation in the class-room made the delivery of one of Dr. Shedd's lectures very different from the delivery of one of Dr. Smith's; who encouraged the utmost freedom in class-room inquiry, and seemed always to enjoy the extemporaneous expression of his students' difficulties and doubts.

Dr. Shedd fortunately was his own literary executor. The lectures he delivered to his classes, he published in two volumes with the title *Dogmatic Theology*. The last literary work of his life was the superintendence of the publication of a third, a supplementary volume; containing notes on the text of his lectures, appendices, and references to, and quotations from the sources and literature of the several subjects he had discussed. A review of the *Dogmatic Theology* does not fall within the scope of this paper. But it would be out of place not to say some things about Dr. Shedd's distinctive qualities as a theologian, and his attitude towards systematic theology itself, as they are revealed in the work. It is the more important to say them, since the popular conception of Dr. Shedd as a systematic theologian, even the conception popular among clergymen, is in certain capital respects an erroneous one.

If I have not misinterpreted a good many statements I have heard or read, Dr. Shedd is quite widely supposed to have been most of all an acute logician; who, having early accepted the Calvinistic theology, cultivated in its behalf the arts of attack and defense with such eminent success, that if only you should so far forget yourself as to acknowledge his premises, you would be unable to resist his conclusions. He is quite generally understood to have held an inordinate estimate of the importance to the religious life of school divinity; to have turned away from "science" with a truly mediæval aversion; to have strongly reprobated theological speculation; and to have set himself as a flint against the opinion that progress in theology is a possible attainment. I am confident that this conception would be radically changed by a fairly intelligent and careful reading of his *Dogmatic Theology*. He is not, first of all, the "acute logician" he is by so many supposed to be. The work does not reveal anything like the schoolman's strong tendency to analysis, to the resolution of an idea into its ultimate elements. In this respect, Dr. Shedd's treatise is far more like the *Institutes* of John Calvin than like the *Theology* of Turretine. Every one who has read these two treatises will recall that, while the seventeenth-cen-

tury theologian is never weary of the work of analyzing and dividing, John Calvin is content to present the Reformed theology in its bold and outstanding features, in its great organizing ideas. And Calvin's method is characteristic of Dr. Shedd. It is one of his distinctions as a theologian, that he emphasizes comparatively few dogmas, which he holds to be fundamental and pregnant; and it is another of his distinctions, that like Calvin's, his elaboration of them is synthetic and literary, rather than analytic or logical. He holds them up to the mind of the reader, whom he invites to their contemplation. In this respect his method is rather Plato's than Aristotle's. Of course, every one who writes a body of divinity must argue his case; and Dr. Shedd is at no loss when he undertakes this work. But I am thinking of him in comparison with other systematic theologians; with mediæval schoolmen like Thomas Aquinas; with Reformed schoolmen like Turretine and Van Mاسترcht; with Puritan schoolmen like John Owen; with New England divines like Nathaniel Emmons; with contemporaries like Charles Hodge and his predecessor, Henry B. Smith.* And I say, that his elaboration of his themes is far more literary and far less analytical than that of any one of these writers. Such a theological writer will, of course, be positive and constructive in his treatment and will not be noticeably polemic. Shedd seldom offers to his readers a detailed and formal criticism of an opposing theory. He has confidence in the great formative ideas of his divinity; and he is content, if he can present them with clearness and vigor, and can make plain their mutual harmony: believing, to use his own words, that "the argument of a profound and consistent system, like the argument of a holy and beautiful life, is unanswerable."

But if he is not eminently argumentative and combative, he is eminently speculative. As far as possible, in the exposition of the doctrines of the Reformed system, he construes them by means of *à priori* conceptions, by means of presuppositions, on which he places a high value. He is, by far, the most speculative Calvinistic theologian the American Church has produced. "The reader will find the historical Calvinism defended in the essays upon *Original Sin* and the *Atonement*, yet with an endeavor to ground these cardinal themes *in the absolute principles of reason* as seen in the nature of both God and man." The sentence is taken from the Preface to his *Theological Essays*; but it might well have been found in the Preface to his *Dogmatic Theology*. He went further in this direction than his predecessor, who once wrote, that "every Christian doctrine has its philosophical as-

* See for example Smith's reviews of Strauss, Renan, Hamilton's *Doctrine of Knowledge*, Whedon *On the Will*, and his *Apologetics*.

well as its Biblical aspect." Unlike Dr. Smith, Dr. Shedd seemed to feel that the chief work of the dogmatician is to expound the philosophical aspect of the doctrine; and that systematic theology gets its distinction, as systematic, from the fact that, as presented in the system, the truths of revelation are correlated to the great ideas which the written revelation presupposes and which are the inlay of the mental and moral constitution of God and man. He was a Coleridgean and Platonist always. He read with interest and sympathy the Christian Platonists: Augustine and Anselm not only, but Cudworth, John Smith and Henry More. I have not space enough to quote passages which show the strength of this speculative tendency. I can only refer my readers to his chapter on the "Trinity in Unity," which commences as follows: "It has been remarked, in the investigation of the Divine Nature, that the doctrine of the Trinity, though not discoverable by human reason, is susceptible of rational defense when revealed. This should not be lost sight of; notwithstanding the warning of the keen Dr. South, that 'as he that denies this fundamental article of the Christian religion may lose his soul, so he that much strives to understand it may lose his wits.' It is a noticeable fact, that the earlier forms of Trinitarianism are among the most metaphysical and speculative of any in dogmatic history. The controversy with the Arian and Semi-Arian brought out a statement and defense of the truth not only upon Scriptural but upon ontological grounds. Such a powerful dialectician as Athanasius, while thoroughly and intensely Scriptural, while starting from the text of Scripture and subjecting it to a vigorous exegesis, did not hesitate to pursue the Arian and Semi-Arian dialectics to its subtlest fallacy in its most recondite recesses."

This tendency to theological speculation and the high esteem in which he held the argument from reason might easily have carried Dr. Shedd away from confessional orthodoxy, had it not been checked or chastened by the historical spirit I have already mentioned; the spirit which made him distrust whatever was new or local in theologizing, if it did not show, that it was also a legitimate historical product; that it was a vital outgrowth of the Christian thought of the past. Dr. Shedd believed firmly in progress and improvements in theology. No American theologian more often or more distinctly asserted this belief. The word which in his view best defines the historical movement is the word "evolution." And though he carefully discriminated evolution from improvement, yet in the Christian history, whether of doctrine or of life, he held that no such discrimination is required. In this sphere, evolution and improvement are one and the same. He believed that as the Christian life is more and more highly differentiated, as it pervades society and

emerges in institutions, it tends to realize the New Testament ideal of the consummate society, the *Civitas Dei*. Quite as clear is the announcement of his view that the history of doctrine is marked by "progress" and "improvement." "Dogmatic history," he says, "presents a very transparent and beautiful specimen of historic evolution. The germ or the base of the process is the dogmatic material given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In the gift of revelation, the entire sum and rudimental substance of Christian theology was given. But this body of dogma was by no means fully apprehended by the ecclesiastical mind in the outset. Its scientific and systematic comprehension is a gradual process; the fuller creed bursts out of the narrower; the expanded treatise swells forth growth-like from the more slender; the work of each generation of the Church joins on upon that of the preceding; so that the history of Christian doctrine is the account of the expansion which revealed truth has obtained, through the endeavor of the Church universal to understand its meaning, and to evince its self-consistence in opposition to the attacks and objections of skepticism." An exceptionally able and learned theologian, with this conception of the progress of doctrine and the improvement of theology in the past, ought never to have been charged with holding that all the light which it was intended should break forth from God's Word has already illumined the Church. If ever a theologian held, as one of his most cherished hopes, the expectation that the Church of the next age, or, at any rate, of some coming age, would know God better than we know Him, Dr. Shedd did.

But he did not believe that the way to advance towards this better knowledge is to break with the past. And this is the point at which he opposed himself to two tendencies, each of which is a powerful tendency at present: the tendency to accept eagerly recent and, as he was fond of calling them, provincial views; and the tendency to divorce "metaphysical reflection" from religion. Dr. Shedd set himself strongly against both tendencies; and he did so in the interest of an improving, a progressive theology. Thus, to speak of the first tendency, much as he was indebted to Neander both for his knowledge of German and for his impulse towards historical study, he criticises him on this ground in an otherwise highly eulogistic paragraph. "The most reverent admirer," he says, "of this devout historian must acknowledge that his construction of Church history is affected by subjective elements, that his apprehension of Christianity is sometimes unfavorably modified by the age and country in which he lived, and especially by the type of culture into which he was born and bred." As to the other tendency—which we are apt to call Ritschlian—

the tendency to look for improvement by giving up "metaphysical reflection," Dr. Shedd was persistent in trying to hold men away from this alleged avenue to a better theological state. He set up the sign "No Thoroughfare" at its entrance; and, in every way he could, told men that it was, after all, only a blind alley terminating in a blank wall. Improvement in theology, larger knowledge and profounder unity—these he believed were to be reached, not by less, but by more and better metaphysical reflection. No lesson of Church history is more clear to him than this. And as to the relation of scientific theology to the unity of the Church he writes often in language like this: "All doctrinal history evinces that just in proportion as evangelical believers come to possess a common scientific talent for expressing their common faith and feeling, they draw nearer together so far as regards their symbolic literature; while, on the contrary, a slender power of self-reflection and analysis, together with a loose use of terms, drives minds far apart within the sphere of scientific theology, who often melt and flow together within the sphere of Christian feeling and effort."*

But highly as Dr. Shedd valued scientific theology in its own sphere, he never confused this sphere with that of experimental religion. He was far too intelligent a man and far too good a Christian not to see that they were not the same. He was just as alive as Chalmers was to the danger of "resting content in the terms of a barren orthodoxy:" and he has put on record his belief that even a capitally erroneous scientific theology may consist with the enjoyment of the regenerating grace of God. I am not now concerned either to attack or to defend this position. I am concerned to present Dr. Shedd exactly as he was, and to efface inaccurate impressions. If in his own views he was a Calvinist of the highest type, on this subject he was what is called "liberal." The principle which lies at the basis of his "liberality" on this subject, he has clearly enunciated in a paragraph from which I have already quoted. "Tried by the test of exact dogmatic statements, there is a plain difference between the symbol of the Arminian and that of the Calvinist; but *tried by the test of practical piety and devout feeling*, there is but little difference between the character of John Wesley and John Calvin. And this for two reasons: In the first place, the practical religious life is much more directly a product of the Holy Spirit than is the speculative construction of Scripture truth. Piety is certainly the product of divine grace; but the creed is not so certainly formed under a divine illumination. Two Christians, being regenerated by one and the same Spirit, possess one and the same Christian character, and therefore, upon abstract principles, ought to adopt one

* *Hist. Doct.*, Vol. ii, pp. 425, 426.

and the same statement of Christian belief. On attempting its construction, however, they pass into *the sphere of the human understanding and of human science*, and it is within this sphere that the divergence begins, and the foundation for denominational existence is laid. In the second place, the divergence is seen in the creed rather than in the character, because one mind is more successful in understanding and interpreting Christian experience than another is. Unquestionably, evangelical denominations would be much more nearly agreed in their dogmatic theology, if the power of accurate statement were equally possessed by all.*

The principle which he thus formulates, namely that Dogmatic Theology is a science and that, in attempting the construction of their creed, Christians "pass into the sphere of the human understanding and of human science"—a principle directly opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine that the creed is a supernatural and inspired product—Dr. Shedd, with characteristic bravery and consistency, applies in the formation of his hopes and opinions as to both the heathen and those who in Christian lands are, in his view as a theologian, radically defective in their theology. He extends the doctrine of *in vinculis ignorantie* beyond most Reformed theologians; and he speaks with far more positiveness than does the present Pope, even in his remarkable letter to the American Bishops, lately published. Somewhere in his writings—I have not the reference—Dr. Shedd refers favorably to Coleridge's well-known and often-quoted statement: "I make the greatest difference between *ans* and *isms*. I should deal insincerely with you, if I said that I thought that Unitarianism is Christianity; but God forbid that I should doubt that you, and many other Unitarians, as you call yourselves, are in a very practical sense, very good Christians." † In affirming the presence of regenerating grace among those who have never heard of Christ, he is more pronounced, I think, than any other Calvinistic theologian of his eminence. He not only affirms it with great positiveness; but he defends his position earnestly and at length. ‡ The section in which he discusses the question commences with these positive statements: "It does not follow that because God is not obliged to offer pardon to the unevangelized heathen,

* *Hist. of Doct.*, Vol. ii, pp. 424, 425.

† Coleridge's *Works*, Vol. vi, pp. 338, 339.—It is possible that I am mistaken in the assertion that a favorable reference to this statement is to be found in Dr. Shedd's works. But as to his sympathy and agreement with it, I am not mistaken; for in a conversation with him soon after the publication of his *Dogmatic Theology*, about his opinion that the election of grace in the cases of adults is not confined to the visible Church or to those having a knowledge of the historic Christ, he quoted Coleridge's remark with approval.

‡ *Dogmatic Theology*, p. 706, *et seq.*

either here or hereafter, therefore no unevangelized heathen are pardoned. The electing mercy of God reaches to the heathen. It is not the doctrine of the Church, that the entire mass of pagans, without exception, have gone down to endless impenitence and death." On this subject, his views are far more pronounced than those of his predecessor, Dr. H. B. Smith, who permits himself only the expression of a hope.

It is almost a reflection on the memory of a man of Dr. Shedd's large and disciplined intelligence, to spend any time in the endeavor to counteract the belief, that he was out of sympathy with "modern science," whatever that may mean. Dr. Shedd very early adopted the dynamic as distinct from the mechanical conception of the relations of God to the universe. And he was one of the first of American writers to apply to history the idea of organic evolution. His name was so closely associated with these conceptions, that I remember to have heard one of the most intelligent, widely read, and theologically cultivated laymen speak of him as "essentially a pantheist." Moreover, he was intimately acquainted with the discussions by "scientific" men of subjects that possess a theological interest. He knew Spencer's philosophy, he knew Hæckel's biology, and he knew Darwin's zoology. He held that they were unproved; and, for reasons that he stated with clearness and force, he did not believe that they would ever be proved. He did not accept, he combatted the positions that the organic was evolved from the inorganic, the animal from the vegetable, and man from the brute animal. He did so, in his chapter on "Creation," with great ability; and with a wealth of allusion which certainly indicates familiarity with the literature of the subject.

The *Dogmatic Theology* was published in 1888. It was at once and on all hands recognized as one of the ablest and most valuable expositions and defenses of Calvinism that had appeared in America. Men could not read his discussions of Theism, of the Trinity in Unity, of Sin, of the Atonement and of Retribution, without the consciousness that they were in communion with a man of great intellectual power, of faculties finely disciplined and cultivated by large learning; a man thoroughly sincere and in dead earnest; and every way as nearly equal as most men who have undertaken it to the great work of unfolding the profound and consistent system of the theology of the Reformation. I have not left myself space enough to review or even describe his system in its details. It has seemed to me better to employ what space I could have given to such a review, in the endeavor to correct or efface what I have taken to be prevalent erroneous impressions touching his views on particular subjects.

Two years after the publication of the *Dogmatic Theology*, having reached the age of seventy, Dr. Shedd resigned the chair which for so many years he had so ably filled. He taught however until the close of another year, when his successor was elected. Meanwhile, the Church was excited by two debates: one on the revision of the Confession, which Dr. Shedd actively opposed; and the other on the questions raised by Dr. Briggs' Inaugural Address and his ecclesiastical trial. Dr. Shedd believed that the Briggs case involved the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards the supreme authority and absolute trustworthiness of the Bible. And he was opposed to the toleration, in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, of the views which Dr. Briggs claimed the right as a Presbyter to hold and teach. In the revision debate, he was as active with his pen as any clergyman in the Church; and in the debates on the supremacy and trustworthiness of the Bible he left no room for doubt as to his position. He employed the time which his retirement from teaching gave to him, in publishing some of his occasional papers not already published, and in preparing for the press the Supplement to his *Theology*. During the last year of his life, Dr. Shedd suffered greatly with increasing languor and with positive and severe physical pain. But he continued to work until his supplementary volume was carried through the printers' hands and was issued by his publishers.

When that was done, he calmly faced the one inevitable event which he knew was not far off. In a note written just when the "Supplementary" volume was published, he says; "I think I may be taken away from earth at any time. But I am in the Lord's hands and wait His pleasure with hope and faith." When his weakness had confined him to his room, and for the most of the time to his bed, he wrote to Dr. R. M. Patterson a letter in which the Christian trust and resignation find tender and beautiful expression. His pastor, Dr. Van Dyke, has told in fitting terms of the calmness and dignity, as well as the childlike confidence, with which he contemplated "his release." I saw him a few weeks before he passed away. I went prepared—it would be too much to say expecting—as a minister of the Gospel to repeat some words of God that might comfort or strengthen him. But the comfort and strength were ministered by him to me. I thought then and still think, that I never heard him when he talked more eloquently; and the subjects he talked about are the most sublime that ever engaged the thought or speech of man. They were the Holy Trinity and the eternal Kingdom of God. Once only, during the conversation, he spoke of his weakness and pain; and expressed the hope that "his release might not be long delayed." When I

left the house, with the impression of his eloquence still upon me, I felt how singularly appropriate in his case was his designation of death by the word *release*; and, just as years before when I heard of the death of Dr. Henry B. Smith, I thought of the words of Socrates in the *Phædo*: "Those who have duly purified themselves with the love of wisdom live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer far than these of which the time would fail me to tell."

I have written a longer paper than I intended to write, and have left unsaid much that I wished to say, especially about Dr. Shedd's charming personality and the traits of a character as simple, as sincere, as serene and as lofty as any I have known. His character seems to me to be as great as his native gifts and his attainments. His character, gifts, attainments and the work he did, justify one in describing him by a phrase which should be reserved for very few: I mean the phrase, "a great man." If Mr. Lowell is correct in saying that "style is fame's great antiseptic," his literary product is likely to enjoy a long life of wide influence. Speaking only of English writers, unless we except John Henry Newman, not since Coleridge, and not often before Coleridge, has so fine a gift of literary expression been employed, throughout a long life, in the exposition of the loftiest subjects in philosophy and theology.

PRINCETON.

JOHN DEWITT.