

EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY.

FIRST SERIES.
VOL. LVI.—No. 8. }

JANUARY, 1880.

{ FOURTH SERIES.
VOL. VI.—No. 8.

NAZARETH.

BY REV. J. B. DALES, D. D.

JUST after noon, one Saturday near the end of March, a party of us started from Jerusalem for the City of Damascus, about 130 miles, a little north-east of the Holy City. We rode small Syrian horses—tough, wiry, hardy, little creatures, who know just how to pick their way along the stony paths, and scarcely ever stumble or fall. There was not a single good road in all the land and nowhere, even in Jerusalem or any of the cities or villages, a single wagon, or wheeled carriage of any kind. After stopping over the Sabbath in our tents at a place called the Fountain of the Robbers, about thirteen miles from Jerusalem, we visited on our way Shechem, and the old Samaria, and Jezreel, and Mt. Gilboa, and crossed a wide plain, where at almost every step our horses trod on beautiful flowers, and the grass was green, and the whole scene was most inviting. It was the old plain of Jezreel—and winding around some high hills and up a beautiful valley, we came to Nazareth, where we felt most strangely, as at every step we thought *here Jesus used to live*. He looked on these hills, and all along this valley, and up into that sky.

Nazareth is very beautifully situated, just as seen in this picture; it lies right in a valley, and many of the houses are on the side of the hill that overlooks the city. But the streets are narrow and dirty, and the people were ragged and filthy. Nazareth had a very bad name when Jesus was there, and it never has had a much better one since. The Arabs say the devil has his home there, and while he goes abroad over the earth by day, he always goes back to Nazareth to stay at night, and they say he has the people all very much like him in everything.

Just as we went into the place, we saw a large low building of white stone and covering a good deal of ground. It was a Roman Catholic convent. In one of the rooms they show where Napoleon Bonaparte stayed when he was in the Holy Land. Near it is a church, which they say is built over the house where Jesus lived with Joseph and his mother Mary. In one of the rooms they showed us what they said was a bench where he worked as a carpenter, and some of the people believed all this so much, that they fell down on their knees and kissed the floor. All these stories, however, are lies. All that was there

I desire to notice one point more, though it is not closely connected with the foregoing :

It is sometimes assumed as an undoubted fact, that Satan could have transferred the kingdoms of the world to our Lord according to his promise. I might remark in reference to this, it is never safe to take Satan at his word. It was his purpose in this statement to deceive. The kingdoms of the world do not belong to him. He has no right to give them. And further, men are not transferred to the kingdom of Christ as they are from one earthly government to another. The difficulty that lies in the way of such transfer, is not a physical but a moral one. He could have crushed Satan in a moment, and overwhelmed him, as he will eventually by his almighty power. But the moral difficulty must be met. The need of an atonement was absolute : so also in reference to a change of heart. These requirements, the surrender of Satan could not set aside. There was no way by which he could override law, justice and the moral government of God, and install Christ at once the head of a spiritual kingdom. He might have resigned his usurped dominion, or withdrawn from the field of conflict, but the fulfillment of his promise was, in a moral point of view, impossible. "The kingdom of God is within you," and this kingdom or reign of the Redeemer is set up, not by the power of the wicked one, but by the operation of God's Spirit, sent forth to work in the hearts of men, on the ground furnished by the Saviour's atonement for sin.

THOMAS SMITH.—(1755–1832.)

BY REV. J. B. SCOULLER.

THOMAS SMITH was born in Ireland, March 20, 1755, and was educated in Scotland. Most probably he was graduated at Glasgow University, and studied theology with Professor Moncrieff at Alloa, as that was the ordinary course, at that time, of the Irish students of the Anti-burgher wing of the Secession. He was licensed in 1776, and subsequently ordained and installed as pastor of the Associate congregation at Ahangel, in the county of Antrim, in Ireland. In 1798 he resigned this charge, for reasons not now known. The probabilities are that the "Irish Rebellion" had something to do with it. The "United Irishmen's Oath" was about that time secretly administered to many of the young men in the Presbyterian churches of the north, as well as to the Roman Catholics, and the result was generally congregational troubles and divisions, and in some cases so serious as to break the pastoral relation. It was thus with Rev. Francis Pringle, and it may have been thus with Mr. Smith, for a pastor of twenty years standing and encumbered with a family did not resign and leave the country, in those days, without some very urgent reason.

He landed at New Castle, Delaware, in the summer of 1799, and made that place the home of his family, while he performed missionary work under the direction of the Presbyteries of the Associate Reformed Church. In the spring of 1800, he removed his family to York county, Pa., and devoted the greater part

of the succeeding year to the supplying of the congregations of Lower Chanceford and Hopewell. In 1801 he was installed as pastor of the newly organized congregation of Tuscarora, in Juniata county, and there purchased a farm upon which he lived during the remainder of his life, and from which he drew a necessary part of his temporal support. He could not have given to Tuscarora more than one-half of his time, for he performed a large amount of missionary work, and subsequently gave half of his time to another branch. In 1806 he became pastor of Fermanagh for half time, and in 1809, by order of the Big Spring Presbytery, he gave one-fifth of his time to the little congregation of Kishacoquillas Valley. The latter arrangement lasted only a year, after which, to the end of his ministry, he divided his time equally between Tuscarora and Fermanagh. He was vigilant and industrious in looking after the wants of neighboring places, and often preached at Concord, in Hare's Valley, and in the valley of the Great Aughwick.

He became so infirm that during the last two years of his life he was unable to preach or do any pastoral work, and on the 12th of February, 1832, he died, in the 77th year of his age, and the 56th of his ministry. In person he was small, in complexion ruddy, in temperament active, in habits of life temperate, in disposition kind but firm, in all things ecclesiastical orthodox. He was a strong churchman, and an ever-ready champion for the truth. As a preacher he was lively and instructive, and no mean master of tender pathos and of fiery denunciation. He was courteous and gentlemanly in his manners, and exemplary and consistent in his life.

He was strongly opposed to union with the Presbyterian Church, and in the General Synod of 1822, led the opposition in the debate; he raised the point of order that *seven* yeas was not a majority of the *sixteen* members present, when the Moderator, Dr. Laurie, decided that silent members were always reckoned as acquiescing with the majority in the vote; and it was he that drafted the protest of those who voted in the negative. And when the Synod was over he came home and gathered up all the fragments left of the Associate Reformed Church between the Susquehanna and the Allegheny mountains, and carried them to the Presbytery of Monongahela, and cherished them until the ordination of Alexander Sharp made it possible to resuscitate the Presbytery of Big Spring.

He was married in 1783, to Jane Weir, of Stewartstown, Ireland, who bore to him seven sons and five daughters. One of these sons, Thomas, still lives, (Dec. 1879) in Allegheny City, in the eighty-fourth year of his age; and two daughters yet live in Cochranston, Crawford county, Pa., where Mrs. Smith, their mother, died in 1844, in the eightieth year of her age. Samuel F., their sixth son, was born at sea in 1799, and was educated at the University at Pittsburgh and the Theological Seminary in Allegheny City, and was ordained and installed in 1827 as pastor of the Associate Reformed congregation at Cochranston, Pa., where he continued till his death on the 19th of March, 1846.

The subject of our sketch must not be confounded with his neighbor, Thomas Smith, pastor of the Associate Church of Huntingdon. This latter was born in Dumfries, in Scotland, was educated in Edinburgh, was appointed by his Synod, in 1790, as a missionary to the United States, but failed to fulfil the appointment, and then in 1800 he came on his own responsibility and united with the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. He traveled for eleven years in the Associate Synod before he received a call, was installed in 1811, as the first and only pastor of the congregation in Huntingdon. He died in this relation in 1825. He was not distinguished as a preacher, but as a kind and industrious pastor and a generous and hospitable man, he took a strong hold upon the sympathy and good will of his congregation and of the community in general.