



PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (1877)

From a Painting by Sir George Deal, B. A., now at Christ College, Cambridge.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH

BY

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AND

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PREFACE

THE preparation of the following work was undertaken shortly after Professor Smith's lamented death in 1894, but had to be postponed to the execution of another literary design planned during his lifetime and carried on in pursuance of his wishes and as a continuation of his life's work. The authors regret that owing to this circumstance the appearance of the book has been retarded, and that it has been further kept back in its later stages owing to defect of health and leisure.

They hope, however, that the delay will not be altogether without compensations. The Robertson Smith case is now passing into history, and it is more possible than it would have been some years ago to write of it in the historic spirit. Moreover, now that so many of the chief disputants have disappeared, the authors have been less embarrassed by the fear of wounding susceptibilities justly entitled to respect, and have been able to treat every aspect of the great controversy fully and frankly. Professor Smith's struggle for the freedom of scholarship in the Free Church of Scotland is in their opinion an episode in the history of their country of abiding interest and importance which must be studied by all who wish to understand either the Scotland of 1843 or the Scotland of 1912. It has been their object, while giving a life-like picture of their friend, to present for the first time a complete view of the development and the consequences of the Aberdeen heresy in its relation not only to con-

temporary religious thought in Scotland, but to the learned world at large.

In addition to the papers kindly placed at their disposal by Professor Smith's family and by his friends the authors have had before them the voluminous literature of newspaper articles, official reports, controversial pamphlets, and other fugitive pieces to which Smith's somewhat stormy career gave rise. They have spared neither time nor pains in the study of these documents, and they hope that they have neglected nothing of any interest or importance.

To the many friends who have helped them by the communication of documents, by criticism and suggestion, the authors wish here to make general and cordial acknowledgments. They have endeavoured in the following pages to indicate more particularly the names of those to whom they are under the most conspicuous obligations. It only remains for them to express their indebtedness to Mr. Stanley A. Cook, Lecturer in Comparative Religion, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, one of Professor Smith's younger pupils, to whose kind assistance the index to this volume is due.

The authors have to thank Sir George Reid, R.S.A., for permission to reproduce unpublished sketches of Professor Smith, and they are indebted to the Master and Fellows of Christ's College, Cambridge, for their kindness in facilitating the reproduction of the portrait which forms the frontispiece to this volume. They have also to thank Mr. F. M. Chrystal and others for their help in preparing and providing photographs.

J. S. B.

G. W. CH.

20th April 1912.

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NEW FARM, KEIG (*page 10*).

From a Photograph by F. M. Chrystal, Esq.

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS (1846-1861)

THE political destinies of Scotland were finally settled in the middle of the eighteenth century, but her history as a nation did not end with the close of the adventure of the Young Pretender. Since the Battle of Culloden it has been of course, in the main, a history of ideas, but it has had its dramatic moments, and it has lost none of its interest for the philosopher and, above all, for the student of religions. As the nineteenth century advanced the whole intellect and passion of the people became concentrated on a somewhat narrow issue of theological controversy, which circumstances had made the rallying-point of two profoundly opposed psychological and political tendencies, and, in the conflict which ensued, the great schism which sixty-nine years ago rent the National Church asunder, was the climax and the turning-point. The life of William Robertson Smith began three years later and covered practically the first fifty years of the existence of the Free Protestant Church. The story of the intellectual generation to which he belongs begins logically, and almost chronologically, in 1843.

The Disruption of the Church of Scotland was, as is well known, the outcome of a protracted quarrel with the State on points which were apparently of little more than local interest, but which collectively raised in an acute form the difficult question of the proper limits of the

secular and the religious authority. Abstraction being, however, made of the particular incidents which embittered the last ten years of the undivided Church of Scotland, it will be found that the true cause of the struggle was the rise and gradual predominance of an evangelical system of Theology among the Scottish clergy and their congregations. The qualities of enthusiasm and unworldliness which are proper to this manner of thinking favoured its rapid progress in a democratic constituency, and at the same time created a formidable antagonism with the spirit of the constituted authorities of the period both in Church and State. The evangelical movement in Scotland attained its full growth before either the civil or the ecclesiastical institutions of the country had time to adjust themselves to the rising pressure of the spiritual situation. Popular excitement, aroused by the inopportune interventions of the secular arm, made what might have remained a doctrinal controversy into a case of conscience of universal interest ; the intransigent party seized the opportunity with the utmost skill, and the result was, humanly speaking, a catastrophe.

That there are other ways of regarding the Disruption is now abundantly clear to any unprejudiced person, whatever may be his private opinion of the contending principles involved. It was natural and indeed inevitable that there should be an evangelical reaction in Scotland in the early years of the nineteenth century. The national weakness for the Rationalism which reduces everything to its lowest terms had been indulged to excess by an educated minority. All the intellect of the people, which was not devoted to building up the national prosperity after the distractions of the Forty-five, following the eclipse caused by such dismal adventures as the Darien speculation, was embarked in the cultivation of common-sense metaphysics and a morality which for simple people seemed to have nothing to do with men of

like passions with themselves. Even in her greatest men Scotland could find little human consolation. The placid grandeur of David Hume's intellect was already the wonder of the world, but it was already also regarded with suspicion and resentment by those who kept the faith of their ancestors. Adam Smith had put all but the finishing touches to the "economic man"; but he, as we know, has proved hardly capable of satisfying the soul hunger even of a more sophisticated and less passionate generation. Influenced by such intellectual traditions, the apologetic of a cultured Christianity necessarily became temporising and defensive; Deistic Philosophy leaked into the Scottish pulpit, which had attained a genteel perfection and a damaging kind of celebrity in the sermons of Dr. Blair, and there arose a generation of Scottish clergymen who preached coldly florid sermons in the metropolitan churches, who at their average were perhaps a trifle undistinguished and a trifle unspiritual, and who at their best recalled the literary graces of the author of *Douglas, a Tragedy*, or the virile urbanity of Jupiter Carlyle. It was one of the most effective taunts of their critics that the name of Moderates, by which they were afterwards held up to the obloquy of the faithful, was chosen and assumed by themselves. Moderation is not a word of power in dealing with a situation in which material misery intensifies a condition of spiritual unrest; and the Moderate majorities which dominated the General Assembly until 1834, discouraging Foreign Missions and opposing the movement for Church Extension among the poorer classes in the large towns, seem to have fallen into that inertia which is the besetting sin of all organisations dependent on democratic opinion and yet unprovided with a formula sufficiently uncompromising for unsophisticated minds.

Intellectually and theologically speaking, the Moderates were doubtless in a certain sense the liberal party in the Church, representing a sort of official modernism, which

would nowadays be highly effective among those who are known as "progressive theologians." "It is now known," says one of their more recent critics, with an air of silencing any possible defence, "that they would have got rid of the Confession of Faith if they had dared"—words which, in view of the events which this book will record, and of the movements agitating almost every Christian Church to-day, have a flavour almost of tragic irony. But whatever is the theological perspective in which the Moderate creed may most justly be viewed, there can be little doubt that its exponents fell short of what had come to be the ideal of pastoral efficiency cherished by most of their congregations. The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.

The evangelical revival, on the other hand, which took so firm a hold on the affections of Scotland, presented no doctrinal features of any unfamiliar interest. It was professedly a return to the strict Calvinistic orthodoxy of the Westminster Confession, and aimed not at abandoning, or even modifying, but at more faithfully maintaining the traditional standards of the Church. It was on the whole free from the hysterical and orgiastic phenomena which distinguished the earlier Methodist movement in England. Extravagant and ill-balanced as some of its utterances might sound in the ears of a philosopher, there was in the Disruption oratory very little of the sheer histrionic abandonment which attracted to the discourses of Whitefield such incongruous hearers as Lord Chesterfield and David Hume. The great men who led the Church out into the wilderness were above all things men possessed of practical wisdom and an aptitude for affairs. Candlish, Cunningham, Guthrie, Duff, and a host of others, all brought some special gift of statesmanship to bear on the difficult problems which perplexed the beginnings of the Free Church, and in the greatest of them all, Dr. Chalmers, the dreamy-eyed financier of the Sustentation Fund, Scotland at last found the leader for

whom she had been longing, who embodied that combination of spiritual intensity with a capacity for the despatch of business whereby a great thing might be accomplished.

When the ten years' conflict was over and the solemn transactions accompanying the Act of Disruption had been carried through, the resulting situation was faced with a courage even more meritorious than that which had resented the intrusion at Marnoch or fought the battle of the interdicts in Strathbogie. It now fell to the combatants to maintain in cold blood, and with improvised resources, the defiance which they had hurled against their antagonists in the heat of controversy, and their conduct in the difficult times which followed was, in the vast majority of cases, beyond all praise. When Lord Jeffrey was informed of the number and the bearing of those who left the General Assembly for the Hall at Canonmills, he is said to have exclaimed that he was proud of his country. That was an emotion which he doubtless shared not only with those who were in general sympathy with the views held by the seceders, but with all the comparatively small number of persons who were able to approach the subject with an unbiased mind. At a slightly later date Lord Jeffrey might justly have repeated his commendation with even greater emphasis. The numbers, not only of the protesting ministers but of the congregations who adhered to them, were very greatly in excess of every estimate. The endurance of the clergymen who left their manses with their families, and suffered extreme, and sometimes fatal, privations in miserable lodgings, the hardships of the people who assembled in the snow to worship in places where no site could be obtained for a Free Church, the unprecedented generosity of the brethren, who in a few years provided the financial basis for an ecclesiastical efficiency hitherto undreamed of in Scotland,—all this has been chronicled elsewhere and by eminent hands. What is more particularly of interest to the present history is the self-sacrifice

of those who forsook established positions and fair worldly prospects in order to dedicate themselves to the service of the Church in supplying religious ministrations to her suffering flock. At a time when the whole machinery of the Establishment was dislocated by the Disruption and between four and five hundred parishes were vacant owing to the secession, the young licentiates or probationers who abode by the old Church, and many of the village schoolmasters, who were in the Scottish phrase "stickit ministers," might reasonably look for rapid and substantial ecclesiastical promotion. It is greatly to their credit that, impelled by conscience, or inspired by the example of the evangelical leaders, they joined the Free Church in a great majority, and indeed almost in a body. The panegyrists of the Disruption do not find even in the unanimous adherence of the Missionaries a more legitimate occasion of satisfaction than in the conduct of these men in the critical beginnings of the Free Church. In most cases they knew well, from early experience, what material hardship means, and they set out to face the world again in a spirit of anything but light-hearted adventure. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, in his admirable study, has described very vividly the almost incredible labour and penury of his father's academic days—how he attained a position as a parish schoolmaster unusually comfortable and congenial, and how, when the Church was divided against itself, his only fear was that he might not be called upon to testify to the opinions which he held without fanaticism by resigning all his advantages.

The case of William Pirie Smith was similar, but it was even more striking than that of his co-presbyter, the venerable bibliophile of Sir William Nicoll's sketch. Born in Aberdeen during the days of the Moderate ascendancy, Mr. Pirie Smith pursued learning with an ardour which throve despite the almost insurmountable obstacles which it encountered, and laid the foundations of an accurate and extensive classical scholarship on scraps

of Latin picked up from an acquaintance who was a Grammar School boy. His next step was to enter the University, which he attained by the exercise of his very considerable natural ability, and by the aid of the excellent system of bursaries or small scholarships, awarded annually at Aberdeen, as the result of open competition among all comers. His career as a student was distinguished by a success consistent with so honourable a beginning. "My father," said one of his sons in later years, with pardonable filial exaggeration, "never took a second prize at the University. They were all first prizes." Whatever may have been the exact truth about his academic distinctions, it is certain that he left the University marked out among his contemporaries as of high eminence in general scholarship. He did not at first seek to enter the Church, though that had been an early ambition. His special bent was towards education; he was by nature a scholar, and both the verdict of those who knew him and the plain facts of his after life, make it clear that he was one of those rare persons who are born with the gift for instructing and inspiring others. His success as a teacher was rapid, and at the time of the Disruption, when he was thirty-two years of age, he was the headmaster of a prosperous Aberdeen school, with the assured prospect of a competency and the chance of higher academic promotion.

His walk in life seemed fixed, the more so as he had married the daughter of his predecessor in the headmastership, an accomplished woman with tastes and abilities akin to his own; and the responsibilities of family life and the attractions of his situation combined to make a change in his calling both undesirable and imprudent. Mr. Smith had, however, embraced with whole-hearted enthusiasm the evangelical side in the great controversy, and in spite of everything, and perhaps in spite of himself, he was swept into the conflict.

The situation in Aberdeenshire was, as it happened, particularly difficult for those of Mr. Smith's way of thinking. Parties were fairly evenly balanced in the town, but in the country a kind of apathetic agricultural Moderatism tended to prevail. There was a formidable leaven of *esprits forts* who held Free Church principles in conjunction with a God-fearing, self-respecting Radicalism, after the fashion of Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk in the parish of Pyketillim, that imaginary apostle of Evangelical Liberalism. These, however, were in most places quite a small minority, whose spiritual welfare depended on a supply of devoted workers willing to serve in a toilsome corner of the vineyard, even, as it were, *in partibus infidelium*.

This state of matters, and the characteristic courage shown by the Free Church leaders in dealing with it, was strikingly exemplified in the district containing the Vale of Alford, a triangular depression traversed by the Don, and barred at its eastward base by Cairnwilliam and Bennachie, two stately granite hills between which the river escapes midway in its course from the Cairngorms to the sea. Here the parish ministers unanimously stood by the Establishment, and among the schoolmasters Mr. Nicoll alone came out. To him naturally fell the charge of the Free Church flock in his native parish of Auchendoir, where he had been teaching since he left the University, and where he spent the remainder of his long life, among the fabulous accumulations of his books. Only one other minister with a fixed cure of souls could at first be established in the neighbourhood; yet with these two men as a nucleus, and with a slight backing of elders, the Disruption Assembly did not hesitate to erect a Church Court in the very stronghold of its opponents, and before the end of 1843 an independent Free Presbytery of Alford was in working order.

This microscopic Presbytery, as its minutes show, at once turned to the task of organising the supply of

Free Church ordinances under grave difficulties. There was much argument with refractory landed proprietors, who in that neighbourhood were almost all hostile to the evangelical movement, and refused more or less obdurately to grant sites for new churches and manses, pretending, with some show of reason from a secular point of view, that there were quite enough already. There are records, also, of devoted efforts on the part of Mr. Nicoll and his colleagues, aided by missionaries and ministers from other districts, to cover the huge deficiency in the pastorate, and of constant efforts to arrange for the permanent settlement of new ministers representing the principles of the Great Secession.

There is nothing to show exactly how it came about that the Free Church congregation in the united parishes of Keig and Tough, in the exercise of the democratic privilege of choice vindicated for them by the Disruption, called Mr. Pirie Smith to be their minister in July 1845. All that appears is that, after some delay due to the difficult circumstances of the time, the call was duly "moderated," and Mr. Smith was ordained on November 5 of that year, leaving behind him for ever the educational career which had already prospered so well with him in Aberdeen. Shortly afterwards he removed to Keig with his wife and eldest child, a daughter then a few months old.

The district in which Mr. Smith was destined to spend the thirty-five years of his active career in the ministry is an area of about twenty square miles, situated at the extreme eastern end of the Vale of Alford and extending up the slopes of the hills to which reference has already been made. The population, which in those days amounted to considerably less than 2000 souls, is scattered over the face of the country, less than one half of which is under cultivation, and hardly in any place is there any concentration of houses sufficient to be called a village.

Hard work and much discomfort awaited the new minister, whose cure of souls extended over an area equal

to two whole parishes of the Established Church. The local proprietor was a "site-refuser," and of course there was neither church nor manse at the time when Mr. Smith was settled. The people of Keig had erected a little wooden shed, built in the course of a night to prevent an interdict, in which he preached every Sunday morning. In the afternoon he had to drive ten miles to conduct another service in a barn in Tough. His home during the first days of his incumbency was at New Farm, a very small house, little more than a cottage, but situated pleasantly enough in the midst of a stately group of elm trees. It was here that William Robertson Smith was born on Sunday, November 8, 1846. The proprietor of the parish under Parliamentary pressure had meanwhile withdrawn his refusal of a site; a stone church had been built, and it was on the day of its inauguration that the baptism of the minister's eldest son took place in accordance with a revival of the old rule that this sacrament is to be administered "in the place of publick worship, and in the face of the congregation." Both functions had been delayed by a series of severe snowstorms, which for weeks had made Keig inaccessible. On January 24 Dr. Spence of St. Clement's Free Church in Aberdeen (who many years afterwards assisted as Presbytery Clerk at his prosecution) gave him the names of his father and his grandfather on the mother's side. "The church was crowded," writes his mother, "but very few of those present had seen a baptism in church, and could not understand what the robe hanging at the side of the pulpit meant." The delay in the christening and the reasons for it are explained in some detail at the beginning of the interesting and frank memoranda which were written by Mr. and Mrs. Pirie Smith on the earlier years of their distinguished son's life. From a conversation which took place many years later, and in which Smith with characteristic vehemence inveighed against the barbarous practice of infanticide paradoxically defended by a friend, it seems

that during the first hours of his existence it was very doubtful whether he would live to be baptized at all. But these fears were not realised, and there follows in the extant accounts a record of a precocious childhood harassed and menaced by much illness. The first crisis passed like many subsequent ones, but until his twenty-first year his health repeatedly gave cause for anxiety in spite of the extraordinary vitality and nervous energy which, early as well as late in life, was his most conspicuous physical characteristic. His mother writes with affection and pride of the earliest signs he showed of intellectual activity ; she notes that he was able at a very early age to appreciate what was beautiful, and tells a story of his delight in the wide prospect of his native valley, on the first occasion on which, when quite a baby, he was taken for a drive in the country clear of the woods which surrounded the manse. "Book," she records with some complacency, "was one of the first words he could say, and as an infant he *must* have a book to hold when he saw others with their Bibles at worship."

Anecdotes of the beginnings of a powerful and distinguished mind, related long after the event by loving witnesses, are almost inevitably coloured more or less by a consciousness of subsequent events. The account given by Mr. Smith of the early intellectual history of his son, interesting and affectionate as it is, is written with a reserve which in this respect is as rare as it is admirable.

William's "formal education," we learn, "was not begun early. He learned indeed to read his native tongue much as an amusement. He also learned the Hebrew alphabet so as to *read* the words of the language before the age of six, but after beginning regular work he forgot, or at least ceased to concern himself with this, and at a much later period had to begin the study all over again. At the same time it is quite probable that this early taste of the Oriental may have been as a seed dropped into a

kindly soil—a seed which was afterwards to spring into vigorous growth and bear abundant fruit.”

His frequent serious illnesses, one of which (in his tenth year) brought him into imminent danger, doubtless accentuated his natural precocity and brought the main lines of his character into high relief at an age when a child with a normal medical history is quite undeveloped. His surroundings, his family history, and the atmosphere of keen controversy in which he was born and bred had the natural effect of turning his prematurely awakened mind to the most serious and speculative subjects. A passage from Mr. Pirie Smith's memorandum gives an interesting and convincing view of the first phase of his son's spiritual life :

“ In the course of these years ” (before he was twelve) “ we had the consolation of learning that a work of grace was wrought upon him, and in such a form that he was at length delivered from the fear of death and made partaker of a hope full of immortality. That the change wrought upon him was real, we had many satisfactory evidences—not the less satisfactory that there was no parade of piety, no sanctimoniousness, but a cheerful performance of daily duty, truthfulness in word and deed, and a conscientiousness which we could not help thinking was sometimes almost morbid. I never knew a boy with so sensitive a nature and so tender a conscience. When still very young, and on the occasion of one of his serious illnesses, his old nurse came from a distance to see him and brought him a paper of sweets. His mother, who disapproved of the free use of such dainties, and generally kept the distribution of them in her own hands, permitted him to keep the whole store himself, and told him to take one when he thought it needed. Some days after, she was surprised to see him rush into the parlour in his nightdress in great and evident distress, and on inquiring into the cause, was told that he could not go to sleep until he had confessed that he had that day helped himself to *two* of his goodies—the second one without any special necessity. Such a child required very careful and tender handling. I am thankful to be able to say that although

in his after years he had to pass through many painful and trying experiences—nay, through much persecution of a kind calculated to shake his faith in divine things—he has never wavered in his belief or been or done aught to induce me to doubt the reality of the change which came to him in the days of his early boyhood.”

To the period referred to in the above extract belong several other notices of religious meditation on Worldly Glory, Self-Examination, Justification as set forth in the thirty-third question and answer of the Shorter Catechism,¹ and other similar matters. Some of these are commonplace enough, but every now and then there are signs of a purely intellectual attitude² towards spiritual things which became more and more characteristic of him and had a profound influence on his theological career. For instance, on one occasion his father heard him speaking to his younger brother as follows:—“The doctrine of the Trinity is incomprehensible—incomprehensible in this sense that man could not have invented it. Therefore it must be true.” When asked where he had learned this piece of Cartesian argumentation he replied that he had invented it for himself. More probably it was an unconscious reminiscence of his reading among his father’s books, which, even in his earliest days, was surprisingly wide; the significant point is that such an idea, however acquired, should have been present at all in clear consciousness in the mind of a child brought up under influences so strict and, at first sight, so conventional. The full explanation of the circumstances which made it possible completes the picture of Smith’s early years, and is essential to

¹ A highly technical matter. “Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”

² See on p. 64 the extract from a diary written by Smith towards the end of his course at the University of Aberdeen. The “purely intellectual” character of German Theology impressed him strongly and, at first, somewhat unpleasantly (see p. 84).

the understanding of the after history of his character and opinions.

This explanation is simply the account of his education and of the rapid expansion of the powers of his understanding up to the time when he left his father's house for the University. The religious and moral ideas just exemplified were imposed on him partly by heredity and tradition, and partly by the striking environment of his childhood which has also been described; they led him to dedicate himself to the ministry of the Free Church before he reached his sixteenth year, and from them, in spite of every vicissitude, he never wholly disengaged himself. Their intrinsic value and interest is great, and their importance in his history cannot be overestimated; but neither at this nor at any other period of his life do they supply material for the complete interpretation of his many-sided character. To understand Smith we must proceed to a more objective view of an exceedingly active existence in which religion, however important, was only one among many interests.

A passage from the ever candid notes of Mr. Pirie Smith supplies the transition, for it shows in a very few words how in the education of his children strict orthodoxy was combined with the practice of complete intellectual freedom and honesty. Speaking of a conversation with one of his sons regarding his spiritual condition, the minister observes that this was the only occasion on which he broached this solemn subject, and continues:

“To say the truth, I do not now and never did approve of the practice at one time, and perhaps still, very usual, of asking young people, or for that matter old people too, such questions as—‘Have you been converted?’ ‘Are you a child of God?’ and the like. And I have not in all my experience found reason to put much confidence in the answers given to such questions, but rather the reverse. It seems to me that children so trained are more likely than otherwise to learn hypocrisy—and I have

some reason in my experience for this opinion. So the custom was not in use in our family, and we have no cause for regret on that account."

The grave common sense of these words is worthy of a man who combined the gifts, so closely allied and so rarely united, of the educator and the pastor. Fortunately for his children, and for others who came under their influence at an impressionable time of life, neither Mr. Smith nor his wife left off teaching when they gave up their school. One of the main secular occupations of the years spent at Keig was the education of their sons and daughters, of other children specially committed to their charge, and of others still whose promise was greater than their resources, and whom they helped with the most generous and thoughtful kindness in the struggle for learning.

Like his neighbour of Auchendoir, and more fortunate than many of his brethren in the Free Church ministry, the minister of Keig and Tough was soon provided with a manse, comfortable and commodious according to the frugal ideas of those days. The routine of his ministerial duties was soon adjusted, and, under the keen and extremely capable guidance of his wife, his domestic concerns were most excellently ordered. The number of the family rapidly increased, and towards the end of the 'fifties quite a large party was assembled in the little house with its neat garden, nestling among the fir trees close by the church of which it was the parsonage, and "looking out smilingly with the dews of its youth still fresh upon it on the lumbering cart-road, its only means of communication with the outside world." The population of the parish, which consisted of agricultural labourers, foresters and saw-millers from Lord Forbes's estate, with a sprinkling of blacksmiths and millwrights, was, as has already been observed, very much scattered, and there was no inhabited house within a quarter of a mile of the manse. The great majority of the congregation had long

distances to come to service, and for the convenience of those who drove, a special stable was attached to the church. This comparative isolation is worth noting, as it threw the manse children much on their own resources for amusement and companionship, and concentrated their interest to a great extent on each other's doings.

Besides Mary Jane, the eldest of them all, who very early in her short life took an active and important part in the household, there were William and George who were a little younger, and three or four little brothers and sisters protectively styled "the children" by their elders. As is often the case in large families, the three eldest, being more or less of an age, kept a sort of inner circle of their own and were on terms of closer intimacy with their parents, but the whole group was closely united and worked together very harmoniously under the easily accepted domination of William and George, whose vast superiority was acknowledged by "the children" with a kind of thankful pride. "My far back recollections," writes one of these admirers, "are all mingled with such scenes as were enacted out of doors in summer and in the nursery in winter, when there were tremendous harangues, chiefly on the superiority of the Lords over the Ladies of Creation, with Willie always leading, while we sat round and admired." In the summer the party gathered at places where there were heaps of stones which seemed enormous to little people, and there "Willie mounted the pulpit and preached vigorously, while George and I were precentors and the rest audience. We were always Roman Catholics and used holy water and made the sign of the Cross with much fervour. I often wonder why we were Roman Catholics, unless we thought there was no harm in making a play of such a creed." The casuistical flavour of this reminiscence is very probably due to a suggestion made by William at the time, and one is reminded of other very early accounts of the critical and



THE REV. WILLIAM PIRIE SMITH, D.D. (1875),
FATHER OF WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH.

From a Sketch by Sir George Reid, R.S.A.

argumentative bent of his mind. A very old friend records that on some occasion in their childhood, he and Smith were building castles with books in a manse parlour. They had been forbidden to use for this purpose the numerous Bibles kept in the room, but the question whether it would be right to incorporate in the structure a copy of Scott's Commentary which also lay ready to hand was less clear. William's decision, after some thought, was that it should not be used because, "though it wasn't exactly the Bible, the Bible was in it."

"I also remember being at Keig when a young child," writes the same narrator,¹ "and from some cause or another being seized with a fit of dulness. William took a serious view of it and led me away to a heap of stones in a quiet part of the wood—where he prayed, with a fulness of confession which made me wonder, that the dull fit (he called it 'melancholia' I remember—a word I scarcely knew) might pass away. I was somewhat ashamed when I saw the serious view he took of it, and was none the worse of the practical suggestion of his mother, who was less sympathetic and proposed as a cure a long sum on the slate."

This gift for the fluent and precise expression of ideas, in which those who knew him in after-life will so vividly recognise their friend, seems to have struck many people even at this early period. His command of general information was very unusual for his age and the sources of much that he then learned remain obscure. Like Mr. Gosse, he seems to have nourished a passion for universal knowledge on a copious study of the *Penny Cyclopædia*, and we know that an early Christmas present from his father, and one by which he greatly profited, was a set of celestial maps. Another gift of which record has been kept was a copy of the Vulgate which he received on his twelfth birthday. What he acquired he rapidly converted into materials for conversation and disquisition. Those who played with him as children dimly recall being

¹ The late Rev. W. A. Gray of Elgin.

interested and even startled by his notions on such things as the function of the imagination, mediæval and occult science, and other equally unusual subjects. A good instance of this kind is given by one¹ who knew him at a somewhat later stage in his mental development and who writes:

“ One of the things which impressed me in W. R. Smith was his power of applying old sayings to modern instances. The one that remains with me is the saying of Heraclitus, *πάντα ῥεῖ*; ‘all things are in flux’ suited William’s scientific tastes, and he would talk to us endlessly in illustration of it—how the clouds came over Bennachie (‘Banff Bailies’ they were called in Keig), how they filled the streams that fed the Don, which flowed to the sea; how the mist rose from the German Ocean and again formed the clouds and the cycle went on. Then it would be some illustration of the plants capturing air, water, and salts, and with the sun’s help building themselves up by vital alchemy into complex substances, then the farmers’ cows eating the plants and a new incarnation beginning; then the cows being killed and becoming part of ourselves by the Sunday dinner of beef . . . then man dying and returning to the earth, and the cycle again beginning as the microbes of decay disintegrated the dead, and all returned to water and salts and air, to be again taken up by the grass and clover. All flesh is grass, *πάντα ῥεῖ*; nothing is lost; all things flow on. Willie was most impressive in that kind of talk and delighted greatly in it. We boys listened in stillness as his quick mind scoured over endless fields of illustration of this kind . . . and enforced upon our boyish minds the impermanency of the Cosmos and the wisdom of the old philosophers of Greece for whom he had a great admiration at that time. . . . I dreamt whole nights over *πάντα ῥεῖ* and evolution after my return from the Manse of Keig.”

Talk indeed, and talk which perhaps on occasion tended to monologue, was the passion of his youth as of his age. It is perhaps not too much to say that it was always his most certain source of recreation. “Nothing pleased

¹ The Rev. Dr. W. S. Bruce, minister of Banff, to whose reminiscences this account is much indebted,

him more," his father writes of the early days, "than a lively conversation on any subject of interest . . . speaking was to him a real refreshment, and it was a medicine to which we often had recourse when he was out of sorts or tired with study, and we generally found it most efficacious." On the other hand nothing more wearied him than when company came and he had to sit silent and listen to the talk of others, for in those days children were not allowed to take the leading part in conversation. It was on one of these occasions when a reverend colleague had stayed long and, after having prosed mercilessly, had at length departed, that Willie is said to have drawn his stool up to his father's knee and to have said, looking up with the air of one whose endurance is at an end, "And now, papa, let us have some *rational* conversation!"

"Rational conversation" and other pursuits of a literary and intellectual character were much in favour at the manse. William is said to have had no great taste for fiction in his early days and inclined rather to solid, if miscellaneous, general reading. It is pleasant to find, however, that he was brought up on the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and that he found much enjoyment in impersonating his favourite characters. The *Pilgrim's Progress*, as might be expected, came in his way very early, and Giant Despair (perhaps the most telling figure in this or any other allegory) seems to have profoundly stirred his childish imagination. Anything like a purely aesthetic or sensuous appreciation of beautiful and pleasant things was at this time absent from his life; everything came to him through the intellect. Thus he did not share the musical aptitudes shown by George and Mary Jane, and never throughout his life developed a taste for music in the ordinary sense; but from the first he was determined to have exact and accurate information on this subject as on all others, and somewhat unreasonably used to be angry with people who "were interested in a mild way"

without performing the fundamental brain-work necessary for an understanding of harmony and theory. His fine taste in the graphic arts came, like his critical appreciation of claret and tobacco, with the enlarged opportunities of his later life. Even at Keig, however, "he used to copy and copy well, in pen and ink, engravings which took his fancy, chiefly from an illustrated edition of Shakespeare"; his first patronage of the arts was to commission a series of sketches on the subject of the contest of Ajax and Ulysses for the vacant armour of Achilles, to be executed by a friend who boarded for a time in his father's house. This interest in poetry and painting must not be ascribed to any particular aesthetic impulse accidentally curbed by an austere environment; it was merely part of his universal curiosity. "If you left Smith for five minutes with a plasterer or a baker or any sort of workman, you would find that tradesman explaining to him something in connection with his trade, and often he worked up a subject of investigation and inquiry that way."

Through all this ran a thread of criticism, a sort of continuous instinct for argument. An inquiry started in his mind had to be provided with an answer, and the answer had to be proved correct before he was at rest. It is hardly too much to say that the controversies of his later life were rehearsed in miniature at Keig. It has been already mentioned that his father, like many learned country clergymen, supplemented his narrow resources (his income as a Free Church minister was less than £150) by taking private pupils whom he educated with his own children. As many as four boarders would sometimes be in residence at the manse at the same time, and with these, as well as with his own brothers and sisters, and indeed also with his parents, William maintained relations in which constant friendship—and deference where deference was due—was tempered by a critical examination of any proposition tendered for

his acceptance. He was ready in appropriate instances to maintain his own view with some vehemence, and it is even recorded that on one occasion he went so far as to thrash another boy for an obstinate mispronunciation of the word Herodotus. This, however, was an exception to his habitually peaceful method of pursuing truth. One of the favourite indoor amusements was the production of small domestic periodicals, which were called by fanciful names and existed mainly for the purpose of mutual criticism. The tiny file of at least one of these, the *Dandelion*, which possessed a circulation of two copies, is extant, and it contains many severe reflections on a contemporary, named the *Iris*, which had degraded itself by the publication of popular fiction. One satirical composition in octosyllabic couplets entitled "The Fate of Iris" is signed W. R. S. and, in a juvenile manner, is not contemptible. From the same hand in the next issue of the *Iris* appeared a spirited rejoinder to the *Dandelion*. But it was chiefly as a literary critic that Smith made his first essays in authorship. The *Weekly Review* was another domestic journal of even earlier date; it appeared in the format of the old *Spectator*, and at times achieved a most diverting parody of the *Saturday* in its severest days. To it he contributed a series of criticisms of works designed for evangelical youth, one of which, named *Ministering Children*, a book of some celebrity in those days, he dismissed with a devastating epigram to the effect that "it was more childish than childhood itself."

As he grew older, and the embargo on childish interventions in general talk was withdrawn, he began to apply his gifts for argument to more serious topics. The habit of free inquiry was much encouraged by his father. One of Mr. Pirie Smith's favourite maxims was levelled against the inconsiderate acceptance of partial views on important matters, "partialisms" as he was accustomed to call them. William, to whom this teaching was most congenial, very early gave proof of an almost reckless

intellectual honesty. Dr. Bruce records several curious instances.

“On the occasion of my first visit,” he writes, “Dr. Smith was lecturing on the Epistle to the Romans, and, during the days when he was preparing his lectures, he would discuss with his sons the Greek text of St. Paul. Even then William—he was perhaps fifteen at the time—showed a wonderful knowledge of Biblical literature, and seemed to have the argument of that grand compendium of Pauline theology at his fingers’ ends. The father we regarded as a dictionary of learning, and the *ne plus ultra* of theology, but when Willie began to talk in his fluent way on ‘the universality of sin and grace,’ it gave us boys a queer turn. He rather alarmed us by his criticism of some of the inspired writings, and we thought him somewhat irreverent, as did his mother. Whatever was extraordinary or miraculous he was prone to criticise, and we often heard from him the Horatian maxim, sage enough in its way, *nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus*.

“On Sunday afternoons the manse dining-room was converted into a household Bible class and something approaching the old catechising took place. Dr. Smith greatly delighted in this, for he was a born teacher. We were asked to take notes of his lecture in church and were expected to give the heads of it in the Bible class. . . . The juniors dreaded the questioning, but the elder brother would readily and with the greatest ease give the substance of the whole of his father’s discourse, and I remember him—to my great surprise—venturing to point out one side of truth to which the preacher had not found time to refer. This was a *quid pro quo*, which, remembering the paternal counsel on ‘partialisms,’ we rather enjoyed, and of which Willie was rather proud. It shocked us, but it evidently pleased Dr. Smith, and the Bible class ended in a colloquy in which these two interlocutors had it all to themselves.”

This train of memories recalls an aspect of life at Keig which might well be overlooked among the pleasing details of a picture of intellectual and theological liberalism. It must not be forgotten that the Free Church of Keig was a stronghold of Evangelical principles, in which the way of

life inculcated by the Disruption worthies was rigidly put in practice. The official views of the family on all matters of conduct, on the minor and the major morals, were exceedingly precise. Even the *Dandelion* pauses for a moment from its light-hearted flyting of the *Iris* to deplore the fact that a child in the village of Alford had been seen by the editor to purchase, unproved, a halfpenny pack of cards in a druggist's shop. The household devotions were of course performed with exemplary regularity, the day beginning and ending with an extended service of family worship, at which all present in order of seniority read a verse of the Holy Scriptures and joined in the singing of a Psalm. The exercise terminated with a prayer offered by the head of the family, or, in his absence, by the mother. Sunday, all the witnesses agree, was a heavy day—"a very serious affair for children." They were not allowed to go outside the limits of the manse garden except to church, and though a robust intellect like William's might enjoy the evolutions of the spiritual palaestra, it was severe work for the ordinary child to be taken through the whole of the Shorter Catechism every three weeks as was the rule at Keig.

Even in the life of everyday there was, as might be expected, a touch of austerity, due partly to the narrowness of the family resources. We find Mary Jane on one occasion gallantly proposing to suppress sugar in the family tea (not an uncommon piece of self-denial in the Free Church circles of that time) by way of helping to meet an unexpected deficiency in the Equal Dividend; and the children were kept at their gardening and at certain other more or less recreative occupations almost as strictly as at their more serious studies. Mrs. Smith, a model of concentrated though wholly undemonstrative motherly concern, was the dominating influence in all the material affairs of the family. She devoted herself so entirely to her duties, and ruled so unobtrusively, that

unobservant persons often failed to appreciate the charm of her character and intellect. Her only relaxations were reading, walks, and conversation with her eldest son and her husband, who relied so absolutely on her judgment and her care that even her shortest absences caused him to be restless and depressed. The great event in her day was tea, at which she would lay aside for a little her incessant labours for the good of her house and its inmates, and would preside with great grace and geniality over a full muster of the party in residence. It was then that she and Mary Jane would bring out the results of their private readings in the poets, and that Willie, in the midst of one of his tyrannical monologues, would sometimes find himself quietly checked by an intelligence as resolute though not so impetuous as his own.

It is natural to dwell at some length on the intellectual habits of a house where learning was so untiringly and so successfully pursued, but it would be a misleading description indeed which did not include some detail of the lighter side of these admirably regulated existences. Whatever were the restraints imposed on William and his brothers by a severe religious and moral tradition and a certain narrowness of material circumstances, there can be no doubt that the physical life that they led was pleasant, health-giving, and thoroughly enviable. The immediate surroundings of the house were charming, and the children may almost be said to have grown up among the beautiful sights and sounds which were regarded by Plato as the most valuable influences in the culture of young souls. The boundary of the garden (beyond which lived the London Correspondent of the *Dandelion*) enclosed a place of delight in which grew all sorts of things which the children themselves had a hand in cultivating. There were snowdrops in early spring, followed by crocuses, jonquils, hepaticas, and primulas. Later came lilacs and sweet old-fashioned roses, and on either side of the front door there was a sweet-brier.

There was a shrubbery too, which was full of nests and loud with birds in the singing season, and once a family of squirrels was reared in a juniper tree. There was a house in the wood named "Savage Den" where in summer there were great doings of Indians and pirates, anticipating in real life some of the most thrilling episodes of *Peter Pan*. In winter there was road-making in the snow, half-serious work, for many paths were needed after a heavy fall, and the delights of skating and of "elaborate and competitive snow men." And in all weathers and at all seasons there were long walks and ascents of the surrounding hills, conducted chiefly by William, who was less fond than the others of the trout-fishing which in that golden age was to be had without asking in almost any river in Scotland. Cricket there was also, though entirely of the "domestic" variety, and swimming in a fine pool of the Don near Castle Forbes. Longer expeditions were undertaken to the sea-coast at the appropriate season, and we hear on one occasion of tuition in Geddes's Greek Grammar being given at Keig in return for instruction in the art of diving at Stonehaven.

Those who knew Smith only in his later years when he was worn with controversies and with illness, and when his physical energy expressed itself chiefly in a sort of restlessness, will hardly be prepared for so robust a picture. Yet we are assured by those who were there to see, that in his youth he was the leader in all the most active enterprises of his companions. "He ran well, jumped well, was a wonderful youth at vaulting over gates, and generally was an effective performer, although his style was not pretty."

Meanwhile, amid all these various occupations a serious purpose was being steadily pursued. William and George were undergoing a strict preparation, directed by their father, for their academic career at the University of Aberdeen. It appears to have been foreseen how

entirely the work of the University would monopolise their time and how severely it would strain their energies; and for this as well as other reasons it was decided not to begin scholarly study with William until George, who was fifteen or sixteen months his junior, should be able to join him. This arrangement was carried out, and the association and close alliance of the brothers was broken only by the death of the younger.

“All their education,” says the father, “was got at home, and mostly by their own exertions. I had my ministerial duties to attend to, and was necessarily a good deal away from home among my people, and much engaged in preparation for Sabbath work. Their lessons were regularly prescribed, and then the boys were left to their own resources, and they uniformly did their best, just as well in my absence as when I was present, accomplishing all that could reasonably be expected. I am not sure that this method would answer in every case; but certainly in their case it trained them to habits of self-reliance, drew out their latent powers, accustomed them to think for themselves, and gave them the pleasure that springs from the overcoming of difficulties. Although their studies were arranged to suit the requirements of the entrance examination at the University of Aberdeen, there was no cramming. No cribs were allowed. There was no such thing in the house, and so it came to pass that a passage from a Latin or Greek author which they had never seen had no special terrors for them, and presented only difficulties such as they had already encountered and often surmounted.”

School hours for the boarders and the family were from half-past eight until midday, and work was resumed for a shorter period in the afternoon. The pupils were, however, very early astir, and worked and played by a clock set half an hour in advance of that used by their parents. On a winter morning they had a custom of conning their lessons (prepared the night before) by the smoky light of “rosetty sticks,” in the preparation of which the boys delighted; and before their parents came

in they would fall to a jumping match in the passages to warm their feet, which were chilled by these early studies. In summer there were pleasanter doings. The boys in the attics would be awakened by the maid as she went out to feed the poultry and bring in wood for the fire, and soon afterwards they would be up and out in the fir wood which stretched up the slopes of Cairnwilliam for miles. "The air," writes Dr. Bruce, who participated in these excursions, "was full of a delicious resinous smell, and with the sough of the wind in the grand Scotch firs in our ears we would walk for an hour and a half."

Much informal work was done on these occasions, especially in the way of committing to memory long passages of the Greek and Latin poets—an excellent practice, now unfortunately much disused. When it was time to return, William, shrill with excitement in the morning air, would pour a characteristic stream of breathless improvisation into his companions' ears, or would yield with them to the physical promptings produced by early rising and a youthful appetite. "He liked a good race, and we would all set out for the manse at full speed over the fir needles and soft heather and arrive very hungry for breakfast. Or the race would be varied by a good pull at the big cross-cut saw upon the fine timber which the farmers carted to the manse, and which furnished splendid logs for the hearth and the kitchen."

Breakfast and family worship, as above described, being concluded, the labours of the day commenced forthwith. Dr. Smith superintended the boys in the study, and Mrs. Smith the girls in another room.

Other hands have described from the pupil's point of view the routine of these labours, which began with arithmetic and mathematics. Dr. Smith presided in his large leather arm-chair, in the back of which he kept a formidable black tawse—a terror to evil-doers, which, we are told, was not infrequently used, though specific

instances are not given. Having fortified himself with a pinch of snuff, and having told each boy what he had to do for the next hour, the Doctor settled down to a chapter of Alford's Greek Testament, which completed, he, like his pupils, occupied himself with algebraical calculations on a slate until the post came in. Meanwhile the scholars came at intervals to their teacher with the results of their work, or consulted him in any difficulty they had encountered. Here Dr. Smith gave a specimen of his method, for in answer to the puzzled questioner he simply said, "Go on," and by a kind of tactful bullying, and a dexterous series of almost brutal appeals to the *amour propre* of the student, he literally coerced the unbraced intellect into a triumph over apparently hopeless obstacles.

After an hour or more of this drastic struggle with the most abstract of the sciences the rest of the morning was devoted to the classics, in which the minister was equally competent. Prose composition in both the languages alternated with the reading of authors, and the most advanced pupils, including of course his sons, seem even to have made some progress in Latin and Greek verses. Both William and George showed some proficiency in this accomplishment, which is not much practised in Scotland, at an early period in their University career.

William's vitality asserted itself vigorously under the restraints of the schoolroom. He would constantly shift his attitude, and after a very few minutes of sitting would be found to be up and kneeling on his chair. Gently checked for this, he would resume the conventional posture, but again his restless movements would recommence. "He used to say he had an extra joint in his back and couldn't sit straight." No doubt, though he was an eager scholar, the physical relief was even greater for him than for the others when the morning lessons were over and the time came for another spell of fresh air and an interesting variation in the educative process.

At noon Dr. Smith was ready for a walk in which he was joined by his pupils.

“It was quite understood to be a part of the education of the manse, but it was more a favour conferred than a task allotted. As a rule it would be through the fir wood or else up the hill to the heather and the bracing air. . . . Often out of the minister’s pocket would come a volume for our delectation—probably Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, just a few months arrived, and purchased at the cost of no little self-denial, or it might be the small first edition of the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*—from which the Doctor, while walking with his fast short step, would read us some noble stanzas. At another time it would be fragments of the Poet Laureate in the grand style, such as *Oenone* or *Ulysses*, or the picture gallery of the *Palace of Art*, or some fine lines of Pope or Dryden, or choice passages from Shakespeare, which he would often compare with some of the far-resounding lines of the *Iliad*, much of which he had by heart.”¹

Mr. Pirie Smith seems indeed to have been widely read and a true lover of literature, although, like his son, of a strongly critical turn. He had, at any rate, the gift of inspiring others, and these readings in the open air deeply stirred the imaginations of his youthful audience.

“I remember the very spots on Cairnwilliam,” writes Dr. Bruce, “where first I heard some of these poetic passages, and still seem to see the dear old gentleman’s glowing face and glistening eye, and then note the quick footsteps that followed the extract as Willie and he set themselves to further discussion and criticism, and probably differed in their estimate. . . .

“Prose too had its place in these rambles and talks; stories about Gibbon, Emerson, Carlyle, and Dr. Chalmers would vary the racy chat of the twelve to one o’clock walks. Sometimes, however,—to my great delight and Willie’s too—Dr. Smith would stop at a point on the hill where the huge rocks abutted on the path, and would give us a very graphic description of rock formation, and of the chemical action of percolating water on the stone. We were shown how the Aberdeen granite was clearly of

¹ Dr. Bruce, as before.

igneous origin, and how big Bennachie across the Don had been consolidated in the cooling of the earth's crust and then shot upwards into its long camel's back and various 'taps' which had become more sharply defined by subsequent denudation. . . . We could scarcely believe all that was said, and hardly knew that we were learning modern science, so pleasantly and jocularly was much of it done. We joked at the tea-table about Bennachie's back, and would take liberties with the hard crusts of loaf to show the girls how, with a little squeezing, it was the easiest possible thing to produce miniature Bennachie's and camels' backs and thus make room for descending Dons and their tributary streams."

The walk over, the more systematic portion of the day's education was finished. Work was resumed for a time after the early manse dinner, but was chiefly of the nature of revision of past lessons or preparation for future ones. Dr. Smith himself was not usually present on these occasions, being at such times much occupied about his parish, and a great deal of the afternoon was spent by the boys in their outdoor pursuits, or, if the weather was wet or wintry, in composing articles for the *Weekly Review*, the *Iris* or the *Dandelion*, as the case might be, or in some other of the occupations already enumerated. Towards the end of the day, which closed by the children's clock at 9 P.M., came a short period during which the whole household, servants excepted, sat round or near the big table and read or worked at any quiet occupation—sewing, knitting, drawing, writing, or making any little thing each had a mind to, but on no account speaking. This time of silence and reflection, as may well be supposed, was felt as a severe restriction by some members of the party, but it had its disciplinary value. A second service of family worship, with the singing of a Psalm, led by the head of the house, immediately preceded the dispersion of the company.

The patriarchal dignity and simplicity of this household could not fail to impress all who knew Dr. Smith and his

wife ; but some of his friends whom he had left behind him in Aberdeen hardly realised the unusual efficiency of the educational system pursued at Keig, or the exceptional aptitude of the pupils. They represented that the boys as students were likely to be placed in competition with the products of celebrated schools, and that with their home-made acquirements they would not stand a fair chance. Dr. Smith was for a moment impressed, and almost yielded to the entreaties of his friend the headmaster of the Old Aberdeen Gymnasium,¹ that William and George might be placed under his care for a time to complete their preparations for entering college. The boys themselves, however, seconded their father's natural desire to keep them at home, and in 1860, a year before it was intended that they should leave Keig, a preliminary trial in the Bursary Competition proved that their confidence had not been excessive. Twelve months later they competed again, and William emerged at the head of the list with a bursary of £30 a year, while his brother took a high place and obtained a scholarship of £10, afterwards increased, in recognition of his eminent attainments. The manse had triumphed over the keenest and most formidable outside competition in the persons of the two brothers who entered the University, the youngest, and already not the least distinguished, undergraduates of their year.

¹ The Rev. Alexander Anderson, D.D., a teacher of high ability in his day. The Council of the Viceroy of India is said to have recently contained no less than three of his pupils.

CHAPTER II

AT THE UNIVERSITY (1861-1866)

THE two brothers, accompanied by their sister Mary Jane, took up their residence at 9 Mount Street in Aberdeen towards the end of 1861, William being now fifteen years of age and George not yet fourteen. Mary Jane, the close ally and adviser of her brothers, was their elder by a little ; like them, she was entering on a more advanced stage of her education, and intended to study music and other polite arts, making progress at the same time in other subjects with the assistance and supervision of the two students. For them the prospect was more exciting ; they were for the first time to make a sustained trial of the schooling described in the last chapter and to have their first continuous experience of the struggle for success in life. Only one of the three was destined to survive the five strenuous years that followed, but the two who disappeared promised at least no less brilliantly than he. George's brief and pathetic period of academic glory will be related in the course of this chapter. Mary Jane, necessarily a more shadowy figure, has left some faint traces in the family history, little scraps of writing in what used to be called an Italian hand, which express a bright, affectionate, and practical temper, eminently suited to the position she occupied in the little establishment of which she constituted herself the mother.

The correspondence which passed at very frequent intervals between the party at Mount Street and the



MRS. SMITH, MOTHER OF WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (*page 24*).

From a Photograph.

parents at Keig is the basis of the history of this period. The notes are very numerous and deal with many details : every incident of university or ecclesiastical life of the smallest interest or importance was communicated either to the father or to the mother by the children with whom they lived on terms of such mutual intimacy and comprehension. There are some observations on public affairs, and a little decorously satirical gossip about friends and neighbours. Mary Jane's postscripts deal chiefly with practical domestic concerns and with the already fluctuating health of her brothers.

The first extant letter of this correspondence is written by Smith himself. He deals characteristically with provisional arrangements for attendance at divine service, and there occurs in it a no less characteristic criticism of the sermon—the same, he believes, that the preacher had delivered two years before at Keig. "I did not like him very well," is the severe conclusion, "he is too much of a composer and too little of a preacher."

This letter is important in the history of the writer, for it is dated as written two days before George and he definitely entered upon their university life, the scene of which, for the better understanding of his intellectual history, it behoves us to set as vividly as possible.

The University of Aberdeen comprises two colleges, King's and Marischal, each of which was originally a separate foundation, with its own degrees and professors. The ancient institution founded by Bishop Elphinstone under the pontifical auspices of Alexander Borgia, and the college of the Earls Marischal which sheltered the learned *enfance* of Dugald Dalgetty, had been united in 1860. By the time that Smith became a student the bitterness of the controversy which we are told attended the "fusion" had been already forgotten in the convenience and economy which were its natural result. There is no trace in the Smith

papers of any surviving antagonism, and for undergraduates of his standing a far more important event was the appointment of Alexander Bain (in the very year of the union) to the chair of Rhetoric and Logic in the united university.

Bain's rhetoric class, of which many amusing reminiscences have been written, together with the less advanced classes in the two learned languages, was then prescribed as the course of the Bajans or freshmen during their first year of study. The Semis or second-year men proceeded to more advanced classical instruction and began mathematics and science. In their final two years, as Tertians and Magistrands, the undergraduates pursued the exact sciences still further, and, while in the third session they again followed the instruction of Mr. Bain in the class of Logic and Psychology, in the fourth they made acquaintance for the first time with the Professor of Moral Philosophy.

Both at the beginning and towards the end, therefore, of his undergraduate days, Smith was to come into contact with this remarkable but antagonistic product of his own race, who was the means of perpetuating for another generation in Scotland the national tradition in empirical metaphysics and anti-mystical utilitarianism. Smith was probably the most brilliant pupil Bain ever had; that was indeed the professor's own expressed opinion. But it was inevitable that from the outset he should be the very reverse of a disciple. The man whom Free Presbyteries were still denouncing as an atheist could scarcely find easy access to minds which had been formed in the orthodox atmosphere of a Free Church manse; and doubtless in the course of their studies at Keig both William and George had been specially warned and fortified against the potential dangers of his ideas. But after all there was nothing in Bain's teaching, penetrating and indelible (some would then have said insidious) as it was, which was likely to prove dangerous to a religious

temperament. He has recorded in his curiously impassive autobiography by what gradual and relentless steps he forsook the consolations of religion and the comforts of enthusiasm. This was not the manner of man to possess the art of making the emotional appeal which is almost necessary in the teacher who is to stir the enthusiasm and command the affection of young men. His pupils heard with awe of his fame in the world of philosophy and letters; they realised vaguely the superiority of his intellect and the impressiveness of that determined attachment to the more quantitative aspects of truth which was the most distinguished feature of his life; but it was not till long after he had ceased to be a teacher that he attained the veneration richly earned by a life-time of intellectual honesty. The philosophic antagonism of Bain and Smith was always qualified by personal regard and mutual respect; but it may be said to have increased rather than diminished with years, and, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, it was destined to come to issue in a public debate.

Bain stands for so much that is characteristic in the intellectual life of the rather turbulent republic of letters which we are describing, that no apology is needed for dwelling at some length on his personality, which was in some ways almost a caricature of a racial type. As a philosopher his influence was, as we have seen, profound though unacknowledged. As the successful architect of difficult fortunes, as an almost unique product of honourable self-help and sheer intellectual capacity, he had a more immediate claim on the interest and admiration of the audience he was addressing. They too were engaged in a struggle for existence, in many cases no less severe than his had been, and for them also the business of getting educated was often a grim prelude to the battle of life. Behind all the superficial boisterousness of which we shall have to take account—the rending of Bajans' gowns, the snowballing, the solemnly planned impertin-

ences, the complicated pranks of undergraduates many of whom were no older than junior public school boys of to-day—there is an undertone of serious rivalry almost startling, almost unwholesome in such young people, something which falls little short of ferocity in the contest for academic distinction.

And these emotions were not confined to the rising generation; their elders joined, at least in spirit, in the conflict, cheered on the combatants, and took and retained the keenest interest in the fortunes of the fray. In Mr. Pirie Smith's memorandum on his son's life, notice is taken of a statement that the late Professor Minto, who was a member of the class of 1861-62, was, on the whole, more pre-eminent than Smith in one particular branch of study. A careful statistical abstract is given of prizes and class places with a view to bring out the true facts. Averages are worked out in the venerable minister's own hand; he is at pains to show that even this faint depreciation of his son's academic prowess is unjustified. In the letters both from George and William where Minto and other contemporaries are mentioned the note of rivalry is insistent; the pretensions of competitors are gravely weighed and discounted, and the results of forthcoming ordeals anxiously forecasted.

The observer who is familiar with the peculiar physical and intellectual charm of life at more southern and more opulent seats of learning, or who is an idealist in educational matters, may find his interest in these austere undergraduate lives qualified by a grain of repulsion. It is not perhaps out of place to recall that Smith's student days coincided with the dawn of the many-coloured liberalism of Oxford, the beginning of the great days of Balliol, the revival of Hegel, and the rise of a more spiritual philosophy than Bain's. In those days Aberdeen had eyes only for Cambridge, where there was an unexampled gathering of great men in the world of science, and where year by year Aberdonians were winning their way to the

highest wranglerships. That the performances of the wranglers appear to interest their kinsfolk more than the contemporary achievements of Cayley and Clerk Maxwell, who himself had only recently left his chair at Marischal College, was natural enough. Besides local patriotism, there was every excuse for their preoccupation with the outward and visible signs of a culture the acquisition of which was due to the exercise of heroic virtues. The whole atmosphere, moral and intellectual, had a recognisable national flavour, a distinction and an originality of its own; it possessed, as it still possesses, the merits which called forth Carlyle's celebrated eulogy of the Keiths and their foundation; and how thoroughly consistent it was with the loftiest ideals of scholarship and culture the progress of this history will show.

The correspondence develops the impressions produced on the brothers by the experiences of their Bajan year. It was not long before they gave a sample of the quality of their classical attainments as they progressed through the *Cyropaedia* and the Epodes under the guidance of Sir William Geddes, of Professor Maclure (affectionately named "Cockie" by his pupils), and of Mr. Salmond, who subsequently became an important figure in Smith's ecclesiastical life. Mary Jane, the admiring sister, writes, a few weeks after the session began:—

"Dr. Maclure called Dod up after the class to-day and asked if he was Will's brother. He said he did not know, but guessed it both from the similarity of voice and from the distinguished appearance Dod had made in the class that day."

And again a little later:—

"Will was up at Geddes to-day; he was not once interrupted, and the class, which had been very quiet during his performance, ruffed¹ at the end."

In Bain's class we hear that the opening exercises were returned marked *optime*, and there are one or two

¹ *Anglice*, applauded.

glimpses of the professor's perverse originality in dealing with literary subjects of which he had no imaginative appreciation. It is disappointing not to find some more personal impression of him. Contemporary portraits and contemporary observations bring his sharp face and keen eyes, the scanty carefully adjusted hair, the dry manner very vividly before us. Generations who never saw him in the flesh are familiar with the snarl showing the long yellow teeth when he scored a point off a metaphysical adversary or reproved a stupid or impertinent student, and with the twist in his chair and the twitch of his gown as he sat lecturing. William's only contribution to the historical portrait of Bain is the preservation of a characteristic dictum, which no doubt occurs in his *English Grammar*, to the effect that there is some ground for thinking that "me" is originally a nominative and that therefore it is "more English and more natural" to say, "It is me," than to say, "It is I."

Sir William Geddes, whose celebrity is not forgotten, and whose stately presence is so recent a memory in Scotland, makes as yet no very frequent appearances in the letters. We learn incidentally that he was then reading the *Iliad* with his class at the rate of sixty lines a day, and his kindly interest in the Smith family is manifest from the beginning. He was one of their earliest visitors at Mount Street, and was always punctual in inquiring after the health of George and William and their parents.

It was, however, "Cockie" Maclure, contrasting in every respect very sharply with the Olympian air and already venerable aspect of Professor Geddes, who, from a human point of view, seems to have occupied most of the attention of George and William during their first session at the University. The less respectful of his pupils declared that he was better at declaiming the speeches of Lord Brougham or the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, with which he would upon occasion relieve the tedium of a lecture, than at unravelling the intricacies of the *Pro Cluentio*

or the Philippics. He was then passing through a series of sharp collisions with his class, the history of one of which is recounted at length in our correspondence and throws some light on the manners and customs of Smith's contemporaries.

The collective high spirits of a company of such exceedingly young men, most of whom were in fact not men at all, but boys half through their teens, frequently issued in physical ebullitions more or less rough and more or less silly. One of George's earliest letters records that—

“ . . . as the students return from college they always shut the shutters of the houses (which in many of the houses in the old town are on the outside of the windows), ring the bells, and knock with the knockers. But yesterday an old woman came out with a pail of water, which she threw on any one who ventured to come near and thus kept one of the shutters from being closed, and to-day she had them taken off. To-day the student who sits beside me got his gown torn to pieces in the class without his knowledge by the two boys behind him. When I perceived it I told him, for which I received a kick in the back from one of the operators.”

This was the audience whose hostility Dr. Maclure, owing to some circumstances the exact nature of which remains obscure, had been so unfortunate as to excite. The two following letters respectively from George and William are characteristic of the eager style of the correspondence and give an interesting, though no doubt rather prejudiced, account of a stirring passage of academic history:—

9 MOUNT STREET, *January 31, 1862.*

MY DEAR PAPA—Yesterday Maclure read out a number of names of persons who were to stay and speak to him. These were then called in one by one into the presence of all the professors and strictly examined concerning Thomson's case. The examination lasted from a quarter past one to about a quarter past three, when they at length extracted from one of them a confession of Thomson's guilt by threatening to take his bursary from him if he

did not tell. When the professors came out the students who had been waiting to hear the report set upon Maclure and chased him along the King Street Road and up Union Street to his house in Rubislaw Terrace, pelting him with stones. Maclure was so much frightened that he had a policeman watching his house all night. So to-day in Maclure's class they kept a constant noise, notwithstanding that he cried "Silence!" and sat down without doing anything for a good while. The Semis also have come to a resolution about the Adam Johnston case, "To give Cockie no rest to his body or peace to his bones till he learns to behave himself"! Maclure himself says that there are only two gentlemen in the Semi class, viz. David Caul and Geo. Thomson the Dean of Guild's son. To-day Bain fined three fellows half a crown each, so that this has been a very memorable week. Mary Jane and Willie are both writing to Mr. Burn to-night. We are all in good health. Grandmother is a good deal better to-day. I can now say 692 lines of the *Medea*. We are going to begin Virgil soon, so if you please send in Bryce. We have two German Virgils also (in the book press upstairs, I think), and if you please send them in too.—I remain, your afft. son,

GEO. MICHIE SMITH.

9 MOUNT STREET, *February 3, 1862.*

MY DEAR PAPA—As the greater part of this letter must be on college matters, I think I had better begin with them.

George told you of Thomson's affair so far as it had gone at the time he wrote. You will remember that he had got no open trial, the examination of the witnesses being quite secret. Well, he has got no open trial at all, but on Friday was cited before the Senatus at 8 o'clock. Before this time Thomson's father came into town (having, I believe, been written to by Prof. Geddes) and tried all he could do to soften Maclure, who, however, was inflexible, and openly avowed an intention, or at least a desire, to have Thomson expelled. Thomson himself went to see Geddes, who expressed himself very sorry for him, mentioned that he had especially noticed Thomson's attention in his class, promised to do his best for him, but said that as a breach of college discipline the offence would have to receive some punishment. In the Senatus Thomson was simply asked what he had to say for himself. He confessed to throwing the stick, but denies (and, I am sure, truly)

any intention of hitting Maclure, apologised, and promised better behaviour in future. He was then removed and the Senatus, after a violent dispute, as was evident from the sounds proceeding from the room, pronounced on him the sentence of rustication for the rest of the session, with the loss of his bursary for this year! But this is not all, for on Saturday, four of the ringleaders in the procession that hooted Maclure were cited and sentenced thus. George Geddes, who has always been, though undiscovered, at the head of every row, and Mackenzie, were each sentenced to rustication *sine die*, which in George Geddes's case was, I believe, accompanied with loss of bursary. Stewart Buyers and Hugh M'Pherson were each rusticated for this session. At the same meeting Thomson's punishment was mitigated. He is only to lose half of a year's bursary, and if he behaves, which he is sure to do, will be allowed to enter the second class next session. In addition to this, George Gordon was at Bain's instigation fined a guinea, because some door (I cannot tell distinctly about this, as it happened, I think, in the lower section) had been broken and Gordon was seen giving it a kick. Fuller wished the fine to be only 5s., but Bain carried his motion.

In these proceedings the Principal, Martin, Bain, and Maclure took the lead. Thomson (Nat. Phil.) took the chief part in the mere investigations, but, with Geddes and Fuller, was for mild measures.

There is great indignation among the students, of course, and I believe the public at large see that Maclure himself is really the cause of all this. The other four were really troublesome in the class, but Thomson's case, as the more moderate professors saw, is merely the result of Maclure's tyrannical oppressions. I believe you were told before how Maclure by repeated injustices goaded him to desperation. Had it not been for Maclure, we would not have had *the least* disturbance. We were at dinner at the Williamson's on Saturday and Mary Jane got a *Cornhill* to take home and read. Granny is almost better; indeed, I may say, quite well.

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Basket arrived on Saturday all right. The flowers were beautiful. We had a lecture from Geddes on Homer to-day. Our first lesson, twelve lines of the fourth book, is to be said on Thursday.—I am, your affectionate son,

W. R. SMITH.

The two brothers soon became much occupied with many concerns besides the pursuit of pre-eminence in learning. It became a question how best to distribute their spare time.

“The principle,” writes their father, “upon which they were instructed to work, and on which they did work, was this: their class lessons were their first care; whatever they had to do was done in concert and done thoroughly. Their work was never in arrear, and the acquisitions of the week were made sure by revisal at the week’s end. Working on this system they secured sufficient time for recreation and never had occasion to encroach upon the hours necessary for sleep, never sat up till midnight, and generally had at least seven and often as much as eight hours in bed. Moreover, no part of the Sabbath day was ever spent in study. They often had an evening to spend with kind friends in town, and frequently indulged in long walks and talks with the few intimate acquaintances they had made among their fellow-students.”

Mr. Pirie Smith as an ex-schoolmaster of eminence had many friends and connections in Aberdeen, so that in addition to the hospitality of relatives his children received many attentions. There is an early description of a breakfast party at a reverend Free Church professor’s house, where the host “was very kind, though he laboured under some disadvantage in having to speak to us all in turn, and dismissed us about half-past ten with the formula, ‘I am glad to have seen you.’” Many names are mentioned of givers of dinners and tea-parties, which became so numerous that both brothers complain that they have not time for such frequent dissipations, and George petitions for an “interdict prohibiting us to accept any invitations, for we have not had a whole Saturday for a long time, and when Bain gives us a very long exercise we need almost all our time.”

To this period belong some quaintly severe criticisms on sermons, among which George’s strictures on an Established Church divine’s discourse, as “a dry address

about God's omnipotence and other theoretical points," deserve to be remembered. More important, however, as an epoch in the present history is the record of William's first essays as an orator. He begins to attend the college debating society very early in his career, and mentions a debate on the subject, "Is Phrenology a Science?" at which "two or three speakers whose voices were strong enough to be heard all through the room were listened to quietly." It is mentioned that the motion was negatived, and that many lamps were smashed by the debaters on their way home. It does not appear that Smith spoke on this occasion, and it is pretty clear that his first speech was made some weeks later when he maintained the merits of Republicanism as against the Monarchical principle of government. The admiring George writes that "his speech was confessed by almost all to have been the best delivered that night. At any rate, in the absence of the leader of his party he was chosen to reply to his adversary's second speech, and by striking a fatal blow at the root of both his speeches put him in such a rage that when Willie came down from the platform he turned round and said, 'You ought to become a lawyer.'"

In these various occupations the session slipped rapidly away, but never did two students give more convincing proof that their time had been well employed. The work of the first session in those days was, as a rule, the key to the future distinction of the prominent members of a class. George and William shared the honours of the year with each other, and with William Minto in Classics and English. William was at the head of the ordinary Greek class, second in the "proveciores" and second also in Latin, besides gaining special prizes for translations of portions of Horace and Juvenal into English verse. In English he was first prizeman. It was a triumph for Keig and its system of education. When in April 1862 the party returned from Mount Street bringing their sheaves with them, it was the first of a series of victorious home-

comings, when the younger people at the manse heard William's voice far off in loud excited talk and were impressed with the vast superiority of their brothers over all mankind. The summer, of which we have no records, was doubtless spent in preparing for the second session, in which Smith made his first important steps in the knowledge of the exacter sciences which was such an important feature in his intellectual life, and which had a very profound influence on all his thinking.

The teachers who conducted the scientific courses in the University had not the celebrity of Bain and Geddes, but personally they were hardly less remarkable. Professor David Thomson, the Natural Philosopher, was a man with gifts for teaching and powers of sarcasm which alternately edified and cowed his pupils. His method was not the somewhat frigid defensiveness of Bain, but consisted rather in the free use of a gift for quiet but cutting sarcasm. He was so sure of himself that he was able to indulge his fondness for the small practical jokes which the demonstrations of experimental science make possible; and every one laughed uneasily, not knowing whether he might not be the next butt. Professor Nicol, known as "Jeems" (even as Thomson was respectfully alluded to as "Davie"), introduced Smith to the sciences of Botany and Zoology, in which, as his later letters will show, he took a keen and continued interest. Nicol's was a retiring and modest personality, and he is now remembered for a controversy with Murchison in which, though overwhelmed for the moment, posterity has judged him to have been largely in the right. Frederick Fuller (more familiarly "Freddy"), the professor of Mathematics, presented a marked contrast to his two colleagues. He was an Englishman, had been tutor of Peterhouse, and, being an excellent teacher with a great capacity for neat and lucid exposition, he must be given a due share of the credit for the numerous Senior Wranglers who were the glory of

Aberdeen. Fuller represented English reticence and decorum, and seems to have preserved discipline without self-assertion, and to have earned the affection of his students without condescension or familiarity. Several precise and strictly business-like letters preserved among Smith's papers testify to the interest he took in his pupil's career. He was much disappointed at Smith's determination to pursue what he somewhat drily referred to as "ecclesiastical preferment," instead of proceeding to Cambridge and exploiting his mathematical abilities after the ordinary fashion of ambitious youth.

The young people resumed their sojourn in Aberdeen in the late autumn of 1862, and came back to much the same activities and pursuits as those with which their first year had been filled. The only incidents worthy of note were a change of lodging and the addition to the party of another sister, whose educational achievements, showing the exact place she was taking in her classes, formed an additional subject of the almost daily correspondence with Keig. A letter from George of this date preserves first impressions of Fuller and Nicol (who afterwards rose in his pupil's estimation), and enriches with some new touches the undergraduate caricature of Dr. Maclure, who as a matter of fact was most favourably disposed towards both George and William, and took an anxious interest in their health and well-being.

11 NORTH BROADFORD, *November 7, 1862.*

MY DEAR PAPA—Our first hour with Fuller every day is spent on Geometry. On Wednesday he gave us only an introductory oration and told us to prepare the first 5 props. On Thursday he went over the first 10 definitions, and to-day over the rest of the definitions, the postulates, the axioms, and the first 2 props. For to-morrow we have to the end of the 7th. As yet he has given us no deductions to do. In the 2nd hour he is going over a few things in arithmetic before beginning algebra. This is very dry, as it is only the easiest things, which we, of course, are perfectly acquainted with, viz.

Numeration and Notation, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Vulgar Fractions. To-day he began Decimals. He has given us to bring on Monday 3 sums in L.C.M. and 3 or 4 complicated Expressions in Vulgar Fractions to reduce. On Wednesday Maclure gave us out the speech *pro Cluentio* instead of the 2nd Philippic, which he had ordered Adam to have. So of course none of the class but one had a book on Thursday. Accordingly Maclure changed the book without allowing that he had made any mistake, and to occupy the time read us part of a long article on the life of Antony and the occasion of the Philippics, all, or nearly all, of which I was glad to find I knew from my history. To-day he continued this and heard us the first chapter. He has on the whole been tolerably agreeable, except the first day, when he told us, "Gentlemen, I have much pleasure to see you in these fine new class-rooms which have been erected for us. The first use we will make of these will be to arrange you alphabetically in the benches." This accordingly was done, when he commenced: "The reason for arranging you thus is that the Senatus may know the place of every gentleman, so that if any mischief be done to the benches the person beside whose seat it is may be responsible. If he cannot find out who did the mischief, the whole seat will have to pay the damages. The benches are public property and you are guardians. We will read the famous oration of Cicero *pro Cluentio*. Now I have nothing more to say to you, so I will dismiss you." This was rather bad, I think, the first day.

Geddes gave us a lecture extolling, of course, Greek Literature above every other subject of study. I do not remember ever seeing him so nearly in a rage as when Cumming told him *ἀπωράμενος* came from *ἀπωράω*. He sat down on his seat, his face on his hands, and cried, "Disgusting!" I thought he would have collapsed altogether.

Nicol's first lecture was on the importance of the study of Natural History. He is a very shabby-looking man in a rusty gown; he reads off his lecture with very little regard to punctuation and so awfully fast that it is almost impossible to take it down.

He recommended to us to get Milne Edwards's *Zoology* and two works of history, a pamphlet on Geology, and a catechism of Geology. The latter two, I think, are rather cheap. Milne Edwards's is 7s. 6d., so that we do not know

whether to buy it or not. I do not think a second-hand copy is to be got, all having been picked up already. I hope you will soon let us know what to do.

Frank Reid says Milne Edwards is not indispensable, but that it is perfectly necessary to have the other two, as he reads passages out of them when he is at Geology. Nicol is said to be very good-humoured, but tremendous when he is really irritated. We are invited to frequent the Museum, and if we choose to stay at the end of the hour, he will explain to us the specimens on the table. Mary Jane sends away to-day her article to *Chambers's Journal*.—I am, your affectionate son,

G. M. SMITH.

The second session proceeded much on the same lines as the first. There was no decline in the brothers' performances, which soon became as conspicuous in mathematics as they had before been in Latin and Greek. It was not long before Professor Fuller's attention was attracted to George, who did a deduction "which had passed more than half the class," and there are frequent notes of the speed at which the brothers could jointly or severally "clear" papers of difficult mathematical questions.

Strict hygienic precautions are taken.

"We have been very careful in the cold weather," writes George, "and are not at all the worse of it, being all in very good health. We got our leggings a while ago.

"We are not doing too much, nor sitting up working past ten, which is excessively moderate. We have very little to do in Mathematics, and to give up them, however much work was needed, would be perfectly ridiculous. In Natural History we have¹ given up all thought of any chance of prizes and only work a little at it on nights before examinations, and I think nine hours' sleep is enough for any person."

Nor were amusements altogether neglected. Shinty² matches, at least as a matter for interest and excitement,

¹ William, nevertheless, was second, and George fourth, prizeman in this class.

² Hockey.

alternate with Ferguson Scholarship papers done for practice at breakneck speed; there is some excitement, even some not altogether disagreeable alarm, issuing in undergraduate verse, on the occasion of the rumours of garrotting in the metropolis which reached Aberdeen that winter. George adopts a somewhat stern attitude towards some of these diversions.

“Willie, of course, has given in his name to the torch-light procession,” he writes towards the end of February, “a proceeding which I think is very foolish, as most people say that it is certain to end in a fight with the cads. Each person has to pay a shilling for the torches and the band. Besides all this, it is to begin at six, which will be broad daylight by that time of the year. Fuller spoke about it to-day, and said that as they were not common here, we would need to take very great care or we would be sure to light ourselves or each other; that he had often seen them in Germany, where they had them often and hence knew how to manage them, and that he believed the secret of the whole lay in two things:

“1. In holding the torches not perpendicularly, but in an oblique direction—that this prevented a person lighting himself.

“2. In marching in perfect order and with each rank at a considerable distance from the rank before.”

The following letter, dating from this time (February 1863), is interesting as marking what may be called the first event in William's theological career. It relates to a prize open to the competition of Free Church students which he won with an essay on “The Lord's Day.” His unaffected recognition of the *patria potestas* no less than his unselfish proposal to add to his father's library out of the prize money are typical of his character and deserve to be specially noticed.

“You asked for more particulars about the essays, but of course I can only tell what I heard from those who were present. It appears that Willie Gray's essay began very far back indeed—with the Roman errors about *ὁὐ ἐὶ Πέτρος*, and that an exposure of the falsehood of the Papist



KEIG FREE CHURCH AND MANSE.

From a Photograph by F. M. Chrystal, Esq.



Doctrines and a good deal about Erastianism formed the greater part of his essay. All who were present indeed, except Bob Urquhart, think that it contained a great deal of irrelevant matter.

"I do not know very well as yet what to do with the money, but at all events I should like to get the third volume of Alford for you, and the rest I suppose I shall keep to help in the next large expense for books or anything else that may occur. Of course I will not spend any of it without your advice and permission. When we have finished the second Philippic with Maclure we are to read the *Adelphi* of Terence. We have as yet done very little Sophocles with Geddes as we have been a good deal taken up with the metre. Fuller is at Quadratics. With Nicol we are nearly done of zoology. We finished the fishes to-day. This week I began my second notebook with him.

"To-day Isabella is first in Bible and Geography, but fourth in English. . . .

"There is nothing else, I think, to tell."

It was in the early part of 1864, in the middle of the third session of their course, that a darker concern than the vicissitudes of academic success first seriously threatened the happiness of the family. The constitutional delicacy of both the brothers, as we have seen, had often caused their parents great alarm, and much care and watchfulness had always been necessary. It is painfully clear how well-founded was the anxiety, how indispensable the precautions to which allusion has been made above.

The old-fashioned Scottish curriculum which the brothers were pursuing, and which has only quite recently been modified, may be said to have been a natural development of the Mediæval system of the seven liberal arts. It had hardly kept pace with the rapid strides of the advancement of learning and educational method since the days of the schoolmen, and the culture it supplied was exposed to the criticism of Dr. Johnson, who described it as "a mediocrity of knowledge between learning and ignorance, not inadequate to the purposes

of common life," though falling short of "the splendours of ornamental erudition." A student who in those days aspired to proficiency in all the subjects of his course was apt to have to choose between adroit sciolism and an amount of labour seriously dangerous to health. The unusual ability of Smith and his brother who, of course, chose the second alternative, and the rare efficiency and completeness of their previous tuition in a measure lessened the strain and made possible the remarkable success which they achieved. Similar instances of extensive and at the same time profound culture—in spite of Dr. Johnson—are fortunately not uncommon in Scotland; they were numerous among Smith's friends and contemporaries. But the price paid by these strenuous young people pursuing the higher culture, in such a climate, often only too literally "on a little oatmeal," was sometimes heavy. In the earliest of his letters from Aberdeen the references to illnesses and deaths among the students are sadly frequent. Sore throats, swollen glands, gastric fever, even ague, are often mentioned, and one of Smith's earliest notes on college life is that he has been absent owing to a swollen cheek and that no explanation was required of him when he returned.

The health both of William and of George had been most carefully watched. As early as January 1862 there had been a consultation of doctors on George, and both teachers and friends frequently expressed concern and anxiety. Professor Bain, writing to the Rev. Hugh Martin in 1865, says: "I see a complimentary allusion to one of the best pupils that we ever had at the University, since the union at least; but alas, poor fellow, his bodily frame is not equal to the indwelling mind. The last accounts I had of him and his brother from their father were a little more encouraging, but one cannot help feeling anxious for both."

Long before the date of this letter, which shows Bain's

kindly appreciation of his pupils in spite of the intellectual antagonism which was latent from the first, and even then suspected, the mischief which it anticipates had come to a head. The winter of 1863-64 was unusually severe even for Aberdeen. "The weather here is frightfully cold, but fine," writes William to his father in February. "An accident of some sort which took place this morning prevented Thomson's class-room from being heated, which on so frosty a day was rather unfortunate." The cold was fatal to delicate lungs. Mention is made of the death of Alexander Manson, a fellow-student, from acute pneumonia after a week's illness and delirium. George was already seriously ill.

"Alexander Manson's funeral was to-day at ten o'clock," writes William on the 18th. "Fuller's class did not meet, and all our class had to go up to the Gymnasium (where Manson had been living), where we assembled in one of the rooms and the Principal read and prayed. We then walked in procession before the coffin to the College gate, where we stood till the coffin, which had up to this point been carried, was transferred to the hearse. Only one carriage proceeded farther. Both Thomson and Fuller came to ask for George as we stood at the gate. Bain also stopped me to ask for him. He had spoken to Dr. Williamson, who agreed with him that George should not venture to come to the classes again."

The letter from which this extract is taken is a short note addressed to his mother by William; on the back of the same sheet Mary Jane writes her account of George's health, from which it appears that he is too weak to be out of bed even for an hour without weariness. He rallied sufficiently to take his examination and to share with his brother, as before, the chief honours of the session. He was then taken back to Keig to recover, and was compelled to remain there all summer and all the following winter. It was not, therefore, until 1866 that his academic career reached what was to be at once its climax and its end.

In the home atmosphere George, who was at first so ill that he had to be carried into the house, recovered for a time the precarious balance of his health; but a new anxiety soon arose. Mary Jane, the devoted sister, developed symptoms of fatal disease. She had been assiduous in nursing both George and William, who had also been ill in the last days of the session at Aberdeen, and towards the end of the winter there are several notes in her hand written in a tone of cheerful energy which is far from suggesting that she was fatally attacked. Her illness seems to have begun immediately after her return to the country in the early days of April, and by the first week of May it had been diagnosed as rapid consumption. From this time until her death on the 15th the entries in Smith's little diary, which for the most part are bald, almost monosyllabic notes of every-day occurrences, become full and pathetic descriptions of his sister's deathbed. The tragedy of these sad days, which was to be repeated only two years later, moved him as no previous experience in his life had done. All his deeper emotions had hitherto been of a religious kind, and the religious aspect of the mournful events passing in their midst was naturally predominant in the minds of such a family at such a time. This melancholy passage in the earlier history of one whose religious position became the subject of so much controversy is of great interest and importance to the biographer. Smith, in spite of his early precocity, was still far from his spiritual maturity; his intellect, as was very natural, had developed in advance of his character, and this, as we know from a subsequent letter, had not escaped the acute observation of Bain, who described him some years later as receptive rather than productive. The diary, and the few letters which Smith wrote at the time to friends, reveal a mood of deep distress. Mary Jane's death was the occasion of his first experience of the more passionate emotions of human life. It was the first and one of the most terrible of his

sorrows, but there was no rebellion against the prescriptions of an inherited and inculcated religious faith ; there can hardly even be said to have been a conflict. Sharp as was the crisis of his grief, it passed and rapidly subsided in a series of consolatory meditations. His feelings are summed up in the following letter to his lifelong friend Archibald M'Donald :—

FREE MANSE, KEIG, *May 9, 1864.*

MY DEAR ARCHIE—I fear there is no hope of Mary Jane's recovery. The fever has been only secondary and her disease is rapid consumption. Within the last two or three days she is very much wasted and changed in appearance. But she is quite calm and composed, and is prepared to die.

Either Papa or Mamma sits with her constantly, and she cares for nothing so much as to listen to Papa while he repeats verses from the Bible. She takes no interest in anything but the Bible.

She told Mamma that she was glad that she had been brought through so severe an illness—that it was worth it all to gain the happiness that she had gained. It is still possible perhaps that she may rally, but we can hardly dare to hope so. She is so weak that it seems a question of days or even hours how long she may live. Dr. Williamson will see her again to-morrow.

Do not blame me for writing to you thus.

On Saturday I was hopeful, but now I seem almost in the presence of death. But though it is very hard for us all, and especially for myself, I feel that it is best for her and for us too.—Your sincere friend, WM. R. SMITH.

Do not think that I should not have written so to you. You do not know how great a loss it will be to me. And I wished to tell you what I have myself seen in her, that there is but one thing that can give composure and happiness even in death.

P.S.—Mary Jane was very thankful for the oranges—she finds them very refreshing now when she is unable to take a drink. We could not have them here. She cannot take the jelly, but Mamma sends her thanks for it.

WM. R. SMITH.

When this letter was written it was still possible to

hope against hope, but after another week of physical and mental agony spent in pitiless self-examination and judgment Mary Jane passed away. On Sunday the 15th May 1864, the diary records *ἔθαιεν ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτί*, and after a few entries relating to her burial it turns once more to details of work and the small incidents of country life.

The crisis over, the process of acquiring erudition is resumed with more energy than ever. The diary again becomes strictly a record of studies, and the writer takes to keeping an account with himself of the number of hours he has managed to work day by day and of the interruptions for walks and work in the manse garden. At this time he was reading Thucydides with Grote's *History*, that most excellent of commentaries on the story of the Peloponnesian war. By the time he returned to Aberdeen he had gone through much of Aeschylus and some Plato, had mastered Persius and made considerable progress with Tacitus, reading Merivale concurrently. Besides this he had been engaged on Mill's *Logic* and on the works of Professor Bain. Most of his time, however, had been occupied with Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

The records of the session which followed bring us to the end of his formal course of secular education and leave him with his degree of Master of Arts. Unhappily, the story of the misfortunes which at this time beset him and his family is far from concluded. Mary Jane's death had been a terrible blow to all the family circle at Keig. The grief of the father and the mother may be imagined, and it is not surprising that the letters and the diary of this period contain frequent and anxious references to illnesses at the manse. George was resting there, no doubt working a little, and recovering slowly and imperfectly from his breakdown. Smith himself was of course in Aberdeen, waging the usual battle with the terrible winter weather, husbanding his health and strength as he best might, but obviously languishing under the unremitting pressure of hard work and the unhealed though unspoken

sorrow of his recent bereavement. Many of his letters of this time are addressed to George.

It was in this year he began the study of Moral Philosophy, so important in the pastoral career, under the auspices of Professor Martin, whom in this chapter there has hitherto been no opportunity to describe. A quondam rival of Bain, who treats him with a kind of grim forbearance in his Autobiography, Martin represented in all points of doctrine an opposite philosophic pole, and, as a contemporary observer has recorded, "he took his polarity very seriously." He belonged to an obsolete type of moralist whose course of instruction proceeded in a pre-established crescendo of rhetoric, strongly flavoured with reminiscences of the pulpit. Like the more celebrated Professor Wilson, he had well-known purple patches in his lectures which when politely pressed he would graciously repeat; nothing could be more unlike the modern course in Moral Philosophy, with its careful appreciation of Plato and Aristotle, and its exact historical survey of the systems built up by Kant and later thinkers.

His students do not appear to have accorded him the respect due to his years or to the seriousness and importance of his subject.

"They were rarely punctual," writes the observer who has been already quoted, "unless some uproarious joke or ironically solemn impertinence had been planned for a particular day. They used to stand in groups about the door of his room singing 'Duncan Gray,' 'The auld man's mear's deid,' 'Duncan's on the grey mear, awa' to seek the howdie,' and other ribald ditties, with occasional songs specially composed on some incident connected with the professor."

Smith seems to some extent to have shared in the critical view which the class (most of them with much less right than he to criticise) took of their professor. Bain was an intellectual antagonist from the first.

Martin was not a foeman worthy of his steel, and, for all his orthodoxy, assuredly not an intellectual affinity. Smith even seems to have received with some impatience certain of Martin's advances and a suggestion, which was not by any means ill-founded, that he would have a good chance of obtaining a Ferguson Scholarship¹ in Philosophy. He remarks on the striking differences between Bain's and Martin's treatment of the "Intellectual Powers," and thinks that Bain is "the imaginary sensationalist Martin is always fulminating at." He speaks of writing an essay on "The Connection between Religion and a Sense of Demerit," "not that he thinks the subject a good one, but because the others presented are worse." The essays, in spite of the defects of the subject, were very successful. Martin thought very highly of his pupil, was fond of publicly examining him on the works of Bishop Butler, and renewed more than once his suggestions of a candidature for the Philosophical Ferguson Scholarship.

In the meantime Smith had been making great progress in his studies of Natural Philosophy, and constantly speaks with high praise and great interest of Professor Thomson's lectures on Optics and electrical subjects. His classical scholarship too had not been neglected, and we find him making Greek verses and reminding George at Keig that "a short vowel does sometimes, though rarely, remain short before $\mu\nu$." All was progressing favourably towards a brilliant conclusion of his career in his native University, but at the last moment, on the very verge of the final examinations, his strength gave way.

The illness from which he suffered had begun towards the middle of March and was no doubt aggravated by neglect in its early stages. The winter had been bitter as usual, and there had been much illness in Aberdeen. Dr. Williamson, who had been a devoted friend as well as

¹ This Scholarship is the highest distinction open to alumni of the northern Universities, and is annually awarded for Classics, Philosophy, and Mathematics after keen competition and most searching examination.

the medical attendant of the family, had succumbed to an attack of typhus fever only a month before, after a very short illness, and there are the usual references in the letters and the diary to ill-health and sickness. In his letters home he admits certain symptoms in his own case, but he minimises them, and in writing to George and his father he continues doggedly to plan the examination campaign. Soon, however, it appeared that he was fighting the inevitable. He in his turn had to retire, deeply disappointed, bruised in spirit and feeble in body, to Keig.

His father, after tracing his successes up to this point and working out the comparison with his academic rivals, to which there has already been occasion to refer, explains very simply that

“ . . . William was prevented by serious illness from attempting any of the examinations for prizes and honours, except the examination on Christian Evidences. In this examination he gained a prize, although he was so ill at the time that he went home to his bed, from which he did not rise for many weeks. He felt the disappointment keenly, and I have no doubt his disease was greatly aggravated thereby. His professors were disappointed too. They expected him to take a very high place in honours, as well in Mental Sciences as in Classics and Mathematics, and now they could not even give him his degree of M.A. without examination in his remaining subjects. They sent to ask whether he could not make his appearance for a short time. They would see to his comfort; they would do everything to prevent injury to him. His doctor put an emphatic veto on the proposal. It was next suggested that he should be examined, so far as was necessary for his degree, in his own room; the doctor consented. The examiners came (the doctor being in the house), and after a few *viva voce* questions had been asked and answered they declared themselves satisfied and took their leave.”

In the result he got his degree and was unanimously recommended for the Town Council Gold Medal, the only honour which could be given without competition,

and which is annually conferred upon the best student of his class, taking all the curriculum into account.

It was not till May that he was able to take a pen in hand, and even then, though convalescent, he is "scarcely beyond the garden." Immediately after this, however, he "begins to do a little Mathematics," and, almost for the first time in his life, to relax his mind with a little general reading. We hear of a course of Hallam's *Middle Ages*, a work that most people would find a little ponderous for their hours of ease; he reads a little Horace, some Macaulay, and a good deal of *Paradise Lost*; it is satisfactory to note that some sensible friend lent him a copy of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, and that he did not neglect to study it. About this time too begins the systematic reading of Theology—the names of Calvin, Hardwicke, and Alford occur almost every Sunday in the diary—and a little later in the year we find him making acquaintance with Augustine *de Civitate Dei*, a work which occupied him a good deal, and from which he made numerous extracts which survive among the papers of this date.

As his health improved he was able to take advantage of the opportunities of air and exercise which made the summer at Keig so salutary a season to both the brothers, and it became possible for him to look forward to the next step in his career. He now finally decided to compete for the Mathematical Ferguson Scholarship, in spite of Professor Martin's advice to try his fortune in Philosophy.

The scientific studies to which, with returning health, he again began to apply himself soon developed into a formidable course of preparation. After a summer of judicious reading conducted under the direction of Professors Fuller and Thomson, who had the liveliest interest in his candidature, and whose wise advice about husbanding his resources was more important than any programme of study, he went to Glasgow for the examination, accompanied by his mother.

The following letter to his father, dated Edinburgh, 21st October, announces his success:—

MY DEAR PAPA—Previous to starting for Edinburgh to-day I called at the Ferguson Office and learned that I had got the scholarship, and that by a considerable number of marks. Of course I am not yet formally the successful candidate, as the appointment has to be ratified by the Trustees. The formal announcement will be sent to Keig on Monday, and you, I suppose, will get it on Tuesday. Tait wrote in his report that “No. 4” (my number) “is possessed of considerable power, but his papers lack polish.” This I had some reason to suspect, my papers (as generally when I am pressed for time) being rather a mess.

I was advised by the Ferguson Secretary to call on Tait, a counsel I think I shall follow. There is a coach to Lasswade, through, I am told, a beautiful country.

Do you know that . . . Russell is to be Premier?
—Your affectionate son, WM. ROBERTSON SMITH.

His mother also wrote to Keig on the same day with a curious suggestion of self-restraint which was probably very characteristic:—

“You will be glad to hear of Willie’s success. On Saturday we had resolved to travel second class—Willie went away before—and we were to meet him at the station. When I saw his face he was looking so sober I said to Mrs. Stewart, ‘I fear he has failed.’ But he came running in about and said, ‘Mamma, you’ll go first class, for I’ve got the Scholarship.’ I felt very thankful. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us.”

The projected visit to Tait was paid; but the professor was unfortunately out, and a personal meeting was postponed. Tait’s admiration of the successful candidate’s “uncouth power” had, however, been conveyed to him, as we have seen, in somewhat modified terms; and soon afterwards we find the two in correspondence on mathematical subjects. The basis of their association as colleagues and of their lifelong friendship was already laid.

It had been decided, when he was brought back to Keig after his disastrous illness earlier in the year, that he should not commence his theological studies in the session of 1865-66, and, though he was obviously much recovered, there was no reason for departing from this excellent resolution. Accordingly, he accompanied George to the old lodgings in Aberdeen in November 1865, and all was for a time exactly as it had been; there was little change to record.

“ At College everything seems to be getting on quite smoothly and dully—Thomson going on with Musical Notes and Martin prosing about consciousness. The only thing that has created any excitement is that one of Geddes’s windows was broken last Friday night. It is supposed, but with what truth I do not know, that this was done by some members of the Tertian Class, the motive being indignation at the large and in fact unprecedented number of their class who were stuck in the Classical degree exams.”

The letters to Keig are filled with accounts of George’s health and progress towards the delayed degree, and his own continued work at Mathematics and Natural Science. At this time too the most important interest of his life begins to make its appearance, for, in spite of the postponement of his Divinity course, it is from this point in his career that his definite preparation for his ecclesiastical life begins with the systematic study of German and of Hebrew. His father’s memorandum tells us that it was his intention to spend the next summer session at a German university, and he threw himself into his new pursuits with characteristic ardour. Speaking of the headaches from which he still suffered, he assures his father that they are due to being confined to the house owing to bad weather, and that he is following the anxious advice daily sent from the manse not to work too hard. He is concentrating on German and doing very little Hebrew.

He says nothing of his Natural Science studies and of

the miscellaneous scientific reading he undertook with the object of helping George. He only mentions his preparation for the Fullarton Scholarship¹ to announce that it is complete, and when it is awarded to him without competition he is "rather ashamed" of the appearance he makes in the examination.

As the session drew to a close his own interests naturally centred in his forthcoming visit to Germany; he gathered together as much information as he could about the various universities; his study of the language rapidly advanced; he speaks with eager interest of an introduction to Wundt, which would bring him into touch with Helmholtz. The chief excitement of the moment was, however, George's chance (growing every day into a certainty) of gaining all the honour of which he had himself been cheated the previous year, and of proceeding to an even more brilliant future at Cambridge. George's health appeared to be holding out well, and already it was clear that his final academic performances would more than justify his early promise. Speaking of an interview with Professor Thomson, William writes: "He then asked George about his health and studies, and when George said he did not know how he would get on in his (Thomson's) class, told him he need not be at all afraid, and said something about "abilities" which George did not catch. What does he mean that George need not be afraid of? Surely of not being first, for George did not need to be told that he *must* be one of the first."

The prophets were not put to shame. Parallel with the anxious and sagacious consideration and negotiation about a suitable college at Cambridge which ended in the choice of Pembroke, to which he sent up his name, George's preparation went on irresistibly. A slight note of anxiety is heard—"I think George is getting on very well with his working, but he is now so engrossed in it that I shall be glad when the session is done." But this is lost in

¹ Open to graduates of the University of Aberdeen.

the thrill of the final struggle. The result surpassed expectation.

“He not only gained the first prize in every subject there studied during the fourth session—Senior Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, and Evidences of Christianity—but he also graduated with first-class honours in Classics and Mathematics, was awarded the Hutton Prize for General Excellence, and was recommended, as his brother had been, for the Gold Medal given yearly by the Town Council of Aberdeen. In both subjects, Classics and Mathematics, he not only gained first-class honours, but stood first in both—having made in the latter subject more than twice as many marks as the student who came next to him. This student, nevertheless, went immediately to Cambridge and gained an open scholarship, and afterwards obtained a high place as a wrangler.”

All unite in praising the brilliancy of the triumph, the modesty of the conqueror. It was at once a realisation of past hopes and a lively earnest of future glories. The reversal of fortune was sudden, terrible, and dramatic. On the 6th of April, George left Aberdeen with every honour his University could heap upon him. On the 11th of the same month he was seized with a vomiting of blood, and on the 27th he was dead.

William's account in the diary is much more restrained than his story of Mary Jane's death two years earlier. There is an advance in maturity, a growth of self-control. He records the progress of his brother's illness almost coldly, and, as if with a deliberate effort, he makes frequent reference to other things. His reading of Bishop Butler and Herodotus was not interrupted even during the last days. The end was painful, violent fits of delirium alternating with periods of exhaustion. “During the final struggle,” says the father's memorandum, “he seemed to be entangled in deep water, but just before all was over he cried out in rapture, ‘Mamma! Mary Jane! I am safe through now.’ ‘And your feet on the rock?’ said his

mother. His answer was 'Yes,' and then all was over." Of all this scene William's diary simply records *ἐκοιμήθη*.

Germany was abandoned for the time, and after yet another summer of mourning and working at Keig a new phase of his life began.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW COLLEGE (1866-1870)

“INTELLECTUAL culture, say some, is apt to make a man less spiritual. This supposes the spiritual part of the mind to be a peculiar faculty. In fact the emotional is meant. But a man may as readily err by trusting his own emotions as by trusting his own intellect. Spirituality is not the development of one part of the mind but the development of the whole mind *in a special direction.*”

These words were written by Smith at the end of one of his small diaries, when he was undergoing instruction in Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen, and perhaps they formed the first sketch for a paragraph of one of the essays of which Professor Martin thought so highly. Whatever be their source, the accident of their preservation is fortunate, for they sum up in a most interesting way the position which the writer had reached at the outset of his wider education. In the history of a man's development the five years after he is turned twenty are usually critical. From this time date the beginnings of his most important friendships, the formation and first consolidation of his views on great questions, the starting-points of his worldly career. This, at any rate, was the case with Smith, for by the end of the period which began in the autumn of 1866 with his entrance into the New College in Edinburgh, and ended in 1870 with his return to Aberdeen as Free Church Professor of Hebrew, he was not only fully launched on his adventurous course as a theologian, but his intellectual growth was almost

complete and all the characteristics which afterwards made him loved or feared were well marked.

The last chapter describes a period of concentration and strenuous self-discipline, during which he was accumulating intellectual capital and spending hardly anything of what he gathered. In the years which are now to be described he certainly spared himself as little as he had ever done, and his progress in mere learning was proportionate. But the leading themes of the history of his theological *Lehrjahre* are the rapid expansion of his personality under the stimulus of wider experience and the concurrent reactions of his intellect on its inherited traditions as they were re-presented to him by his new teachers and in his new studies.

He left his father's house thoroughly grounded in the subjects of the current culture and well equipped to secure all that was possible in the way of conventional academic success. But there had also been cultivated in him a habit of free inquiry, a universal curiosity, and a turn for criticism formidable even in its beginnings. In his university days, and so far as his academic work was concerned, he seems almost deliberately to have held these tendencies in abeyance in order that he might the more completely absorb all that there was to learn. In fact he submitted himself to the intellectual discipline of the university with a completeness that was almost disconcerting to his teachers, reserving judgment on the views put before him, but acquiring them perfectly for the purposes of examination, and reaching the end of his course in speculative matters *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*. Bain appears to have been somewhat piqued at this armed neutrality, and when in 1870 he was asked for a testimonial in Smith's favour he emphasised his pupil's capacity for "any effort of erudite acquirement," and rather wickedly insinuated a reservation as to "whether he would manifest a corresponding amount of originality."

Viewed from the standpoint of "erudite acquirement," Smith's equipment in his twentieth year was at all events remarkably extensive and efficient. He had a wide and accurate knowledge of the Classics; his powers of composition in both Latin and Greek were above the average of his contemporaries; he possessed a serviceable acquaintance with French, and he had set about learning German with his customary energy and success. His speculative powers had, as we have seen, been appreciated only by the less distinguished of his teachers, but he had acquitted himself with great brilliancy in the philosophical exercises of his university, and his pre-eminence in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy was attested by the possession of the highest distinction in Scotland open to a student of his standing. The exact sciences were at this time, and remained for many years, the leading profane interest of his mind, and there was more than one moment in his subsequent career at which it seemed possible that he might end his days as a physicist or a mathematician, and might be received into the placid paradise of scientific research as the colleague and the equal of such men as Klein and Kelvin, who were both his friends.

In the early days of his "pursuit of universal knowledge," as Bain described it with Aberdonian irony, he had little time for what desultory persons call general culture. But the tastes which he had acquired at Keig under the kindly auspices of his father, and especially his early fondness for natural history, did not forsake him. There is extant a series of letters to his old friend Archibald M'Donald recording things seen in the country which are among the most charming of his early correspondence and show a gift for close observation of wild creatures and a pretty turn for what he called "zoological small talk." One of these letters on the squirrels of the Vale of Alford, and another which contains a half humorous inquiry into the local superstition of a fabulous

monster called the "earth hound," would scarcely disgrace the light and loving hand of Gilbert White himself.

The extreme rarity of the hours which he devoted to æsthetic or recreative literature is a feature of the scheme of concentration to which reference has been made. From the diaries which he kept while he was at Aberdeen it is easy to trace his reading in detail, and the absence of anything of the nature of mere *belles lettres* is almost complete. He appears to some extent to have shared the Rev. Mr. Nicoll's recorded aversion from fiction, and to have indulged himself with a novel once a year (in the Christmas holidays) as a sort of duty. In this way he read *Romola*, *The Small House at Allington*, and *Elsie Venner*, as new books. Wilkie Collins's *No Name*, which he considered a stupid tale, but nevertheless read through, is another of these sparse imaginative landmarks in the early career of an omnivorous reader. The literary culture acquired in the open-air readings on Cairnwilliam had been supplemented and to some extent methodised by the rather grotesque prelections of Mr. Bain on "Rhetoric." There is some evidence that he could distinguish by its flavour a passage of verse by Pope or Dryden and refer it to its proper poet, but in those days at least there is no sign that he habitually read any poetry but the Old Testament. It was not until he had completed his work for the Ferguson Scholarship that he began to read freely even in history, and that we hear of his making the acquaintance of Macaulay and Carlyle. His references to current literature are almost entirely confined to the theological and philosophical articles in the *Athenæum* and the *Saturday Review*, which by some arrangement of joint subscription were regularly read at the Manse of Keig.

About this date (late in the session of 1866-67) his letters to his father make mention of his difficulties in mastering the initial intricacies of Hebrew, and passages of considerable interest occur which show that he was also

beginning to concern himself quasi-professionally with theology and to reflect systematically on the things of Faith.

“Tell Papa,” he writes, “that I am gradually getting on better with my Hebrew, tho’ I have not yet made a great deal of progress. I am now pretty far through with Mill’s book,¹ and tho’ there is much to be blamed in the spirit of it, and some passages that display prejudice rather than thought, I cannot say I think those are right that treat the book as contemptible. I propose to send Papa my estimate of it as a whole when I have finished it. I may add, in the meantime, that as regards Christianity the passage that raised such an outcry is not by any means the worst in the book. *It* is so far at least defensible, but there is a passage in the same chapter that is simply shocking, and displays the bitterest hostility to Christianity.”

He consults his father on the distinction of *πνεῦμα* and *ψύχη* in the Pauline writings; he refers with some pride to his success in answering the arguments of a Baptist; and from time to time he makes some rather outspoken observations on the value and efficacy of tracts. The following extract from a letter written shortly before he went to Edinburgh is interesting as giving a specimen of the religious atmosphere in which he moved, but especially as showing the cautious moderation with which, notwithstanding his critical instincts, he still treated even the more extravagant expressions of the creed in which he had been brought up.

“I found my afternoon last week with the B.’s rather pleasant. Mr. B. is really a very nice man, and Mrs. B. was not so obtrusive with her peculiarities as on the former occasion. Mr. B. evidently is not free from peculiarities in his religious views, however. He would have the rules for admitting members into the Church made much stricter, saying, ‘It is better that ten Christians should be excluded than that one false Christian should be included.’ Is not this carrying things too far?”

¹ *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy*, 1865.

Generally the tendency on his part and that of Mrs. B. seemed to be to deny the very existence of the Visible Church as anything more than a name not justified by Scripture. I am sure this is wrong, but I should like to have somewhat clearer views on the point. I could only refer to the evident fact that in the earliest time there was a Visible Church distinct from the Church of Christ, e.g. to τοὺς σωζόμενους and to Paul's evident statement that the Jews as a whole enjoyed certain benefits as forming the Visible Church. I would be very glad if you could give me any hints on the subject and tell me if I am right in believing the chief privilege of the Visible Church as a whole to be the charge of the preservation and transmission of God's truth. I daresay I shall find something on the subject in Augustine as I advance farther in the *Civitas Dei*."

The good people whose names are withheld appear not infrequently in the letters of this period, and the violence of their opinions seems occasionally to have moved Smith to impatience, and perhaps caused him more uneasiness than he fully realised. Such a caricature of the orthodox position was by no means edifying to a young and trained intelligence which was on the point of making a critical examination of the foundation on which that position was based, and the most triumphant dialectical refutation could with difficulty dispel its evil suggestions of want of charity and want of common sense. Some reminiscence of vagaries of this kind may have prompted the faintly uneasy feeling in the words which are set at the head of this chapter.

But the reinforcements which he derived, whether from Augustine or from Keig, were sufficient for the time, and the student entered on his formal studies for the ministry with a spiritual horizon clear of the slightest cloud. He even continued to occupy what would now be considered the extreme positions of Presbyterian orthodoxy. In a slightly later letter to his father we find him of opinion that the effect on church singing of accompaniment by an organ "is to strip it of its devotional character," and

in another he severely condemns a sermon by Dr. Hanna, the son-in-law and biographer of Dr. Chalmers, of whom he hears "very opposite opinions expressed in the New College."

"His sermon was certainly the most elegant I ever heard, but contained nothing but æsthetics and a little bad logic in favour of relaxed creeds. There was neither thought, nor genuine feeling, nor gospel truth in any part of the discourse, which was an account, historical and æsthetical, of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. One Psalm, two Paraphrases, and a short hymn called a 'dismission' were sung. I do not think the broad party will be very formidable till it gets an abler leader. I suspect that it would quite sink but for the injudicious conduct of Begg, Gibson, and *The Watchword*.¹ I have received in common with the other students all the back numbers of *The Watchword* that are in print, and am, I believe, to get the rest. *The Watchword* has a very bad effect. Every one ridicules its tone even when adopting its conclusions. It is melancholy to see a good cause² injured by such a partisan."

He approached the scene of his new triumphs no longer as the submissive learner anxious to assimilate whatever was put before him, but rather as one eager to be enrolled among the defenders of a system of knowledge and belief in which he had the fullest confidence.

The New College in Edinburgh was founded in the year after the Disruption, and has always been one of the most important and prosperous institutions of the Free Church. Its establishment was the outcome of the great and at that time unprecedented generosity of the wealthier brethren, which was imitated in a not altogether uncom-

¹ Dr. Begg was then at the head of the party which opposed the Union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. Dr. Gibson, one of his most vigorous supporters in his Anti-union agitation, was Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free Church College of Glasgow. *The Watchword* was a polemical journal conducted by Dr. Begg and his friends in the same interest. See below, pp. 130-1.

² Smith's sympathies at this time inclined, it would seem, towards Anti-unionism.

petitive spirit by the laity of Glasgow and Aberdeen, who, scorning to be beaten by the Capital in such a contest, had erected colleges of their own which testified to the local enthusiasm for Free Church principles.

The primary object of these seminaries was, of course, to supply the rising generation of ministers with the theological instruction which their own teachers could no longer give in the ancient Universities of Scotland, and so to maintain, even in separation from the State, the high tradition of good learning which has always distinguished the Scottish ministry. In the first years of the Free Church instruction was also given in certain subjects nearly akin to Theology. A sound theory of Morals and a sound view of Knowing and Being were matters in the opinion of Dr. Chalmers and his friends in which the interests of the immature theologian should be specially safeguarded, and one result of their solicitude was that Mr. Macdougall, afterwards well known as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, was appointed to the Chair of Ethics, while the venerable and celebrated Professor Campbell Fraser began his career by instructing Free Church students in Logic and Metaphysics. Natural Science also had claims upon the attention and vigilance of the Church; a lectureship was therefore established, the holder of which was expected to treat in a comprehensive but orthodox manner the vast range of important topics assigned to him.

When Smith came to Edinburgh in 1866 religious tests for non-theological academic posts had been abolished, the Free Church had given up the teaching of philosophy on her own account, and both Mr. Macdougall and Mr. Campbell Fraser had migrated to the University. Wisely or unwisely, however, it had been decided not to relinquish the advantages believed to accrue from the scientific lectureship, then held by Dr. John Duns. His predecessor in this post had been Dr. Fleming, a palæontologist of some distinction; but Dr. Duns

was not always ideally successful in discharging his difficult duties, and he is the subject of frequent and satirical comment in Smith's correspondence. The College had by this time made rapid advances. The Professors had long left the narrow premises in George Street, where Dr. Chalmers ended his career as a teacher, and were established in the dignified building placed on the ancient site of Mary of Guise's palace high above the city, and already displaying on this lofty eminence the two solemn towers of which Ruskin disapproved. The structure was intended and accepted as a demonstration of the material resources of its builders, but it was the intellectual quality of its teachers and its students that lent the greatest weight to the evangelical propaganda of which it was the centre. Chalmers and Welsh, as well as Cunningham, the founders of the institution, were gone, but the level of reputation and even of celebrity enjoyed by the staff, was at this time very high. At their head stood Dr. Robert Candlish, one of the greatest of Dr. Chalmers's lieutenants, who now enjoyed in the emancipated communion the academic preferment of which he had been so harshly deprived during the last days of his connection with the Establishment. Dr. Bannerman, an orthodox theologian and a very excellent and kindly man whose powers of exposition Smith seems to have underrated, occupied the chair of Apologetics. Dr. Smeaton and Dr. Buchanan (soon afterwards succeeded by Dr. James Macgregor) presided respectively over the study of the Exegesis of the New Testament, and Systematic Theology. Dr. Rainy makes his first appearance in Smith's life, in which he played so remarkable a part, as his instructor in Church History. Dr. Blaikie,¹ who was a master of the practical side of the duties of the ministry, and who had an invaluable gift for appealing to the average mind, instructed

¹ Dr. Blaikie succeeded Dr. Bannerman on the death of the latter in 1868.

the students of the final year in Pastoral Theology, while the impetuous piety of Dr. Duff, now retired from his brilliant labours in the Indian mission field, had found scope for new activity in a chair of "Evangelistic Theology," from which he exhorted the young men to greater efforts, and emphasised the lessons of missionary enthusiasm to be drawn from the contemplation of the Church persecuted yet militant, and unshaken in her orthodoxy.

All these were outstanding figures, but, with the exception of Dr. Rainy, they are of secondary importance in this history compared with the two remarkable persons who then jointly occupied the Chair of Hebrew Language and Old Testament Exegesis. The subjects which they taught were of crucial importance in Smith's life. The schools of Theology to which they belonged represent the two sides in the controversy which consumed the best years of his life, and apart from these considerations they must, in any case, by reason of their attainments and their character, have profoundly influenced his way of thought.

Dr. John Duncan, the elder of these, was a conspicuous instance of a type never very common, and now probably quite extinct. His fame among the present generation depends rather on the piety of posterity than on any tangible surviving performance of his own. His striking spiritual vicissitudes, his extensive if somewhat desultory erudition, the high flavour of intellectual eccentricity which pervaded his life and conversation, delighted, and at times overawed, his contemporaries; and they supply material which is worthy of a more skilful and unprejudiced biographical treatment than it has received. His early experiences bore a curious resemblance to those of Dr. Bain. He too, as Dr. Taylor Innes has prettily put it, "was compact of the kindly clay of Aberdeen." But from the outset he had much more of human weakness and human enthusiasm in his composition than that robust

and redoubtable philosopher. His love of learning was an affair of the heart, a passion which haunted him to the end, and which he indulged with something of the zest and persistency which belongs to the enjoyment of culpable and illicit things. His was a high-strung temperament, very apt for tumultuous spiritual experience, but very unfit to endure with equanimity or to vanquish with success the most ordinary trials of human fortune.

Accordingly we find that the success which he attained was the more honourable as won in the face of many difficulties of his own making. In early life he had wandered somewhat aimlessly in a wilderness of "moderate" metaphysics, and owed no more to his connection with the Established Church than a theistic bias for a great deal of very formless speculation; it is even hinted that there were more serious and practical objections to his way of life. The evangelical orthodoxy in which he finally came to rest was founded on experiences of conversion of the most approved type. He was, in his own words, "a philosophical sceptic who had taken refuge in Theology." It would be unbecoming and irrelevant in this place to inquire what was the precise nature of the errors in conduct which he forsook; whether the "daily sin" in which he accused himself, and is accused, of living was not to a great extent a creation of the hypochondria which not infrequently besets the intellectual and the religious life, or at worst the natural aberration of an organism overstrained by low living and uncongenial environment. It is enough to say that in 1866 "Rabbi Duncan," as he was affectionately styled by his friends and pupils, had for many years been one of the most venerated figures in the Church.

As regards his intellectual errors, the unprejudiced modern reader will find some difficulty in estimating the precise nature of the philosophic scepticism in which Dr. Duncan passed his unregenerate days. He has left no systematic statement of his early views, and the frag-

ments of his conversation preserved by Professor Knight are oracular utterances in which it would be unreasonable to expect to find even the *débris* of a philosophic system. The steps by which he reached "the fastness of orthodoxy" are frankly ascribed to an inscrutable act of Providence. But, as in the case of the Stoics of old, once the point of conversion is passed, there is no turning back, and we are left in no doubt about the nature of his opinions, the precision of which no longer depends on the clearness of his own expression of them.

The doctrine of "the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures" played an important part in the formation of these. Although the dogmatic exposition set forth in the Confession of Faith does not explicitly depend on this doctrine, the argumentative plan is such as to give it great, if perhaps undue, prominence. For Dr. Duncan, at all events, the Bible was "not a congeries of books, but a unit, with organic and vital units; not a lump, but an organism inspired by the Spirit of truth and Spirit of life: 'lively oracles.'" "The works of the Holy Ghost," as he delighted to call the Old and New Testament Scriptures, were, in fact, the major premises of the dogmatic syllogisms contained in the Confession of Faith, and we are told by one of his biographers¹ that he excelled all his contemporaries in believing and loving every word of God *without preferring one above another*, and "excelled Calvin himself" in the difficult feat of interpreting a text without bias in favour of other texts. Thus, although he had been known to take the freedom to speak of "the genius of St. Paul" or of "the long stretches of Isaiah," he taught his students that they must not look beyond the language of Holy Scripture. "God," he said, "employs human speech; but He Himself selects the words that are to express His thoughts. He leaves not man to put words on them; *the words are as much the Spirit's as the*

¹ Dr. Moody Stuart.

ideas, and the Apostle Paul studiously avoids other words." In this, observes the biographer already quoted, "he presented a fine contrast to the flippancy of many modern theologians who seat themselves in the throne of God and constitute themselves judges of what in His Book is right and what is wrong, according to their own capricious and perverted tastes."

This striking system acquired much of its value from the rapt and intense manner of the teacher, and derived a quasi-œcumenical flavour from the romantic history of his mission to the Hungarian Jews. In the course of that mission he had secured for his Church a group of converts distinguished more by their intelligence than by their number, had become the confidant of an Archduchess, and had perfected himself in more than one of the languages with which it was said that he could "speak his way to the Wall of China." But Dr. Duncan, though an impressive lecturer, was the sport of his own discursive methods, and it was soon said of him that he taught his pupils everything but Hebrew. The Church, therefore, in her wisdom gave him a coadjutor and successor whose teaching brought the first light into the dark age in Biblical Criticism and Biblical Theology in Scotland.

Dr. A. B. Davidson, destined to be celebrated as a Hebrew scholar, and to be revered by many generations of grateful pupils as a most stimulating and efficient teacher, was yet another example of a native of Aberdeen who, with few initial advantages, carved out for himself a most honourable and distinguished career. Unlike his colleague, however, though like his pupil Smith, he had in a great degree the capacity for incisive criticism and severe analysis. In the opinion of some he did not possess the same wide range of miscellaneous acquirements as Dr. Duncan, but his equipment as a teacher was certainly far more practical and systematic. It is most important to note that, notwithstanding a certain reticence and a curious turn for qualification which sometimes asserted themselves

rather inopportunately, his outlook on his subject was that of the present day. In 1862, when he published the first and only instalment of his *Commentary Critical and Exegetical on the Book of Job*, he was explicitly attempting a "short grammatical treatment of a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures," a thing at that time "as yet unattempted in our language."

"We in this country," he observed, "have been not unaccustomed to begin at the other end, creating exegesis and grammar by deduction from Dogmatic, instead of discovering Dogmatic by deduction from Grammar." "The books of Scripture," he went on to declare, "so far as interpretation and general formal criticism are concerned, must be handled *very much*¹ as other books are handled. We do not speak here of the feeling of reverence and solemnity with which we handle the books, knowing them to be the Word of God, and bow under their meaning so soon as it is ascertained, but of the intellectual treatment and examination of them during the process of ascertaining their meaning. That treatment must be *mainly*¹ the same as the treatment we give to other books."

This passage deserves the most careful attention as being a statement of the fundamental position of what came to be described in the struggle that was to follow as "believing criticism." The argument which it contains, carefully poised, as the reader will observe, on its qualifying adverbs, was in this particular instance designed to justify Davidson's views of the later chapters of the Book of Job which had come to be regarded by modern criticism as interpolations. It nevertheless seemed necessary for the believing critic to save the doctrine of plenary inspiration. This Davidson contrived by a half-avowed theory of Divine Afterthoughts, which, so far as the text was concerned, admitted of additions and developments, themselves under providential guidance, and made it possible for the orthodox scholar in the

¹ The italics are not in the original.

nineteenth century to say, with a side glance at dogma, that "Scripture having now in our days attained its full growth, it is with this full growth *mainly*¹ that we have to do."

There is nothing novel or eccentric in this position which in the course of history has, in innumerable instances, been adopted alike by cautious innovators on their probation and enlightened conservatives on their defence. It strikingly resembles the more advanced Catholic position with regard to the Authorised Version of the Scriptures according to St. Jerome, but in a church which seeks its dogmatic standards exclusively in the Bible it could obviously be neither permanent nor even of long continuance. The Higher Criticism was still in leading strings and hedged about with forms and fears, but at least it existed, and through the teaching of Davidson it at once passed, such as it was, into the mind of Smith. The resulting ferment was not long in beginning, and developments of great consequence in Church History ensued.

It may be conveniently said at this point that Smith secured with comparative ease the more important of the honours awarded at the New College. He was first both in the entrance and exit examinations, thus gaining both the Hamilton Scholarships, which are given at the beginning of the first and of the third session, and the first of the Cunningham fellowships, which are dependent on the result of the exit examination. The early letters from Edinburgh show the same sharp-set spirit of competition as marks the Aberdeen correspondence. A running account of his struggle with a fellow-student for the first place in Professor Davidson's class is rather quaintly mingled with disquisitions on the Messianic character of certain Psalms and on the authorship of the Pentateuch, a subject which seems to have been touched upon in some of the very first lectures that he heard. Once,

¹ See preceding note.

at least, he pauses to ask himself whether his anxiety about the issue of certain examinations is quite in keeping with the religious character of his new surroundings. At any rate there was much less danger than formerly of over-study.

“Such work as we get to do here,” he writes to a friend early in 1867, “—and the whole does not come to a great deal—is very much in the form of writing. In the University as well as in our College essay-writing is the main thing required, and the Edinburgh men have a fluency in this line that we at Aberdeen cannot at all equal. It does not follow, however, that because they write faster, Edinburgh men write better than we do; indeed, I do not think that is the case.”

This passage perhaps glances at the somewhat popular style of certain of his contemporaries which was chastened by a not infrequent sarcasm from Professor Davidson. It also indicates for the first time an attitude towards the intellectual atmosphere of the official orthodoxy which it is important to understand clearly, and which is fully illustrated in the following very frank extracts from Mr. Pirie Smith's Memorandum.

“During his first Theological Session he had three classes to attend—Apologetics, Dr. Bannerman; Natural History, Dr. Duns; and Hebrew, Dr. A. B. Davidson. The class of Hebrew was the one that he most enjoyed and from which he derived the most benefit—not merely, nor even chiefly, because of the subject, but because the Lecturer was a man of great ability, which could hardly be said of the other two. Having in Aberdeen already taken a session in Natural History, he and others similarly placed were naturally somewhat indignant at being compelled to begin the study of the subject over again. This feeling may, in a large measure, account for the distaste with which the lectures were attended and the far from cordial relations between the lecturer and his students. . . . A few specimens of his prælections will suffice to justify the distaste which he managed to create in some of his hearers. The first day William thought he seemed a pleasant man

and that his class might after all turn out to be interesting. His next notice is somewhat more unfavourable. 'I think,' he says, 'Duns is not a very able thinker, and he does not lecture well. On Fridays he has an examination. It is of a conversational kind, when oral, as it was yesterday. I got into a regular argument as to the difference between animals and vegetables, not exactly with Duns but with his assistant in the Museum who was seated among the students and, I think, enunciated Duns's own views. At least Duns set him to answer my objections and gave no answer himself. The class as a whole, I think, were inclined to side with me and thought Duns really did not know what to say. Certainly he broke up the class abruptly without giving a definite statement. . . .'

"To the work of Dr. Bannerman's class William gave himself with zest and enthusiasm. His first impression of the Professor was rather unfavourable. 'As yet we have had only introductory matter, couched in very diffuse language showing, I think, very little logical power.' But whatever he may have thought of the lecturer he respected and honoured the man as a gentleman and a Christian, and Dr. Bannerman on his side respected and did justice to his pupil. 'Bannerman has given out a long list of subjects for our homily.¹ All of course are connected with Apologetics, some with Natural Theology, others with different aspects of Christian evidences. . . . I think I shall choose a subject from Natural Theology—the development theory—I meant to give some time to this subject at all events, having got Herbert Spencer's book.'"

Later he writes :

"I am working at the development theory for my homily. . . . In Spencer's book the fallacies are very obvious. The manner in which he contrives really to assume the materiality of the soul in particular (which of course is the foundation of the whole doctrine) is very ingenious, but contains an egregious *petitio principii*. Of course the doctrine of the correlation of physical forces forms a great feature in the argument. I think, however,

¹ An exercise prescribed for students in the first year of their Theological course, which was in form a dissertation, academic in character, on some Apologetic proposition set by the Professor.

that I can show that the doctrine is not understood by the development school, and that the doctrine of the dissipation of energy directly disproves the theory of evolution. From this point of view I think I might bring into my homily something different from the common arguments. . . .”

The homily was read in due course, and elicited considerable praise from Dr. Bannerman, who said “it was to be viewed as quite beyond a mere college exercise; that though there were some points on which he could not agree with the writer, he (the writer) had worked out principles of great value in philosophy and apologetics, and though the subject was difficult, the writer had mastered it, and not it him. He also praised the clearness of the statement both of the writer’s own views and of the opposite views, etc., etc., in fact was quite flattering.”

Apart from his work, the circumstances of Smith’s daily life in the early Edinburgh days differed very slightly from those of his undergraduate career at Aberdeen. He established himself at first in Castle Street with his sister Nellie, who had been sent to school in Edinburgh, and there was the same constant interchange of communications with the Manse of Keig. The climate of Edinburgh, though accounted severe, seems to have suited him better from the beginning than the unmitigated rigours of the Aberdeen winters, and apart from an occasional return of chest weakness, combated with cod-liver oil and respirators and other favourite devices of the mid-Victorian physician, his medical history begins at this time to enter on a happily uneventful phase. He produced, indeed, one contemporary observes, the impression of physical delicacy; they looked “with a measure of awe on the short, round-shouldered, youthful-looking student” whose reputation had preceded him from the North. But with the attainment of his twentieth year he entered on a period of moderately settled health and sustained

vigour which was destined to last without serious interruption until the premature close of his life.

The sister who lived with him gives a vivid little sketch of her brother as he was at this time :

“ It used to be his boast,” she writes, “ that he had me so admirably trained that I never disturbed him by talking or anything of that kind. . . . We never talked except at meals ; then I got leave to chatter as much as I liked, though sometimes his mind ran so on his work that I used to think he was hearing nothing. However, that was not the case ; as I got an answer after a time, but sometimes so long after that I had nearly forgotten what I had said. He never nagged. If I did anything that did not please him he told me so in a few plain words and then was done with it. If he saw me looking puzzled over my lessons he would suddenly say, ‘ Stuck ? ’ or, ‘ Want a hand ? ’ and then ran rapidly over the different points, making notes here and there on the margin of the book. One had to be very quick to take it all in, and sometimes I used to wish with an inward groan, as I used to wish at home when father was working out a sum, that he wasn’t quite so clever. . . . On Sundays we always went to Church together in the morning, racing along at a terrible pace, and at night we had as regularly a practice of Psalm tunes, ‘ French ’ being a great favourite. . . . Sometimes young men came to be coached, and it was a standing joke that he always kept their pencils.”

Warned by his recent experience of illness, and admonished by the affectionate anxiety of his family, he was at first extremely cautious in the expenditure of his surplus energies, and for a time he avoided many activities which attracted him, but which involved his being out at night. He joined the Philosophical Institution,¹ as he said, in order to procure himself some light reading, for “ it is impossible to subsist upon heavy books alone,” and he saw something of a few friends who belonged chiefly to the Aberdeen connection. But for the most part he

¹ An organisation of some standing, whose main purpose is to provide popular lectures by eminent persons ; it possesses a fairly large general library, with a reading-room attached.

spent his evenings in theological study or in coaching Free Church students (often in the most disinterested way) in Mathematics and Natural Science. The development of his social relations, which a little later made such rapid progress, advanced at first somewhat slowly ; but one friendship which specially distinguishes this period deserves particular mention.

It was very near the beginning of his first New College session that Smith made the acquaintance of Mr. Lindsay, now Principal of the Glasgow Free Church College, who then lived in rooms in the same house. The friendship advanced rapidly, as appears from the following passage from a letter to Keig, which is interesting, both on personal grounds, and as throwing light on the point reached by the heresiarch who was then engaged in writing a homily to show that the theory of evolution is "metaphysically absurd and physically incorrect" :

"Since Ellen went away I have been writing my homily and amusing myself by strolling about the town. I daresay I should be rather dull but for the company of Lindsay, whom I like very much. He has some opinions that I do not at all assent to, but on the whole our views both in theology and philosophy correspond. Lindsay is generally said to be rather broad. I think, however, that this is a mistake. I think he is really a good fellow."

The struggle in the Hebrew class ended in his standing equal at the head of it with his chief competitor.¹ This honourable issue of the contest secured Smith's academic position, and he ceases henceforth to be much preoccupied with the juvenile business of class distinctions. At the end of the session he carried out the plan of travel which the year before had been frustrated by his brother's death, and spent several months in Germany in the study of theology, perfecting himself in the language and amusing his leisure with the study of mathematics and of the world at large.

His early impressions of travel are characteristic and

¹ The Rev. J. P. Lilley, D.D., Knox's United Free Church, Arbroath.

interesting because so sharply and clearly recorded ; but they would be disappointing reading to any one who expected a sentimental journey or a picturesque tour. His first experiences of Germany date from the last days of the old particularism, and he lived entirely among the intellectual and academic class whose interest does not then appear to have been very powerfully awakened in the great work of Bismarck which was soon to enter on its final phase. Smith's letters are full of interesting and minute information about the manners and customs of students, the aspect and dimensions of public buildings, and even the details of the Catholic ritual, with which he became acquainted in its most splendid form at Cologne. But there is nothing to show that he entered into the spirit of the national aspirations of Prussia, which was even then celebrating the first anniversary of Sadowa. The possibility and even the imminence of war with France is indeed present to his mind, but the letters contain several curious disparagements of the German army, and, like many people of greater experience than he then possessed, he was far from forming the slightest estimate of the power which in less than three years was to change the face of Europe.

These were matters on which he was little qualified to form a sound opinion, but the influence of his first travels on his attitude to the questions with which he was chiefly concerned was deep and lasting. He found himself for the first time in a religious atmosphere totally different from that in which he was born and bred, in a country in which there were more Catholics than Protestants, where among the Protestants themselves religious indifference and wide divergences on all important points were common, where even religious controversy was conducted with a kind of apathy, and where in the manner of the learned who taught Theology there was nothing (as he said) to suggest that they regarded it "as anything but an abstract science." In his pursuit of this science it is not difficult

to trace the growth of a certain independence and detachment.

His original intention had been to go to Tübingen, at that time a very usual place of resort for young English scholars and theologians, and additionally attractive at the moment because Dr. Davidson had some idea of spending the summer there. Dr. Davidson, however, decided to go to Italy, and various advisers, including, it seems, the Minister of Keig, recommended Heidelberg, where Rothe was proving himself "at present the most notable man on the Rational side." The young theologian, however, felt "some hesitation in exposing himself to the most rationalistic teaching in Germany," and he ended by settling down at Bonn in the household of Dr. Schaaerschmidt, Professor of Philosophy in the University, induced thereto by the circumstance "that, after Heidelberg Bonn seemed to be the best place that was esteemed very healthy."

The letters of this time are much occupied with the collection of the necessary books for his Hebrew studies, arrangements for German lessons, and the beginnings of acquaintances with German students, some of which ripened into interesting and important friendships which will require notice hereafter. Many passages show how fast he held to the traditions in which he had been brought up.

"Your last letter," he writes to his father on Monday 29th April, "was delivered to me yesterday morning, one among many strange and displeasing features of a continental Sunday. Before considering the questions in Mamma's letter I may say how I spent yesterday. In the house here, Sunday (Mrs. Schaaerschmidt says) is just like any other day. Mrs. S. spins or works as usual, but in deference to my feelings abstained from doing so yesterday in my presence. The first service in the Lutheran Church was at half-past seven, which was too early. The second was at half-past nine, and to it Dr. S. accompanied me. He does not usually go to church now because Mrs. S. is unable to go.

I did not understand the service very fully, and made out only part of the sermon, which was on the Beatitudes. The German hymns I found very fine, and the singing was better than ours, every word being clearly pronounced. There is no later Lutheran service, and no Scottish service until seven o'clock. In the interval I read and walked in the garden. Dinner was distinguished by the use of claret instead of beer. A little before seven a German student called and asked me to walk with him. I walked down to the Scottish Church with him, and had some talk about our way of keeping the Sabbath, which he admitted had advantages. I am not quite sure how I ought to do in such cases. In this instance my course was clear, as I had to go to church at any rate; but ought I in other cases to refuse to walk on Sabbath afternoon, or rather to walk and try to use such conversation as is suitable for Sabbath? I incline to the latter view, but would rather have your opinion. When I first called on Dr. G. on Saturday, a week ago, he invited me to come to his house on Sabbath evening, and I of course declined, but I am not sure that a quiet walk with a fellow-student is quite the same thing. I would also prefer that you should not send letters so as to reach me on Sabbath as the last did."

His opinion of the performance of a compatriot whose service he attended, and whose preaching he thought indifferent, is concentrated in the scathing comment, "He sings hymns with a harmonium."

Of his studies he remarks a little later (May 8):

"I cannot even now speak very certainly about Kamphausen. His pronunciation is very indistinct and I am not yet fully accustomed to it, and miss so much of his lectures that I am not able to speak yet about them. On Monday night, however, I walked with him in the cool of the evening (to walk in the middle of the day is impossible, with the thermometer at 80° in the shade and not a cloud in the whole sky, as has been the state of weather this week). However, to return to Kamphausen, I found him rationalistic, as we should say, that is, he holds for example that a passage of S.S. can contain no more for us than for the author, and that its full meaning is to be obtained by placing ourselves at the author's standpoint. At the same time, though this view leads him to

admit that there may be historical errors in the Bible, and to refer Daniel to the period of the Maccabees, etc., he is not a rationalist according to the Germans, who reserve that name for those who deny supernatural inspiration and prophecy altogether. The middle position of K. I do not fully understand and may not have done justice to. Certainly the language in which he spoke of the Messianic Psalms to-day seemed very much orthodox. I must repeat, however, that I do not follow his lectures well enough to speak with certainty.

“Lange’s lectures are only thrice a week and are very interesting. I understand L. better, as he speaks slowly and distinctly. He is in German phraseology *geistreich*, while Kamphausen is, I believe, only a thorough scholar. Once a week I hear Köhler on Nahum and Habakkuk. This is a public class, *i.e.* no fee is charged. I have heard the first lecture only. Köhler speaks distinctly and I think his lectures will be interesting. He is orthodox, but is counted inferior as a scholar to Kamphausen.”

And again a little later he writes (May 20) :

“To begin with the Theological Seminary. This is an institution more akin to our way of conducting University Classes, but somewhat more elaborate. Thus this summer the Book of Judges, or rather a few chapters of the book, are read. The students translate into Latin, and then have themselves to furnish an exegesis of the passage. The Professor who presides conducts this exercise, corrects any error, and—at least this holds good in the case of Köhler, who is a very genial man—leads, so to speak, in a general conversation when there is any difficulty suggested. The whole is very friendly and pleasant. The Old Testament Seminary meets once a week only. There is also a New Testament Seminary, and another the name of which I forget, but I attend only the Old Testament. The second meeting is to-night, so at present I speak only from my experience of the first at which I ‘hospitirte,’ that is, was present without being enrolled. I enrolled only to-day, and had some conversation with Köhler on Jacob’s dream. I do not, however, view the dream quite in the same way as he does. I have from the library a very curious essay of Philo’s on this dream. It is not of much use, as it takes a purely allegorical view of the whole history. It is,

however, very interesting, and may give me some hints at least. . . .

“Lange continues to be interesting, but is very discursive. He is constantly flying off at a tangent. He is at present involved in a quarrel with Schenkel of Heidelberg, who started as a member of the Vermittlungs School to which Lange belongs, but has now taken up a very rationalistic position, while Lange, on the contrary, is among the most orthodox of the Middle School. Lange edits a *Bibelwerk* or commentary for practical purposes, giving, in addition to exegesis, the main homiletical lines of thought. One volume of this was written by Schenkel, but proved so heterodox that another author has been called on to provide a second volume on the same Epistle. Schenkel, indignant at this, has attacked Lange in general, and the *Bibelwerk* in particular, with great acrimony in a periodical he edits. A controversy between the two theologians is now raging somewhat bitterly.

“Schenkel is a popular rationalist and a very influential writer. He is not, however, regarded as one of the most powerful men of his School. The leader of the strict Lutheran School on the other hand seems to be Delitzsch. Hengstenberg’s influence is very much declined, as he is very haughty and overbearing and very High Church.”

The slight movement of controversy in the next extract (July 10) marks a further step in the same process :

“I went a long walk with Professor Kamphausen and had a great deal of interesting conversation with him, especially on Inspiration, a subject on which he is very far from orthodox. At the same time he is a very sincere and I believe pious man; in fact, it is quite absurd to regard the heterodox Germans as infidels. Of course I do not mean that such men as Strauss are not infidels. But Kamphausen, though in regard to some points very heterodox (*e.g.* he goes about as far as Colenso in the Pentateuch question), is on other points, I may say, strictly orthodox. So far as I can see, he holds quite orthodox views on the person, miracles, etc., of Christ, and lays special weight on the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*.”

Theology did not monopolise Smith’s energies. About the end of May he writes of a resumption of mathematical studies :

“ In the end of last week I went to hear Plücker, the celebrated mathematician. He lectures not on mathematics but experimental optics. He had capital apparatus and a very good lecture to a very small number of students. He conducts a mathematical seminary, which I must go to see. Professor Schaarschmidt has promised to give me an introduction to him. He is an oldish man, at least sixty I should think, and speaks very distinctly. I think I made out every word he said.”

A few days later he carried out his intention of making Professor Plücker's better acquaintance, and called upon him with a letter of introduction from Schaarschmidt. Plücker was lecturing on a new geometrical method, and also on subjects connected with plane geometry. One of the latter lectures struck Smith as so interesting that he sends an abstract of it for his father's benefit.

“ Plücker's new geometry of space,” he observes, “ must, I suppose, have some relation to Quaternions, a subject he is not acquainted with. I find the mathematicians, who are few in number, very affable. One of them,¹ who is a kind of assistant to Plücker in his experiments, has just lent me a paper of Plücker's on his method, which I have not yet had time to look at.”

This extract shows that Smith was already laying the foundations of his acquaintance with German scientific men and methods which in later years became a conspicuous feature in his life. Other letters show that he interested himself a good deal in the general work of the University. He gives long and lucid descriptions of the German academic system, favourably contrasting its specialised activities with the somewhat discursive character of the Scottish curriculum. He writes interestingly about the relations of Protestants and Catholics in the Rhenish Province, the influence and merits of the Catholic Theological Faculty, the prestige of the Jesuits, the dissensions of the Protestants among themselves, and other topics of current Church history.

¹ The beginning of Smith's acquaintance with Professor Klein.

Another scheme of study began to occupy his attention about the middle of June, when he decided to become a candidate for the Shaw Fellowship, an academic prize for philosophical attainments, which is periodically open to competition among graduates of the four universities of Scotland. Replying, no doubt, to a suggestion from Keig, he observes :

“ I have already seen in *The Times* the conditions of the Shaw. I suspect I may almost have to go in for it, as I conceive there is no other possible Aberdeen candidate. In many respects I should like to do so very well ; but in an Edinburgh examination, especially in pure logic, I know I should have no chance against Lindsay, who knows everything, except psychology and Mill's style of logic, far better than I do. . . . I do not know if I have mentioned that I have finished the rough copy of my exegesis and done something in preparation for my essay on Genesis. I am also reading Kant, but the accounts I send to you of matters not studious must prove to you that I am not studying hard. It strikes me that to compete for the Shaw might be useful in this way, that if I were the only Aberdeen competitor and a good second, I would run a fair chance of the next examinership at Aberdeen.”

The vivacity with which he describes the incidents of his daily life, and the modest amusements in which he from time to time indulged, must have shown his family that he was at any rate thoroughly enjoying himself. He made several expeditions on the frequent academic holidays to the Ahrthal and the Siebengebirge, and often visited Cologne, where he witnessed the great procession of Corpus Domini, and where, as he was fond of recalling in later years, he gathered roses from a tree which then grew on the top of one of the unfinished towers of the Cathedral.

He had by this time acquired considerable powers of expressing himself in German, though not the complete proficiency of his later life, and it had not taken him long to acquire a taste for German manners and customs—always excepting the laxity in observing Sunday, “ about

which," as he still complains, "I feel it quite an anomaly to use the word *Sabbath*." He was still enough of a newcomer to record with qualified approbation his first experience of *Sauerkraut*, and even of salad, which was then not much used in Scotland, and to chronicle as an event likely to amuse "the children" the appearance of sorrel soup at Frau Schaarschmidt's table. These dishes he seems to have regarded with some distrust, but in other respects the German cuisine rather took his fancy. At any rate he was careful to procure and transmit to his mother various recipes for German dishes, in return for which an approved formula for marmalade was sent from Scotland, and is said to have been welcomed with enthusiasm in the Schaarschmidt household.

A literary reminiscence of this period is not without interest. Smith had been disappointed of an excursion by a rainy afternoon, and writes :

"I consoled myself for this by reading one of Goethe's novels, but I cannot say that I found the novel in all respects satisfactory. I do not think it was so interesting as good English novels, and certainly the moral tone was much lower. By the Germans, however, the book, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, is viewed with perfect enthusiasm."

Another passage from the same letter contains a reference to current events. Bonn, and more especially Cologne, are on the main route between France and Germany. At Paris the splendours of the Second Empire were reaching their culmination in the great Exhibition of 1867, and an almost unprecedented number of crowned heads and other personages of exalted rank had been the guests of Napoleon III. The anecdote which Smith preserves is characteristic of the instability of the international situation, and has some historical interest.

"The following story is reported from Cöln. As the King of Prussia and suite passed through Cöln and were received by the officials on their way from Paris, the

King said there would be no more war in his lifetime, Bismarck that he hoped the Emperor would be able to keep peace, and Moltke that there would be war next spring. Certainly the Prussians are prepared for war if necessary. Forty thousand men were reviewed in Potsdam this week, and of course only a small part of the army can be at Potsdam at once.

“The Luxemburg evacuation showed itself here a week or two ago in the shape of footsore artillerymen going about with billets. One such soldier was billeted on Schaarschmidt, so the peace cost the Professor half a dollar, which is the price one pays if he does not wish to have a soldier in his house.”

Some weeks later, in the course of July, Smith assisted at the passage of the Sultan Abdul Aziz, who was also on his way from Paris, and speculates in a rather boyish manner as to whether he had indeed managed to distinguish the Commander of the Faithful among the numerous personages of the Imperial suite.

Another visitor to Bonn in whom Smith had a more personal interest was Professor Flint,¹ who had some acquaintance with the Schaarschmidts, and whose personality and preaching attracted him greatly. Professor Flint arrived towards the close of the semester, and the time was approaching for Smith's departure from Bonn. It was his intention to spend a few weeks in travelling about Germany before returning home, and some time before he had succeeded in persuading his father to join him in this expedition. Mr. Pirie Smith had no experience of foreign travel, and the undertaking was then more serious for a man of his age and fortune than it would now be considered. He had indeed hesitated to embark on the journey without

¹ The late Rev. Robert Flint, D.D., LL.D., Correspondent of the Institute of France, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at St. Andrews (1864-76), Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh (1876-1903), author of *The Philosophy of History in Europe, Historical Philosophy in France, Theism, Socialism, Agnosticism*, and many other works.

a travelling companion, and the plan, in which Smith displayed an eager interest, was very nearly abandoned. William's arguments and remonstrances prevailed, however, and the journey was decided upon. The home letters are thenceforth filled with elaborate instructions for the assistance of the old gentleman in dealing with the complicated coinage, the countless frontiers; and the many petty troubles which beset the continental traveller in those days, and in the result he arrived without mishap at Bonn, where he spent several days at the Schaarschmidts' house with his son. The tour which they undertook together began in the first days of August; and consisted in a journey by easy stages up the Rhine to Heidelberg, where they spent a week. The minister, who conscientiously worked very hard at his sight-seeing under Smith's energetic guidance, seems occasionally to have been somewhat exhausted by his labours and by the heat, which was intense; but on the whole he enjoyed his travels very much. At Heidelberg the tourists were rejoined for a time by Professor Flint, and Smith attended a theological lecture delivered by an unspecified Professor which he found "fearfully heterodox, but very clever in style and delivery." He also records that he visited Professors Holtzmann and Zeller, and that he heard the University preacher Nippold, whom he thought "unorthodox but evangelical." In spite of his fatigue, which was no doubt due to the sun and the unusual excitement of foreign travel, Mr. Pirie Smith was able to compose several lectures on the subject of his experiences, which were no doubt afterwards delivered to appreciative audiences at Keig. William was at any rate able to record when on the point of turning homewards that both were much the better for the trip.

They returned by way of Brussels and Antwerp to London, where the indefatigable sight-seers spent another heavy day, ending at the Crystal Palace; they then took

ship for Aberdeen, and by the beginning of September Smith was once more at the Manse, where he spent an uneventful autumn in preparation for his winter's work.

The winter of 1867-68 found him settled with his sister in new lodgings, this time in Buccleuch Place, in that newer part of the Old Town of Edinburgh which was being built about the flourishing time of the senior characters in *Redgauntlet*. It is pleasing to note the growing physical vigour and the unabated zest of study which carries him through even the more tedious passages of the theological course. In a letter to a friend (February 13, 1868) he enumerates with a diverting affectation of languor the pieces of work on which he has been engaged, culminating in a struggle with a Hebrew root, and continues :

“As besides all this I have done a lot of other work in theology and have been reading Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes and Kant, you may judge that I have been pretty busy.

“To get to more interesting matter, you will no doubt applaud the conduct of Dr. Candlish in setting up a gymnasium in the New College. I attend with a good deal of regularity, especially in wet weather, and succeed pretty well where a light weight is an advantage—as in the various kinds of vaulting. A popular exercise is the spring vault, in which a bar of very imposing height may be cleared without much effort when one has got the knack. Perhaps you know this by the name of double vaulting which it sometimes receives in our gymnasium. My weakest point is the trapeze, on which I am quite helpless and unable to get up steam. Occasionally probationers come up and assist, and it is rather comical to see a man in a white neckcloth knotted round a bar, with his head projecting between his legs.”

Apart from his studies of double vaulting, his spare moments were occupied with mathematical tuition and, more seriously, with the metaphysical reading referred to above which he had undertaken with a view to competing for the Shaw Fellowship.

His main preoccupation during this session was,

however, the development of his theological views of which we have seen the beginnings in the letters from Bonn, and which was soon to find expression in considered utterances. Besides the advanced instruction in Hebrew which he was receiving from Professor Davidson, he was following the classes of Professor Smeaton, and was a somewhat impatient hearer of the lectures on Systematic Theology of Dr. Buchanan, who was then long past his best as a teacher, and, as Smith complained, was not above an occasional false quantity, besides displaying a tendency to confuse the question of the Divine authority of the Pentateuch with that of its Mosaic authorship.

The Latin discourse, a controversial exercise, now no longer exacted in the decent obscurity of a learned language, was in Smith's time the main piece of written work required of students during their second year at the New College. The subject he chose was "*An Jesus Christus sit Messias Patribus promissus,*" and, by reason both of its ability and of its masterly handling of the subject, the discourse received high praise from Dr. Rainy, whose "good but somewhat spun-out" lectures on Church History were part of the course of instruction during that year.

"Rainy began by stating my distinction between the two methods of investigating the subject, and thought (as I supposed he would) that I had put the distinction between the two too strongly, and that the way I followed was rather an extension of the ordinary treatment, so as to go deeper into the matter, than a different way. I think he is wrong here, but I feared he would have said more against my treatment of Turretin, etc. Then, as to my own way, he said I had worked it out in a very interesting manner; in fact, he had not had a more interesting discourse for a long time. In reading it one was carried on with great interest; for, firstly, the Latin was Latin, which was a great comfort, and then the thoughts, etc., etc.

"He thought, however, that in one or two points I was disposed to find too little of the New Testament in

the Old Testament. It was well for argument not to press the meaning of the Old Testament too far, but in one or two places he thought I should not have denied that there might be more in the Old Testament. He thought this was partly owing to the influence of Hofmann, whom I had quoted. Hofmann was a very powerful thinker, and so apt to carry intelligent students too far with him. Altogether the criticism was elaborate, and to me satisfactory, as I knew he would not find me quite orthodox."

Two papers he submitted for the judgment of Professor Davidson are even more important in the history of Smith's mind at this critical period. The first of these, on "The Day of the Lord," showed "a considerable grasp of the principles of historical criticism," and won for him a prize of books, which he chose for himself, and among which it is interesting to note that he acquired a copy of Rothe's *Zur Dogmatik*. Of the second, "On Prophecy and History," written in the last weeks of 1867, he himself gives an interesting summary in a letter to Keig (January 3, 1868):

"I have not been doing much this week since I got Davidson's Essay fairly finished. I may perhaps modify the latter part a little still. The subject needs very nice treatment, and it requires very exact handling to bring out that the Prophet's mind, acting according to its natural laws, was yet the organ of a supernatural Revelation. My leading idea is a parallelism between Prophecy and the Christian life. Man's agency forms the connecting power by which God's Creation is moulded into conformity with His Spirit: man and the world at large were made by God supernaturally and fitted for His Divine Purpose, but that Purpose is only reached through the Free Activity of Christian men guided by the Spirit of God as a formative principle. So in Prophecy there was provided a certain supernatural *matter* of thought in vision, etc., probably by supernatural action on the nervous system. This fitted into the natural matter present to the Prophet's mind, and the two thus combined were moulded into a thought by the action of the Prophet's mental powers guided by the formative influence of

the Divine Spirit. The double divine action below and above the Prophet's own activity sufficed perfectly to control the result without interfering in a magical manner with the laws of human thought.

"I do not know if this is intelligible, but I think the thought has some apologetic and scientific value."¹

Dr. Davidson's view of the paper fully realised the hopes of the young author. He praised the "reverent spirit" in which the inquiry had been conducted, and, having by this testimonial established the legitimacy of the speculation, he went so far as to say that the psychological part of the essay was the most fundamental examination of the subject he had ever seen. The argument was progressively conducted and "always took a firm position on the facts of human nature, not going off into the clouds in treating what was supernatural as if the supernatural were unnatural." The appreciation ended with the prediction that Smith would on this *human side* of the science do good service to Theology.

Enough has been said to show how unanimously a great future in the service of the Church was already predicted for Smith by those of his seniors who were best qualified to speak. It is now time to indicate the position he acquired among those of his own standing. He had by this time begun to take part in the work of the Missionary Society and the Theological Society, the activities of which were justly regarded as forming an important part of the education of the rising generation of ministers.

Beyond some early expressions of diffidence in the conduct of public religious exercises in connection with the Home Mission work in the Canongate, and one or two references to Dr. Duff, his connection with the Missionary

¹ The Essay was, as stated below, read and discussed at the New College Theological Society on January 25, 1868; and, somewhat recast, it was sent in the following April to the editors of the *Contemporary Review* (Dean Alford and Archdeacon Plumpton). A brief note from the latter (April 20) announced that it was not thought "suitable for our pages." Only a fragment of the paper now survives; it will be found under the title "Prophecy and Personality" in *Lectures and Essays*.

Society, of which he was Corresponding Secretary in 1868-69, does not supply much interesting material. The quasi-social side of the Society's work, with its musical evenings dignified by the occasional presence of an evangelical peer, seems to have attracted him very little ; but in the more serious concerns of the Society he took an active part. The following passage, from a letter written early in 1869, keeps in due prominence a certain phase of the Free Church consciousness, the importance of which the intellectual party of those days were apt to underrate. It is not uninteresting to note the attitude of reasoned liberalism adopted by the Corresponding Secretary, and the influence which he is able to exert in favour of moderation and common sense.

“Our other great event is the application of the University Missionary Association to send delegates to our Missionary Society as they do to the U.P.'s.¹ Black² had given notice of a motion simply to agree ; but as some men felt a little difficulty as to whether in doing so we might seem to be giving up F.C. principles, I framed an amendment to which Black gave way, instructing the Secretary to explain that we felt that we could cordially agree to the proposed intercourse without at all entering into the historical questions which had so long separated the Societies, and which we were still far from indifferent to, as we should meet simply on the ground of common love as two Evangelical Missionary Societies representing the University and New College respectively, and having at heart alike God's Glory and the promotion of Christ's Kingdom on earth. This motion gave general satisfaction, but a small lot of 4 or 5 men, headed by Ross, our Missionary, got up and assailed us in the most passionate manner, calling the Established Church almost infidel, and their Association little better ; at length we were forced to adjourn the meeting. There is no doubt that my motion must be carried by a large majority, but the row is serious in intensity if only one or two men are really involved in it.”

¹ United Presbyterians.

² Dr. Sutherland Black, one of the present writers.

It is perhaps just worth while to record that the motion was carried as the mover anticipated, and that the New College authorities fully approved of the decision.

Smith's work in the Theological Society, of which he was in turn Secretary (1868-69) and President (1869-70), is in the nature of things of much greater importance. The Society met every Friday evening, either to hear a paper by one of its members followed by a written criticism delivered by an appointed critic, or to hold a set debate on a theological question selected beforehand. He reports to his father of his early appearances in the proceedings of this body :

“ I do not think I can ever be a popular speaker, for I find my views very generally misapprehended. I find that a successful debating society speech must be composed of a number of detached pieces. I never rise except to expound *one idea*, and am, therefore, too theoretical to be very well received, *i.e.* to make hits. But I think I am listened to with attention, though really it is very hard to say, and certainly those that follow me have repeatedly accused me of heresies quite opposite to the real sense of what I said.”

Various slight notices of these discussions appear in his letters, and a few scraps of notes for speeches and criticisms survive among his papers. The first event of real importance, however, in his connection with the Society was the occasion (January 25, 1868) on which he read before it the Essay on Prophecy, originally written for Professor Davidson, to which reference has already been made. It was delivered to a thin audience, much below the average in numbers, partly owing to the counter-attractions of a party at Dr. Rainy's, and partly to one of those almost legendary tempests which at times arise in Edinburgh, in the course of which the streets are strewn with the fragments of chimney-pots, and four-wheeled cabs are blown over on their sides. In spite of these disadvantages the essayist had no cause to complain.

“My essay was very favourably received,” he writes home, “tho’ I think that no one except Lindsay fully understood it. Lindsay gave a very favourable criticism, declaring that the psychological part was perfect so far as our psychology went, but doubting whether psychology was far enough developed to base a theory on.

“Black, the regular critic, praised me highly, but quite missed some important points, and did not profess fully to understand me. Kippen said he thought it was the best essay he ever heard, and began to pitch into its main thesis as contrary to the doctrine of Predestination—by a complete miscomprehension of a term I had used. Bell gave a very kind laudatory criticism, praising the conscientiousness with which the thoughts were worked out, and also praising the style as being genuinely effective without any straining at effect, or a single word put in with that aim.

“The general agreement was that the essay was somewhat German and obscure, that the obscurity, however, was due to the subject rather than to the treatment, which was clear as far as possible in so abstract a subject, that there was no padding in it, that it was very ingenious, that the thoughts were very beautiful, and all wrong, etc.

“I think I may say on the whole that my essay could not have been received with more respect. No one ventured to attack it strongly, because no one quite followed the course of thought.”

He spent much of the spring and summer of 1868 in Bute, where he was engaged in some not very congenial tutorial work,—“not trying to the body, but aggravating to the mind.” In the intervals of coaching his backward pupils he settled himself to the preparation of his *Popular Discourse*¹ on Jeremiah’s prophetic work, “strictly based on passages,” and to an extended study of Rothe. Much of his leisure was devoted to expeditions in the company of a retired naval officer who lived near, and who taught him how to sail a

¹ The New College exercise for the third year of the Theological course, which took the form of a lecture on some Biblical subject such as might be addressed to a congregation from the pulpit.

boat; and his solitude was enlivened by a flying visit from his mother, and by a correspondence with his friend Lindsay, in the course of which an important suggestion was made by the latter and at once referred to Keig for observations and advice.

“Lindsay tells me,” he writes, “that Tait’s assistant—not bound to grind air-pump—is probably about to leave, that A., who has not graduated, is not eligible, and that there is no other Edinburgh man, and that I, he thinks, would have a good chance. The work would be light and suit nicely with my Edinburgh session. (Besides that, to be assistant at Edinburgh gives a certain status.) Really, I think it would be worth looking after. Examining papers is the main thing.”

Some slight difficulties about the manner in which Smith should offer himself as a candidate were quickly overcome, and the subsequent negotiations ended in the following letter:

17 DRUMMOND PLACE, EDINBURGH,
September 26, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR—I have only now got your note, having staid longer in Ireland than I intended when I gave you the above address. I am too tired and sleepy to write much, perhaps even to write *sense*.

I don’t think the New College will in any way interfere with me. Your chief work will be looking over examination papers once a fortnight—and that can be done at any hour—and showing the students where and how they have blundered.

As to the Physical Laboratory which I hope to open, I take it that you will consider attendance there rather as a means of making yourself known by original investigation than as daily toil.

But I have no doubt we shall arrange matters easily, especially as you seek the post from a genuine love of the subject.

Let me know when you are coming to Edinburgh, for we can settle more in half an hour’s talk than in fifty letters. My mechanical assistants won’t be here till the last ten days of October, so there is no hurry whatever.

I shall propose you to the University Court at their early meeting next month. —Yours truly,

P. G. TAIT.

In October, accordingly, he returned to Edinburgh, and established himself in comfortable quarters in Duke Street. In the New College session which followed he contrived to keep his theological reading in advance, on the whole, of his teachers. "Rainy's class,"¹ he observes, "is *slow*. There are some very good lectures, but no push"; and he seems to have held his own to some purpose in some very vigorous passages with Professor Macgregor, the eccentric but accomplished divine who had succeeded Dr. Buchanan in the chair of Systematic Theology. He secured the Hamilton Scholarship at the beginning of the session, beating the best men of his year, rather contrary to his expectation, and, though he obviously felt the severe strain on his energies, he was also able to continue his philosophical reading, and take part in the Shaw Fellowship examination with at least a chance of success. Complete success was, however, in this case beyond even his heroic energy and universal aptitude. The Fellowship, which carries with it the obligation to deliver a course of lectures on some philosophical subject, was awarded to Mr. Lindsay as every one, Smith included, had expected. Owing to the extreme pressure of his other work, he did not even succeed in realising his ambition to stand second; but he made a very distinguished appearance in the examination, and Professor Campbell Fraser, who adjudicated, is reported to have said that "his papers were the most interesting of the lot."

His contributions to the Transactions of the Theological Society, of which he was now secretary, included an essay, delivered on January 8, 1869, which dealt with an even more important topic than the psychological implications

¹ The Senior Class of Church History.

of prophecy, and was the product of his most recent theological reading.

“I delivered my essay at the Theological on Friday. It was really a success—much better received than I had expected. I have lent it just now to a man who wished to read it. Indeed, I have had several such applications. I must, however, send it to you when I get it back. The subject is *Christianity and the Supernatural*—very much a rendering of Rothe’s ideas from an English starting-point and in English forms of thought. I was especially glad that one man told me that he felt the vein of thought to be not only speculative but edifying.”¹

This opinion of Smith’s version of Rothe was not quite unanimous in the Society, and about this time the conservative opposition, though small in numbers and consideration, provoked an incident which gave rise to some passing bitterness, but which, in its due historical perspective, is somewhat amusing. The account which follows is from the contemporary correspondence :

“We had a row on Friday night [February 5] in the Theological. A motion was brought forward by a very ignorant man named * * * really levelled against Lindsay, Black, and myself, whom he accused of habitual contempt of Scripture. He did not mention our names, but told Lindsay that his motion (which was to tie down all members of the Society to absolute acceptance of the statements of S.S.) was against us. With some difficulty * * * got a Highlander to second, but found no one else to vote for his motion.

¹ The essay will be found in *Lectures and Essays*. Here it will be enough to say that Professor Rothe of Heidelberg (1799-1867), whose leading ideas Smith successfully sought to set forth to himself and the Theological Society in this paper, is the same Rothe whom we have seen characterised above (p. 85) as “at present the most notable man on the Rational side.” It is interesting to remember that Ritschl also, towards the close of his career as a theological undergraduate, spent a summer (1845) at Heidelberg under Rothe. Both the older and the younger disciple show the powerful influence of this master of historical and speculative theology, alike in their confident affirmation of the fact of a supernatural Divine revelation, and in their refusal to assign a special supernatural character to the records in which the fact of that revelation is conveyed.

“ I came down on him pretty heavily, plainly telling him that he could never have supposed that there had been anti-scriptural teaching in the Society unless he had been utterly ignorant of Theology.”

In the event the Society, though some members were inclined to think Smith's retort a trifle too severe, supported the impugned office-bearers and, in spite of the protests of the accuser, left in its minutes the uncontroverted assertion of his theological incompetence, and even threatened him with expulsion unless he retracted. It is not quite clear whether this threat was actually carried out, or whether the offender was allowed a more dignified exit by voluntary resignation. In any case he disappears from the story, and Smith's first theological controversy ended in a complete victory.

His University work, and the new associations and engagements which it brought him, were indeed quite sufficient to occupy all the time he could spare from his theological studies ; and it is difficult to see how he could have contrived, had he been elected Shaw Fellow, to prepare and deliver the course of lectures which would have been required. So far as can be judged from the history both of his earlier years and of his subsequent life, he found a greater happiness, and one more suited to his nature, in the society of Tait and his circle and in the pursuit of science, than he could have done in the cultivation of the Metaphysics of which that circle were the professed and somewhat obstreperous opponents. For the next two years he occupied a recognised position as a teacher of Physics. The importance of the work he was able to do in that capacity and as an original investigator was considerable, as we shall see ; but of at least equal consequence were the relations which he now began to form in the literary and scientific society of Edinburgh, outside the theological circles to which his acquaintance had hitherto been almost entirely confined. His friendship with his

new chief grew quickly, and it was one of the most congenial in his whole life. Professor Tait was at this time at the height of his reputation as a teacher and as a man of science, and was working in close association with his illustrious Glasgow colleague, Sir William Thomson, afterwards Lord Kelvin, in various undertakings, including the production of a celebrated text-book familiarly known from the circumstance of the collaboration as T & T'. Apart from his distinction as a natural philosopher Tait was personally a remarkable figure, even in a generation which maintained at a very high level the traditional glories of the Modern Athenians. He was a man considerably above the average stature, with a rugged head that Rodin would have liked to copy. The outlines of his face were bold and stern, but with this the intense kindness of his eyes and the benign expression of his mouth made a contrast which was almost startling. His personality acted like a charm on those who had the privilege of his intimacy. This was probably due in great measure to the strain of buoyant, almost boyish, enthusiasm which permeated his character to the end of his days. When he was not engaged in a strenuous course of golf at St. Andrews or a long walk near Edinburgh, his kingdom was a barely furnished little room in his house, 32 George Square, lined to the ceiling with books, and littered with piles of pamphlets and dusty manuscript, mostly covered with a neatly written maze of quaternionic or other mathematical symbols, pervaded with the odour of tobacco, and, in his earlier days, usually graced with a hospitable beer-jug which stood on the mantelpiece. Here he would work hour after hour, standing at a high ink-stained desk. But, however busy, he was always ready to welcome a friend, with whom he would discuss and argue with a tolerance and good humour which would have greatly surprised those who knew him only as a keen gladiator in the scientific arena.

Such a friend necessarily opened endless possibilities of

new experience to his junior colleague, whose parents seem at first to have been a little startled at the accounts which they received of the hearty though strictly moderate convivialities of the Professor and his new assistant. He hastens, in the following passage from a pleasant letter, to correct a wrong impression of frivolity which he appears to have created :

“ I am sorry to have given you a bad impression of Tait by mentioning the whisky and water, which certainly was not in quantity to do more than make up for our not sitting over wine at dinner.”

And again :

“ I don't know if in my last I found time to tell you that I dined with Tait on Christmas Day, and had a very pleasant evening in a quiet way. It is a great comfort that one has not to dress for Tait, and there is nothing stiff about Mrs. Tait or himself. Mrs. Tait asked me if I would object to come down always and dine with them on Sunday. This of course I declined, but it was kind in them to ask me. I am very glad to know that Tait is not a positivist. In fact there is a speculative Society, of which Sir W. Thomson is President, to which Tait refuses to go because most of the members are Unitarians. It is a comfort to know that our leading men of science are not *all* unbelievers.”

The new assistant had a great many minor examination papers to correct, and, as the standard of excellence was in his opinion uniformly pretty low, he complains that the task of arriving at an order of merit was no light one. The most laborious and responsible part of his University work was, however, the supervision of the laboratory which Tait, almost first in this country, had established for the practical instruction of his more advanced pupils.

“ I have so often written about the laboratory,” he writes to Keig, “ that I not unnaturally never thought that you had got very little definite information about it ; I will try to supply the want now.

“ The laboratory is open daily from ten to three—I

go up at ten and stay till eleven, and return always at two at the latest. But when I think I can venture to leave my classes I go back sooner ; in fact, I am never to go to Smeaton's on Mondays and Wednesdays, making my attendance next year if necessary. As yet, too, I have had to be very irregular with Macgregor, but that is mainly because Tait is busy with his ladies' class, which he has some trouble in getting arranged. The men come in whenever they please, *i.e.* the eight or nine who have joined the laboratory. Each is set to do something, two generally working together, and of course when they have gained some facility, and have a pretty long piece of work to do, they require very little attention. Tait comes up daily for a longer or shorter time.

"I have an experiment of my own. I am taking a series of observations on the intensity of thermo-electric currents in junctions of copper and iron dipped in baths of different temperatures. . . ."

Among the eight or nine pupils who were placed more or less under his charge were several who have since become celebrated. Sir John Murray, one of the naturalists, afterwards the chronicler, of the *Challenger* expedition, and now recognised both in Europe and America as the leader of oceanographic research, was a constant attendant at the laboratory, and remained Smith's life-long friend. Sir John Jackson and the late Mr. Meik, builders of the world's ports and bridges, also received their initiation into practical scientific work at this time under the auspices of Robertson Smith. Others whose names are honoured as engineers and men of science passed under his hands ; and the little group included another member destined to distinction, though then perhaps a somewhat idle pupil, the future author of *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*, the creator of Lord Hermiston and the Master of Ballantrae. Robert Louis Stevenson was at that time making his first unwilling and wholly unsuccessful efforts at a professional career, and was a student in Tait's laboratory. Little is remembered of him by the surviving witnesses, but it is said that when, as frequently happened, his interest in the legitimate business of the moment flagged, he showed the utmost

adroitness in drawing the lecturer into an argument on some theological point, rehearsing no doubt the controversies which about this time existed between himself and his father.

Early in 1869 Smith writes of other branches of his scientific work which was now absorbing a great part of his time :

“ My first lecture on Herschel came off to-day. I got on too slowly and was not altogether satisfied with myself. But as regards my audience I got on well enough. I am to lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays, and, if needful, on Fridays for a fortnight or three weeks.

“ I send you a *Scotsman* for to-day because I have a letter in it on ‘ Electro-magnetism and Magneto-electricity.’ The letter has been rather spoiled by bad pointing, probably because I only handed it in at 8 last night. The history of the thing is this. Tait wrote an obituary article on Forbes, in which he incidentally mentioned Faraday’s great discovery of Magneto-electricity. Segmann, a Danish merchant in Leith, wrote to claim the discovery for the Dane Oersted. Tait replied by saying that what Oersted discovered was Electro-magnetism. Segmann, however, will not give in, and has written two more letters, to the first of which Tait replied. But Segmann’s *second* letter, which appeared yesterday, contained a quotation from an article of Brewster’s in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which speaks of ‘ the Science of Electro-magnetism or *Magneto-electricity as founded by Oersted.*’ Tait did not like to have to accuse his late Principal of ignorance of Natural Philosophy, and so asked me to continue the fight. I accordingly wrote the letter I send, which pleases Tait highly. Tait says he almost danced with delight at it ; he is in fact a most excitable controversialist. . . .”

The controversial alliance, of which the above-quoted passage gives the first notice, was unbroken to the end of Smith’s life. One early and conspicuous result of it was Smith’s paper on Mill’s views of the nature of geometrical axioms,¹ which Professor Tait about this time communicated to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

“My great piece of news about myself,” writes the author, “is of course my Royal Society paper which Tait read last night. He read it all and had the figure of the Pons on the board and gave it off in great style, pointing out the steps of the proof with the pointer. In short, he did the very best that could be done for it, and then finished off with some supplementary remarks of his own in the way of demolishing metaphysicians at large and Hegel in particular. He thought the Society should congratulate itself on having got a man of so much force as me (!) to do this sort of work, which he said was very necessary; and he hoped I would take up other similar subjects, as Hegel’s treatment of Newton.”

This incident was remembered for some time in Edinburgh academic circles. A characteristic sally of Tait’s, in the course of which he likened metaphysicians to ogres, led to the epithet of Jack the Giant-Killer, modestly declined by Tait himself, being passed on to Smith, who presently found himself engaged in a correspondence with Mill and Bain (the latter had been rather ruffled by the tone of the Royal Society paper, and wrote remonstrating at some length).

“As to Bain,” he writes, “his letter is to my mind intended to be a crusher. It is as severe as he could make it without incivility, but he has wholly mistaken my position, and I can answer every sentence he has written if need be. . . . It is clear to me that Bain regards my paper as a deliberate insult to his school. I don’t agree with you that there is some truth in his conclusion. stand *wholly* on mathematical ground, which is, of course, unassailable, and shall be happy to fight the question out against all the empirical logicians in England.”

In spite of the pugnacity of the combatants, the question was not at this time fought to a finish. The argument was interrupted by Smith’s departure for Germany, where he spent the summer of 1869, taking up the thread of his theological studies, which had been a good deal interrupted by the recent additions to his activities in Edinburgh.

Some time before he left he wrote to his father :

“ . . . On Friday evening the office-bearers of the Theological Society for next year were chosen. The Presidents are Kippen, Bell, and myself, and I have been chosen to give the Introductory Address next winter. This is nearly all my news, except one important piece which I have kept to the end. I was told to say nothing about it to anybody, but you are an exception, I presume. A letter was awaiting me at the University this morning from Fuller,¹ telling me that a Professorship of Mathematics at Agra, worth £600 per annum, with £150 for outfit, is vacant, and asking ‘ if such a situation would meet my views, or if I was still bent on obtaining ecclesiastical preferment.’ Of course I answer (immediate answer is asked), saying I am still bent on going into the Church, and therefore cannot entertain the idea. Nevertheless it is very kind of Fuller, and I feel gratified, as I suppose you will also.

“ For the rest, I am doing something at Newton and Hegel, and Sir W. Thomson has sent me a copy of a book of Lagrange’s necessary for the purpose, which was not to be got here. So I must make something of it now.”

In spite of the broadening effect of his new scientific associations and his attachment to the writings of Rothe, he still fought shy of the professedly rationalistic School of Heidelberg, and, though he could not but accept a suggestion of Tait’s that he should pay Helmholtz and Kirchoff a flying visit, in order to pick up any suggestions that the organisation of their laboratories might afford, he decided for his own theological purposes on the University of Göttingen. His old acquaintance, Croom Robertson, had strongly recommended the town as a pleasant place to live in, and the metaphysical lectures of Lotze as well worth attending. Professor Schaarschmidt wrote to offer an introduction to Ritschl, whom he described as “ einer der scharfsinnigsten Dogmatiker in Deutschland,” and Sir William Thomson was called upon to provide a letter to Weber, the

¹ Dated “ University of Aberdeen, March 22, 1869.”

illustrious physicist, then in his declining days, but still the glory of the Göttingen scientific school.

For Göttingen, accordingly, Smith set out in the last days of April 1869, accompanied by Mr. Black, and equipped with works on Mathematics and on Hebrew grammar and with Rothe's *Zur Dogmatik*. The journey by Hamburg and Hanover proved very pleasant. He speaks in a more mature style of the rising splendours of Prussian cities, and he seems at this time to have revised to some extent his early unfavourable judgments on the Prussian character and the Prussian military system. The students found comfortable quarters in Göttingen, and made frequent excursions, one of which, in spite of a sprained ankle which awakened anxiety at Keig, was extended into a fairly long walking tour on the classic ground of the Harz mountains.

Their academic experiences were equally satisfactory. The letters of introduction were cordially honoured, and in one of the first of his letters home, Smith was able to announce that "the *trains* at least seem to be laid for a very satisfactory acquaintance in Göttingen." It was soon clear that Ritschl had not been overpraised. His lectures were indeed the most important experience of the summer, and the beginning of the friendship to which they led is a landmark in the history of Smith's theological views even more important than the first impressions of the German school which he had received at Bonn in 1867. The leading characteristic of Ritschl's teaching was a sort of shrewd eclecticism which leaned decidedly to Calvinistic orthodoxy. He had forsaken the Tübingen School in which he had commenced, and this had been followed in the German manner by a personal estrangement from his master Baur. In 1869 he was "taking a very independent course, freely criticising the established positions, but cherishing much greater respect for the Reformers than for the present dogmatic." Smith found him lecturing on Conversion, Good Works, and the Assur-

ance of Grace, on the last of which topics he gravely criticised the extravagances of Pietism and Methodism, which pretended "to assign a distinct point as the point of conversion." Fresh as he was from the spectacle of similar errors among highly accredited personages in his own Church, Smith was greatly attracted by the acuteness and ingenuity with which Ritschl was able to reprove the superfluities of evangelical enthusiasm without attacking what he regarded as its inherent validity. "I have never heard anything," he remarks, "so interesting on a theological subject as Ritschl's lectures. He has evidently such thorough clearness in his own views, and such complete acquaintance with the views of others, as to make his lectures exceedingly instructive."

Smith, as we have seen in an earlier part of this chapter, held somewhat high doctrine on the position and privileges of the Visible Church. He was accordingly delighted with Ritschl's condemnation of sects, the conception of which he distinguished sharply from the conception of dissenting churches. A sect, he held, treats the Church as merely the sum of saved individuals, and demands of each member an empirical certainty of his saved state, which he can establish by pointing to a definite momentary experience of conversion. The Church, on the other hand, without denying the possibility of such experience, recognises "that the Church is before the individual, that it is in the Church that God's grace works, and that the development of the individual Christian takes place in the Church, and is conditioned by the Church." Thus "a child may in the Church, under a Christian education, grow up a child of God without being able to point to a definite conversion at a given time," and in such a case we may feel a confidence that God will begin a work of grace in his heart even before his personal consciousness begins. From this position at once followed a reasoned justification of infant Baptism, and a condemnation of that tampering with the immature religious consciousness



WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH IN 1870.

of which Mr. Gosse has recently painted so vivid and so sinister a picture. Ritschl's views on this subject were in striking agreement with the good sense of the principles on which the children of the Manse of Keig had been brought up, and in communicating them to his father, Smith expresses his satisfaction at having been enabled to bring to clear consciousness ideas which had always been familiar to him, but which "we often rather feel than are able to express with sharpness."

For all this insistence, however, on the necessity of orthodoxy and of principles of authority and churchmanship, Smith did not at all waver in his own firmly established views of what the exact nature of that orthodoxy should be.

"On Sabbath," he writes about this time, "we went for the first time to the Reformed, *i.e.* Calvinistic Church. I can't say that I enjoyed the service, for it was *moderate* to a degree. Even the hymn-book was a compilation of last century, which ought, according to the preface, to exclude all expression of feeling, etc., and merely to give in a plain form the teaching of Reason and the New Testament. Of course there was much more of the Rationalistic than the Biblical in it when it took this line."

The same feeling appears in an interesting note on certain mild experiences of pastoral work which arose from the presence of a Scotch family in Göttingen, at whose house he and Mr. Black alternately conducted a service on Sundays:

"I again took the meeting on Sabbath evening, and rather enjoyed it. But both times Black has suggested that my train of thought needs rather too close attention. I must try to be simpler. One feels that there is great need of skill and faithfulness in speaking before a family of which several members are clearly very *moderate* in their views."

The scientific results of the journey were also satis-

factory. Weber was cordial and helpful, though he was no longer in actual command of the Göttingen laboratory, which was then under the direction of Dr. Kohlrausch, a scientific correspondent of Professor Tait's. The demands of his theological classes made it impossible for Smith to do much laboratory work, and, on consideration, it did not appear that Edinburgh had much to learn in the way of apparatus and arrangements. A more important event was the beginning of his intimacy with the celebrated mathematician, Dr. Klein,¹ whose acquaintance he had first made in Plücker's class-room at Bonn, and who now introduced him to the *Mathematisches Verein*, a highly exclusive scientific body which met once a week for discussion of the higher Mathematics, tempered by beer. The visit to Heidelberg on which Tait had insisted was paid about this time, and the following record of it shows the extensive and important academic connection procured for him by Klein's friendship, and the close relations which at this time he began to form with the most brilliant among the rising generation of young German men of science.

"I came to Heidelberg on Monday, and have been kindly received by Helmholtz and Kirchoff, who showed me their collections. I also had some intercourse with several Privat-docenten and junior professors to whom Nöther² introduced me. Nöther is one of the young mathematical doctors in Göttingen. With him, Klein (editor of Plücker's posthumous works), and another, Hierholzer, I drank Bruderschaft last week, so of course Nöther gladly gave me an introduction to a friend, Hartmann, who again brought me into his circle of young professors."

He returned to Scotland towards the middle of August, laden with thermometers of some special German pattern

¹ Professor of Mathematics at Erlangen (1872-75), Munich (1875-80), Leipzig (1880-86), and Göttingen (1886), where he is now Director of Physical and Mathematical Studies, and enjoys the dignity of Privy Councillor.

² Professor of Mathematics at Erlangen since 1875.

for Tait's laboratory, and with many additions to his library of Theology and Mathematics. He took with him, also, the feeling that he had carried the development of his theological position a step further, and he remarks of Ritschl's lectures that they were "far the best course he ever heard."

After a few weeks at Keig he returned to Edinburgh, where he found himself almost immediately face to face with events of critical importance. Professor Sachs, the holder of the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis in the Free Church College of Aberdeen, had died in the autumn (September 29), and the brilliancy of Smith's performances suggested to more than one of his friends that, in spite of his youth, he would be a very suitable successor. It need hardly be said that the suggestion of his candidature did not come from himself; but it was warmly pressed upon him, and after some natural hesitation he consented to allow his name to be brought forward. The idea commended itself from the first to Dr. Davidson, who showed no indecision and a great deal of tact in the manner in which he quietly promoted the interests of his favourite pupil. He secured that Smith should have an opportunity of displaying his power as a teacher of Hebrew by giving up to him the conduct of the preparatory Hebrew class, adding in the letter in which he made this proposal, "that it might be useful to have taught such a class *well*, as he had no doubt Smith would do if he undertook it."

With these new duties and his ordinary work at the University and the New College Smith's hands were full enough; and the candidature in its earlier stages seems to have occupied him very little.

"... I don't believe I have the ghost of a chance," he wrote, "nor shall I trouble myself about the matter, for I can very well afford to wait and have every prospect—in my excellent relations to Tait—of having the means of studying steadily for a year or two still; so that I

may possibly have a better chance another time, and be better fitted to use it."

In the course of this winter he made several important acquaintances among his contemporaries in Edinburgh, and began to acquire what may be called a recognised position in general society. The following passage from a letter to his father (October 29) records an interesting event :

" I dined with Tait yesterday, with Crum Brown and M'Lennan, an advocate. There is a new talking club to be set up, of which Tait and these two are to be members, as likewise Sir A. Grant, Campbell Shairp, and Tulloch of St. Andrews, and a whole circle of literary and scientific men in or near Edinburgh, the object being to have one man at least well up in every conceivable subject. The selection is to be somewhat strict, so I was surprised when it was proposed last night to table my name. It might be very useful to belong to such a thing: the attendance being not compulsory, and the meeting twice a week, the thing could not be burdensome, while the circle of acquaintance opened up would be the very best."

" The Edinburgh Evening Club " was accordingly founded shortly afterwards, and we shall have occasion, in the next chapter, to describe it more fully. Both Smith and Mr. M'Lennan,¹ whose important articles on " The Worship of Animals and Plants," were then appearing in *The Fortnightly Review* (October to February), became original members; the acquaintance between them soon developed into a close friendship, which was of great importance in the history of Smith's life and work.

The controversy with Mill and Bain seems to have been tacitly abandoned by both sides, having ended in a promise by the former to consider Smith's objections in a new edition of the *Logic*. Smith, however, had by this

¹ John Ferguson M'Lennan (1827-1881), a member of the Scottish bar. He contributed the article "Law" to the eighth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and afterwards developed certain speculations first propounded there in his *Inquiry into the Origin of Capture in Marriage Ceremonies*, better known as *Primitive Marriage* (1865), and *Studies in Ancient History* (1876).

time carried out Tait's suggestion and had written another paper for the Royal Society entitled "Hegel and the Metaphysics of the Fluxional Calculus,"¹ in which the Hegelian criticisms of Newton were severely handled. This led to a sharp argument with Dr. Hutchison Stirling, the eminent Hegelian, conducted mainly by correspondence published in the columns of the *Courant* in December and January. The opinion of competent and impartial persons was that Smith had distinctly the best of the encounter. He was already acquiring a reputation as a philosophical controversialist, and at this time also appeared a French translation of the paper on Mill "with all the hits sharpened up to absolute ferocity." About the same time was published a third Royal Society paper on the purely scientific subject of "stream-lines."¹ This paper was the result of important experimental work carried out in Professor Tait's laboratory, and it is not too much to say that it places its author in the ranks of scientific discoverers. As a contribution to Physical Science it is regarded by eminent authorities as a classical exposition of its subject.

The reader, who has heard so much of Smith's activity of mind and powers of work, will perhaps not be surprised to learn that in the midst of all these varied interests and concerns he found time to elaborate his first considered utterance on theological matters since he had come under the personal influence of Ritschl. He was now one of the Presidents of the Theological Society, and, on November 8, some little time after he had decided to become a candidate for the Aberdeen chair, he delivered an inaugural address on the Work of a Theological Society.¹ The intrinsic value of this paper is considerable; its interest and importance as the pronouncement of one who aspired to the position of an accredited teacher in the Church can hardly be overrated. We are told that the attendance of members of the society was small,

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

owing to the inclemency of the weather; perhaps, therefore, the audience which Smith addressed was chiefly composed of theologians as enthusiastic and progressive as himself. The nature of the occasion forbade debate, and there was little more than a hint of opposition in the customary speeches on the vote of thanks. And yet, in all the circumstances, it is perhaps surprising that Smith's plea for a progressive theology did not startle and alarm at least some of his hearers. What he had to say was, in some of its aspects, revolutionary. All theology, he insisted, must advance, and develop according to the new experiences of the new generation; but the progress he advocated was "*impossible as long as the absolute truth of the existing confessional dogmatic is maintained.*" Meanwhile his candidature was being more and more energetically promoted.

In the Free Church of Scotland the function of choosing the teachers charged with the instruction of her theological students is properly reserved to the General Assembly. It is customary, however, for the Supreme Church Court to take into consideration all recommendations which may be transmitted to it from Presbyteries and Synods. It is therefore considered to be much in favour of a candidate for a chair if his name is sent up to the Assembly as a proper person to be elected by as many Presbyteries as possible, and the good offices of his friends are invoked to secure that this shall be done.

His father from Keig, and Mr. Lindsay in Edinburgh, organised the campaign on Smith's behalf, and soon a very striking body of testimonials was collected. He made personal application only to those of his teachers with whom he had friendly relations of a special kind; but even so, his backing was very strong. Tait, with many loud protestations that he hoped his indispensable assistant would fail in his candidature, wrote very strongly in his favour, and procured a letter of warm commendation from Sir William Thomson. His Aberdeen pro-

fessors were less enthusiastic ; Sir William Geddes was committed to another candidate, and Bain, as we have already seen, could give only the grudging commendation of a not too generous philosophical opponent. The Germans compensated the candidate for these shortcomings. Schaarschmidt and Kamphausen wrote with the affectionate cordiality of old friends and advisers ; Ritschl gave a testimonial of grave commendation, impressing on the electors the intense scientific zeal, the many-sided knowledge, and the *ausserordentliche Gewandtheit des Geistes* of his pupil, while Lotze, in the course of a very strongly worded letter, regretted that Germany might not have the chance of claiming him entirely for her own. The Edinburgh theologians, led by Dr. Davidson and Professor Macgregor, were equally emphatic. Davidson had the most claim to speak, and what he said must have been almost decisive.

“ Mr. Smith,” he wrote, “ is by far the most distinguished student I have ever had in my department. By this I mean not only that his acquirements are greater, but that they are of a different kind. Mr. Smith not only knows Hebrew well, but he knows well that which constitutes Hebrew, or any other of that class of languages. He knows more perfectly than any young man I ever came across the principles both of the Grammar and of the Idiom of the Semitic languages. This knowledge he has arrived at, partly by his own very great talent, and partly by the study of such scientific Grammars as that of Ewald, with which he has a great familiarity. But his acquirements in Old Testament scholarship are not confined to the knowledge of the language. Having had opportunities of being several summers on the Continent, and hearing some of the most distinguished lecturers there, he has made great advancement in Sacred Criticism. He has written for me several essays, particularly one very extensive one on the Divine Names in Genesis, and another on Prophecy, which displayed not only learning, but ability of a very high kind. For what is surprising in so young a man is the maturity as well as the striking independence of his mind. From all I have been able to see, I consider that

the department of Old Testament learning is the one most congenial to Mr. Smith, and in which he is most likely to do good work ; and if he were placed in a position favourable, there is almost no result too high for the Church to expect from him."

Rainy, then commencing his long and eventful leadership of the Assembly and the Church, also bore witness to " his great ability and high promise," showed himself favourable to Smith personally, and sought occasions for making his better acquaintance.

Equally impressive were two testimonials which he received from the youth of the Church. One of these was from the entire body of students attending the New College, and was most honourable to the signatories, both for its generosity and its discrimination. They testify to the intellectual eminence, the special aptitude, and the winning Christian character of their friend and fellow-student, and the sentences in which his rivals in the Theological Society and in his own class impress upon the Assembly his fitness for preferment, must have made a deep impression on all who read them. The other testimonial came from the members of the Hebrew tutorial class, which he had been conducting during the winter, and was accompanied by a present of books. The students refer to the clear and scientific way in which the Hebrew tutor had " laid open to them the leading principles and structure of the Hebrew language ; thereby imparting to what might otherwise have been dry and difficult detail an interest and ease which could not fail to enlist our attention and awaken our energies," and they conclude with words of affectionate good wishes, and thanks for the helpful courtesy of his personal relations with them.

His first public contribution to the theology of the Old Testament, " The Question of Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent,"¹ was intended to commend its author to the favourable notice of the electors, and

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

appeared in the *British Quarterly Review* for April. Its acceptance by the editor seems to have been due, in part at least, to the good offices of Smith's new friend, M'Lennan; on its appearance it received the warmly expressed approbation of Dean Stanley, who had not yet awakened the resentment of Scottish patriots, and was then enjoying that sort of undenominational celebrity which often belongs to those who are not regarded as wholly orthodox by their own church.

More than once in the early stages of the affair Smith had contemplated withdrawing in favour of two older and more experienced candidates who were also in the field. The more prominent of these was Mr. Salmond, who had been his teacher at Aberdeen, and who was destined to be a staunch friend and supporter in after-life. Mr. Salmond, who was a generous opponent, was also a formidable one, and his testimonials in the opinion of many were superior to those in favour of Smith as showing wider pastoral and educational experience. The candidature, however, was no longer in Smith's own hands, and his name had already been adopted by Presbyteries all over the country. His father's efforts in circulating his testimonials, and bespeaking support from fathers and brethren whenever possible, met on the whole with a most cordial and gratifying response. Here and there a Presbytery threw out his name. Now and then among the letters which came to Keig from other manses, and which are still preserved, occurs one declining support on the ground of youth and inexperience, or hinting that the prizes of the Church should be reserved for those who had borne the burden of her pastoral service. But even in the letters in this correspondence (and there are several) in which the weakness rather than the strength of human nature is displayed, there are continual protestations that, whether on this occasion or another, the election of "Mr. William" to a chair was a certainty. In the end the strength of the testimonials was found irresistible. The Church,

to her honour, was profoundly impressed by the remarkable evidence which they contained of almost universal learning, and (as one of Mr. Pirie Smith's correspondents put it) of "continental experiences which unquestionably give a breadth to a man's culture, and need not, with the grace of God, impair his orthodoxy."

The turmoil and anxiety of these days, and the strain of his doubled and trebled activities, told on Smith severely. Several times he had to take some days of complete rest, and he often complains of lassitude and weariness. In a letter to a close friend, early in 1870, he expresses a longing for some consistently theological work, not as a matter of ambition, but of personal edification, and complains of the distractions of his divided allegiance to the University and the New College. In spite of these very natural symptoms, however, his constitution on the whole stood the strain well, and a brilliant deliverance was at hand. Early in May he was licensed as a probationer of the Free Church of Scotland, and on Tuesday, May 25, the final vote of the Assembly elected him to the Aberdeen Chair by a majority of 139 over Mr. Salmond, his strongest and most deserving competitor. In the letter of pride and thankfulness which the minister of Keig wrote to his wife from Edinburgh, he says, "It is marvellous how much satisfaction Willie's election has given to the *whole* Church."

CHAPTER IV

THE HEBREW CHAIR (1870-1875)

AFTER his election to the Chair, Smith had several months in which to prepare for his new duties, and to take a holiday, which he much needed after the excessive labours of the previous months. His engagements, festive and official, were inevitably very numerous in the days immediately after the Assembly made him a Professor, but he was soon able to escape from Edinburgh and begin the process of rest and recuperation at Keig. A plan to visit Mr. Black, who at this time was settled at Seville, unfortunately came to nothing, chiefly owing to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war and the rapid series of German victories, which threw all the arrangements of European travel out of gear, and made it impossible for any one with important professional engagements to venture far afield. The projected holiday shrank to a few weeks in the Highlands, and Smith spent at Braemar the memorable fortnight during which the news of Sedan arrived. The excitement of contemporary events, the exhilaration of healthy exercise in the stimulating climate of Deeside, and the pleasures of congenial society soon effaced the traces of overfatigue. He spent a great deal of time in the open air, and saw much of a group of old acquaintances and future colleagues who happened to be visiting Braemar at the same time, particularly Mr. (now Principal) Whyte, who was already a trusted friend.

The only opponents of Smith's candidature who had

had any show of reason on their side were those who, as we saw in the last chapter, founded their objections on his youth and inexperience of the practical work of the ministry. It must be admitted that his bent was from the first almost entirely academic, but we have indicated how strong, and indeed how irresistible, was his vocation to the service of the church. He had not at first taken altogether kindly to preaching or, indeed, to the conduct of public worship in any form, owing to the difficulty he experienced in early days in expressing himself in a popular manner. This difficulty he appears about this time to have definitely overcome, and in the interval between his appointment and the commencement of the active duties of his chair he kept many preaching engagements in spite of his fatigue, and proved that he was likely to show no want of energy in this department of the active service of the Church. He speaks in letters to Keig of the increase of "comfort and acceptance" with which he delivers sermons to the critical congregations of Edinburgh, and we need not doubt that he was equally successful in the numerous country pulpits which he filled about this time.

Of the discourses which he delivered on these occasions some score survive. They were prepared with the care which Smith gave to every piece of work he undertook, but it cannot be said that they form a distinguished contribution to homiletical literature. Their most remarkable characteristic, in fact, is their conventionality. They might have been delivered by any orthodox country minister to any Scottish congregation. Smith had learned from his father not only how to think, but also how to preach, and in after days, when his critical opinions were the subject of so much bitter controversy, the curious crowds who flocked to hear him were almost disappointed with the old-fashioned evangelicalism of his sermons. His friends and supporters pointed with triumph to these manifestations of dogmatic orthodoxy, and with reason, for they were the

serious expression of a devout piety which he maintained through many apparent contradictions to the last day of his life. They do not call for further comment here. The following record¹ of the impressions of two intelligent hearers seems to the present writers to afford the elements of a just appreciation of Smith's characteristics as a preacher.

“ I have heard Smith preach three times now. Bonar was with me once, and did not quite like it ; the references to Christ seemed too expressly orthodox, he thought, to be the genuine expression of his belief. But of course B. knows nothing of theology, and presumes that Smith must diverge from the orthodox throughout, because he is so enlightened a critic of the *Book*. I suppose he is quite orthodox on the Person and Work of Christ. I have thought his preaching interesting and full of wise, and often delicately suggestive, practical teaching, and I have been struck with what seemed a tender reverence of tone in his whole service, spite of the natural irreverence of his voice.”

Ecclesiastically speaking, Smith had at the time of his election merely the standing of any student of theology who, without cure of souls, has “ taken licence,” and has been admitted to preach the Gospel. He had still to acquire the full status of a minister of the Free Church, which is considered necessary for a professor, and he was accordingly ordained on November 2, 1870, the day before he met his classes for the first time. The ceremony of ordination, which is one of the most impressive known to the Presbyterian Churches, takes place at an appointed diet of public worship conducted by the Moderator of the Presbytery within whose bounds lies the sphere of the candidate's future labours. The ordinand is called upon to answer a series of questions, and finally to subscribe a formula embodying explicit declarations of his belief that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are “ the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners,” of his repudiation of all “ divisive

¹ By the late Rev. J. C. Barry, Dumbarton.

courses," and of his submission to all duly constituted ecclesiastical authority. This being done, the Moderator descends from the pulpit and ordains him to his office with solemn prayer and laying on of hands. The other ministers present gather round, and it is the custom for them to lay their hands also on his head. The Moderator then formally receives and admits him in the name of the Presbytery and by authority of the Divine Head of the Church, and offers him the right hand of fellowship. Thus Smith's career as a theological teacher began not merely with the triumph of an election, but also with a sense of consecration to a solemn task implying grave pastoral responsibilities. Enough has already been said to show how sincerely he believed that he could conscientiously carry out all the obligations of his position as a minister and as a professor. The welcome extended to him by his new colleagues was cordial. Ritschl wrote a charming letter of congratulation from Germany, and Dr. Davidson, in a letter regretting his inability to be present at the ordination, looked forward with interest to the printing and publishing of the inaugural lecture.

This discourse, which was subsequently printed as Professor Davidson desired,¹ was the most mature and effective of Smith's writings up to that time, and merits the closest attention both for its own sake and in view of subsequent events. In form it was, as befitted the occasion, a carefully prepared and finished piece of academic prose. The balance of the composition, the clear and dignified conduct of the argument, the occasional touches of restrained eloquence, all showed how much he had profited by his Edinburgh experiences of writing essays and addressing audiences. In substance it showed a corresponding advance in speculative power. As an exposition, or perhaps rather as an interpretation, of the results reached by those who were in touch with the recent progress of German Protestant Theology the

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

lecture could not have been better. The lecturer faced the problem of the relations between theology and historical criticism, not indeed with a complete consciousness of the gravity of all the issues likely to be raised, but with a characteristic and contagious confidence that he had found the only possible solution. He pronounced the first official vindication of a historical understanding of the Old Testament not in the tone of one recommending a method disapproved of by an important body of opinion in his own Church, but rather as a eulogist of the freedom and courage imposed upon that Church by her own best traditions as opposed to the ineffectiveness and misleading timidity of the mediæval hermeneutic. The Catholic Church, he told his hearers, had almost from the first deserted the Apostolic tradition in setting up a conception of Christianity as a mere system of *σωτήρια δόγματα*, a series of formulæ containing abstract and immutable principles, intellectual assent to which was sufficient to mould the lives of men who had no experience of a personal relation with Christ. This fundamental error, with the attendant evil of superstitious accretions to the sacred narrative which had acquired almost co-ordinate authority with the Canon itself, had led to a complete obscuration of the true efficacy of the word of God.

“Can anything,” he asked, referring to the traditional method of interpretation, “be more fatal to a true appreciation of Scripture than this artificial confinement of every thought it contains within the narrow compass of a crude Theological system, a truly Procrustean bed, of which not even the earliest thoughts of the Old Testament must fall short, and which the ideal completeness of the New Testament must not transcend?”

The Catholic doctors, he argued, too much ignored the continuous exercise of Divine Power implied in the historical work of Redemption, and this produced the further error, which was even more serious from the

evangelical point of view, of ignoring or forgetting the indispensable personal relation of the individual Christian to the Redeemer. Holy Scripture, *Verbum Dei, omnium perfectissima et antiquissima philosophia*, contains, no doubt, in itself the only perfect rule of faith and manners. But it is not, as the Catholics tended to claim, "a divine phenomenon magically endowed in every letter with saving treasures of faith and knowledge." Rather it is the vast and animated record, perpetuated under the supreme sanction of the Divine Will, of the mighty redeeming purpose ever present to the holy and inscrutable mind of God. Regarded in any other way the historical connection of the Old and the New Testaments is lost or misunderstood. Difficulties of interpretation, difficulties of faith and morals are multiplied, and the only refuge for the believer is on the one hand an inadmissible allegorical exegesis borrowed from the Hellenistic Jews, and, on the other, a recourse to the mystical and magical sacramentalism which had once for all been abandoned at the Reformation. He appealed to the authority of "the comprehensive genius of Calvin" as "an ever precious example of believing courage in dealing with the Scriptures," and proceeded in a memorable passage to draw the conclusion of the whole matter:

"It is impossible to pass from this topic without in one word pointing out that a necessary consequence of this way of treating the Bible is the honest practice of a higher criticism. The higher criticism does not mean negative criticism. It means the fair and honest looking at the Bible as a historical record, and the effort everywhere to reach the real meaning and historical setting, not of individual passages of the Scripture, but of the Scripture records as a whole; and to do this we must apply the same principle that the Reformation applied to detail exegesis. We must let the Bible speak for itself. Our notions of the origin, the purpose, the character of the Scripture books must be drawn, not from vain traditions, but from a historical study of the books themselves. This process can be dangerous to



Wilson Brothers.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (ABOUT 1874).

From a Photograph.

faith only when it is begun without faith—when we forget that the Bible history is no profane history, but the story of God's saving self-manifestation."

The revolutionary character of this pronouncement was masked by the fervour and the transparent honesty with which it was made, and by the unconscious ingenuity of the method of presentation. Smith's teaching in substance was at this time probably in essence little more advanced than that which his master Davidson had been carrying on for years ; but he was far more outspoken in giving his programme to the world, and at the very outset of his career he had carried the claims, though perhaps not the practice, of the "believing critic" a step further than the last generation had ventured to do. On the other hand, his lecture adroitly identified the interests of free inquiry into the historicity of the Scriptures with the interests of religious truth as conceived by a dogmatically orthodox and evangelical Protestant. The tradition of Scriptural interpretation which he favoured was, he claimed, the tradition of Luther and of Calvin, and those who opposed him laid themselves open to the reproach of espousing the cause of mediæval darkness, and of dealing with the Bible according to the celebrated Lutheran similitude of the sow with the bag of oats.

The little party of enlightenment in the Free Church of Scotland was delighted, and Smith received the unanimous congratulations of his friends. They were firmly entrenched, as they thought, in a position which reconciled the passionate piety of Dr. Duncan with the somewhat timid scholarship of Professor Davidson. They did not reckon with the party of ignorance, whose strength in any theological community it is dangerous to underestimate, and they forgot the taunts of "habitual contempt of scripture" which had been hurled at their leader by the more obscure of his college contemporaries. The time, however, was not ripe for controversy, and the pamphlet, "What History teaches us to seek in the

Bible," did not awaken the Church from her dogmatic slumbers.

There were at least two very good reasons for this. In the first place the party of ignorance were as yet far from realising the gravity of the situation. Biblical scholarship was still rare in Scotland. Davidson's *Job*, as we have already seen, was almost the first example in English of Hebrew erudition of the "dangerous" variety. The subject on the whole excited little interest in the ecclesiastical world at large, and a keen scent for this kind of heresy had not yet been cultivated among the Highland Host. Secondly, the energies of the reactionaries were fully occupied with a controversy in which they became for the first time an organised body conscious of their corporate strength, and which was of critical importance in the temporal fortunes of the Church. Union with the bodies which had forsaken the Church of Scotland before the Disruption, and which were now themselves associated in the important and respected denomination known as United Presbyterians, had for some time been a cherished aim of the more enlightened and statesmanlike of the leaders of the Free Church. The great obstacle to the realisation of this aim, and the source of many bitter troubles both then and long afterwards, was of course the principle of State Establishment which the leaders of the Disruption had carried with them into the wilderness.

When Dr. Chalmers and his friends left the Disruption Assembly they dreamed of creating¹ "an Establishment to which others might return." They conceived it to be the duty of "the Civil Magistrate" to endow and cherish the Church while leaving her full spiritual independence. The only question was which Church should receive this disinterested patronage. There appears to be no doubt that this was the view personally held by the Disruption Fathers, though it is a matter for endless argument how far they introduced the principle into the formal

¹ Carnegie Simpson, *Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. i. chap. vii.

documents embodying their claims. Shortly after the Disruption, Dr. Chalmers, at any rate, resented keenly any reflections on the establishment principle, and in certain memorable letters took occasion to administer a severe snub to certain English and Welsh admirers who were rash enough to congratulate him on having become a dissenter. The ecclesiastical position of the United Presbyterians, on the other hand, was totally different. Their views on this question were based on what they themselves not inappropriately styled "New Light" principles. They altogether repudiated the theory of state establishments, and held that it was the duty of the Church to provide both for her own temporal and for her own spiritual needs. The simplicity and reasonableness of this "voluntary" position, as it was called, and the obvious advantages it possesses for a Church freed from the entanglements of state support and state control, became evident many years later, and would now probably be recognised by the great majority of a Church which has been educated by affliction. In the years 1863-73, which saw the first phase of the Union controversy, it had many irreconcilable opponents in "the Church of Scotland free," but it was hoped that moderate counsels might prevail in the Church courts, and that some honourable compromise might be found. The attitude of the United Presbyterians was correct and affectionate, and it seemed for a time that by judiciously emphasising, on the one hand, the Voluntaries' admission of civil authority, and, on the other, the Free Church assertions of spiritual independence, the foundations of union might be well and truly laid. The negotiations prospered for a time, but little real progress was made, and in the year 1866 serious difficulties had already arisen. The party of reaction had found its leader in the celebrated Dr. Begg, who began by obstructing, and ended by destroying for a season, the hopes of the Unionists, after bringing the Free Church to the very

verge of a second Disruption. The official leader of the Assembly and of the party of Union was still the venerable Dr. Candlish, who was now in his last decade and visibly dispirited by the perverse temper of his Church, so great a part of which, as a recent writer¹ has said, was in "the time of ebb which succeeded the mighty surge of the Disruption." Much of the practical work of leadership devolved in these circumstances on his lieutenant, Dr. Rainy, who some years previously had been transferred from the pulpit of the Free High Church to the Chair of Church History at the New College.

This remarkable man, who was destined to guide the fortunes of the Church during nearly forty of the most troubled years of her history, was then commencing that career of ecclesiastical statesmanship with which his name will always be associated. Rainy will not be remembered either as a great preacher or as a great Doctor of the Church. His lectures as Professor, as we have seen, were satisfactory rather than distinguished, and it may well be doubted whether the learning he was able to amass in the quieter years of his full and busy life entitled him to take a leading part in any controversy of purely scholarly import. But with all these deductions, and others which we shall have to make hereafter, it is right to say that he was an outstanding figure, and in his own way a great man. His physical presence was dignified and impressive; you could not meet him among other men without recognising in him the conscious superiority and the instinctive adroitness in managing other people which are the foundation of senatorial capacity. In his presence the differences of those about him seemed to become focussed on some intelligible point of his selection. The ground which *he* had chosen was usually the ground on which an issue was debated; and if circumstances proved too strong for him, no one could retreat more skilfully than he. It was in the depressing years of the first Union

¹ Carnegie Simpson, *op. cit.*

struggle that the Church first learned to appreciate his aptitude for affairs, and when, after ten years of frequently bitter and sometimes unedifying conflict, the hopes of union and the life of Dr. Candlish almost simultaneously ended, Rainy's claim to leadership was uncontested.

In these days of trial and disappointment no one had leisure for the Higher Criticism but the Higher Critics, and they seem to have devoted themselves almost entirely to the studies which were to provide a new and even more serious source of distraction for the Assembly and the Church at large. The Union Controversy has in fact only an incidental interest in Smith's history. We have seen that his views on the authority justly to be attributed to the Church in any civilised community were very decisive, and it is probable that he began with theoretical leanings in the anti-unionist direction. If, however, he ever had such leanings, he soon became a convert to the more practical and progressive view, and in the earlier letters from Edinburgh there are several curious references to the conversion of his friend Lindsay, which was slower, but in the end equally complete. In the early days of his professorship there is no doubt that he had for some time been a strong supporter of Dr. Candlish and Dr. Rainy in the struggle in which they were opposed with so much ability and so much bitterness by Dr. Begg. He frequently takes occasion to condemn the violence and want of scruple shown by the Anti-unionists, but it does not appear that he took any prominent official part either in this particular controversy, or, at this time, in Church politics generally.

His life was crowded with other interests and concerns. Amongst these his academic duties naturally took the first place. The junior students had to be taught the elements of Hebrew, and here, no doubt, the experience he had acquired in conducting the tutorial class in the New College, mentioned in the last chapter, proved invaluable. But abundant evidence is still extant of the

unremitting care with which he never ceased to prepare for his pupils, with whom he systematically read a rich and varied selection of passages from all parts of the Old Testament. A still more important part of his duties was the delivery of lectures to senior students on Old Testament exegesis, and the theology resulting therefrom. It has been found convenient, in the Bibliography appended to this volume, to catalogue in their chronological order with some fulness the manuscripts of these lectures so far as they still survive ; and in the companion volume a selection of extracts from them has also been given, in the belief that they will be found to be not only of great biographical interest, but also of some intrinsic value. For either purpose it is essential that they be taken in the order of time. Immediately after his appointment he turned his mind to the inaugural lecture, of which some account has been given ; the next topic to which he directed his attention was, as it happened, " the Nazarites," which he treated with special reference to the broad distinction between prophets and other persons of sacred profession in Amos's time. Smith's later views on these matters are accessible elsewhere, and his earlier tentative researches need not detain us now. But one brief extract has seemed worth preserving, and is reprinted as showing that he had even then begun to formulate, with regard to the composition of the Pentateuch, views which already could hardly be called orthodox in the traditional sense, though they were still far removed from those which he ultimately adopted. In all the lectures it is worth noticing with what scrupulous care they take account of all the most recent literature on the subjects with which they deal ; and it must also be remarked that almost all of them were afterwards rewritten so as still to represent the most recent extensions of knowledge.¹

¹ Thus the lectures on Prophecy originally written from August 1870 onwards were afterwards reconstructed in 1876-77, and some

The new professor's anxious care for the progress of his pupils is reflected in some letters which survive from this period. "As to my classes," he writes at a date about midway through his first session, "I have two very good . . . and two very poor. . . . Of these, however, one contains at least some improvable elements." Then, after a reference to one particular pupil, whose errors were "captiousness and self-conceit," he proceeds :

"The others are at least, I think, possessed of sufficient faith in me to profit by my teaching. I believe I am well enough liked, and my lectures, I understand, are rather appreciated. With my colleagues all goes most smoothly. Dr. Brown was predisposed in my favour, and Lumsden is a thoroughly kind-hearted man if he isn't crossed. Now, as I don't meddle with general matters, and don't mean to do so till I know my ground, I am safe, I hope, to see only his good side.

"There is in the Aberdeen Hall a thing I never saw in Edinburgh—a sense that when a lesson is given it must be got. Hence the men know their Hebrew grammar and prepare their reading. Even the very worst don't come *unprepared*. I suspect this is due in the main to Sachs's influence, but I do hope it may last. I fancy that Lumsden, too, takes real work out of the men. About Dr. Brown I am less certain. . . .

"I have joined Candlish's¹ congregation, and find him an instructive and in a measure stimulating preacher. He has a 'sense' for scientific theology, but I don't think that he is quite free from the faults of our present Scotch theology. Of course the great Aberdonian is Fr. Edmond. With him I think I shall get on smoothly enough, as we have some points in common, especially a taste for curious books—anything I believe even of that kind is often a useful *Anknüpfungspunkt*."

specimens of these in their later form are reprinted in *Lectures and Essays*. In like manner the lectures on Hebrew Poetry dating from 1871 were subsequently recast, and formed the substance of the article in the *British Quarterly Review*, also reprinted; of rewritten lectures on "certain select Psalms," that on Ps. xvi. appeared in *The Expositor* for 1878, and a series on Heb. i. and ii. was published, also in *The Expositor*, as late as 1881-82.

¹ Dr. James Candlish, son of the more celebrated Dr. Robert Candlish.

Mr. Edmond was an advocate, in the Aberdonian sense of the term,¹ whose taste in matters ecclesiastical was accounted fastidious and conservative to an unusual degree. Smith, to the surprise of many people, made a complete conquest of him in a very short time, and the alliance between them remained unbroken during the troubled time that followed. His successes in less difficult regions of Aberdeen society were equally immediate. The Principal, who is spoken of in such guarded terms in the letter above quoted, became a firm friend, and soon came to rely much on his new colleague's judgment and assistance in the conduct of the affairs of the Hall. Indeed it is not long before we find Dr. Lumsden resigning the office of Secretary of Senatus, which he held along with the Principalship, and moving that Smith should succeed him. Smith's official and semi-official relationships as professor and minister seem everywhere to have been cordial. His active share in the business of the Aberdeen Presbytery was at first small, and it was some little time before, practically under compulsion, he allowed himself to be made an elder in the East Free Church, of which Dr. James Candlish was minister; but he preached from time to time as is expected of a professor, addressed the Free Church students at the University on the advantages of a University culture and other improving topics, and, generally speaking, discharged to every one's satisfaction the miscellaneous duties which fall on those who occupy prominent academic positions.

He had again set up house in lodgings as in the old days, an establishment of his own being still, as he said, "too great an undertaking." With him was his younger brother Charles,² who was beginning his academic career at the University, and had the same tutorial advantages

¹ Aberdeen solicitors, by Royal Charter of Charles I. (1633), bear the style of advocate.

² Charles Michie Smith, Esq., lately Director of the Kodaikánal and Madras Observatories.

as his sisters in past years. The omens were all favourable. His health and energy had returned in full measure, and his landlady rejoiced to hear him, when he came into the house, rushing upstairs two steps at a time, audibly practising his Arabic gutturals.

As regards his social relations, he admitted in a letter written about this time that he did not find, and could not expect to find, in Aberdeen the same advantages which he had had in Edinburgh, where the greater number of his literary and scientific friends were then collected. There were, however, special compensations for his exile from the Royal Society and the Evening Club. Aberdeen was not lacking in intellectual, and especially in artistic society, and he soon came to know a group of distinguished and interesting people in whose company he formed new tastes and more than one lifelong friendship. Aberdeen was then producing perhaps more than her share of the most eminent artists of Scotland, and possessed at least two of the leading Scottish connoisseurs of that day. The first of these, Mr. John Forbes White, will be long remembered as a genial and public-spirited citizen. He was a man of considerable literary culture and exquisite æsthetic taste, a humanist who wrote and spoke Latin with the old-world facility, and in his social relations the very embodiment of friendliness and hospitality. His family was connected with that of Smith's old teacher, Sir William Geddes, then still in occupation of the Greek chair, and it was no doubt at Geddes's instigation that Mr. and Mrs. White called on the new Professor of Hebrew very soon after he took up his residence at Aberdeen. This visit is recorded in a letter to Keig, and subsequent correspondence shows that the acquaintance soon developed into an intimate friendship. Smith found in Mr. White an entirely congenial spirit, and derived much benefit, both physical and mental, from his society. Mr. White induced him to take walks, and even, upon occasion, to play golf, and, as was equally important, he introduced

him to the circle of cultivated people which he had the gift of collecting about him. Mr. White at that time lived in Union street, the Piccadilly of Aberdeen, in a large house, the decoration of which was one of the earlier and happier achievements of the school of William Morris; but he also possessed another abode, at some distance from the town, with which perhaps the most affectionate memories of his friends will be associated. Seton Cottage is situated in a deep cleft by the edge of the Don, which flows for some miles between high and well-wooded banks before it reaches the sea. The house is surrounded and secluded by trees, and the view across the water to the two venerable stone spires of St. Machar which overtop the dark green of the woods on the farther bank, is unequalled in the neighbourhood. Mr. White and his family spent much of their time at this charming place, and in Smith's letters there are frequent references to his visits there.

It was no doubt in Mr. White's company that he first made the acquaintance of the other great local patron of the Arts. Mr. Alexander Macdonald of Keppleston was the possessor of an ample fortune and a fine collection of pictures and objects of art, part of which has now become the property of the city of Aberdeen. Though physically infirm and compelled constantly to use a bath-chair, he was a man of great intellectual vigour; the decision of his character was reflected in his countenance, in which it pleased him and his friends to detect a resemblance to the great Napoleon. He was a great friend to all Scottish, and especially to all Aberdonian artists, but he had a great acquaintance among contemporary painters generally, and he used frequently to be visited at his house of Keppleston in the near neighbourhood of Aberdeen by Millais, Keene, Sambourne, du Maurier, Sam Bough, and many others. Keppleston was the scene of much delightful hospitality, and Smith soon became a frequent and a welcome guest. From this

period also dates his friendship with Sir George Reid, the distinguished ex-President of the Scottish Academy, and with his brother, the late Mr. A. D. Reid, an accomplished artist and a delightful companion.

With these and other new friends his leisure was very fully and pleasantly occupied. He began to interest himself in artistic matters and to collect about him the pictures and other beautiful things which those who knew him later in his life will remember. His evenings were taken up, as he says, with "much trotting out to dinner," and the informal gatherings at Keppleston or Seton Cottage, alternated with more solemn festivities at the houses of his colleagues or of prominent members of the Free Church laity, where large companies assembled to eat the fruits of the earth out of season, and everything was done in the most elaborate style. Particulars of these banquets were duly sent to Keig for the edification and amusement of his father and mother. More than once he complains of the inroads which society made upon his studies, and announces his intention of declining further invitations.

Meanwhile he was by no means forgotten by his friends in Edinburgh, who continued to follow his doings with interest and attention. The introductory lecture seems to have been a good deal discussed at the Evening Club, and to have somewhat puzzled some of his scientific associates. The company which he had left, and which delighted to welcome him back on the occasions of his comparatively frequent visits, deserves at least a passing notice.

The Evening Club, the foundation of which was described in the last chapter, reached the height of its prosperity in the early seventies. On its list of membership all that was most distinguished in a memorable generation of Edinburgh people was amply represented. The Lord President and the Lord Justice Clerk of the day appear, together with Lord Neaves, whose wit and

culture maintained the literary tradition of Kames and Monboddo, and Lord Gifford, whose memory is preserved by a celebrated endowment of Natural Theology. The then Lord Advocate, better known in later days as Lord Young, was also a member, and upon occasion terrified and delighted the company with the mordant wit which there were few who did not fear and none who did not admire. Sir Daniel Macnee, President of the Scottish Academy, famous for his inimitable anecdotes; Dr. John Carlyle, the translator of Dante and the brother of the Sage; Professor Blackie, with his showy eccentricities; the more serious but equally genial figure of Professor Masson—all these distinguished persons frequented the gatherings held in the old club rooms at 90A George Street. Tait, too, though he disliked general society, would often come in after the evening meetings of the Royal Society, and the survivors of the habitués of those days will recall a memorable encounter between him and his old friend Thomas Stevenson, the father of the novelist, in which the merits of the theology of the Shorter Catechism were the issue of the battle. The antagonists sat, one on each side of the fireplace, smoking long clay pipes,—Tait, alert, aggressive, and Episcopalian; Stevenson grim, resistive, and Presbyterian, hurling taunts and logic at each other till they parted, amicable but irreconcilable, in the small hours of the morning.

But if the company was distinguished, it was interesting also as the last embodiment of the corporate intellect of Edinburgh, the last phase of a society which was at its best when Dr. Johnson stayed with Boswell at James's Court, and had hardly declined in the days when Lockhart wrote *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*. The members of the Evening Club still for the most part inhabited the grey streets of the older part of the New Town. Most of them had to make their way up one or other of the toilsome ascents from the north side of the city in order to reach the

place of meeting, and among the younger members there lingered traces of the old-fashioned and now almost obsolete Scotch conviviality, of which Robert Louis Stevenson (himself a junior member of the company) has given some curious glimpses.

Smith, with his friends, Dr. Davidson and Mr. Lindsay, represented the Free Church; but his interests in the Club were not mainly theological. In the earliest days of his membership he formed the acquaintance of two of the most prominent of the younger set, and with them he lived on terms of affectionate and lifelong intimacy. One of these was Mr. Alexander Gibson, an advocate, who reached no higher eminence than the Secretaryship of a Royal Commission, though, in the opinion of his friends, he might have done great things had his life not been prematurely cut short. The other was Sheriff Nicolson, one of the most popular figures of his day, a typically warm-hearted and unbusiness-like Celt, a great teller of stories and singer of songs, and on occasion a versifier with a true vein of sentimental humour. Neither of these two men can be said to have ever done justice to the gifts which they possessed, but both were men of varied culture and learning, and as companions they were unrivalled. Mr. M'Lennan, who has already been mentioned, and of whom there will be more to say, and Mr. Aeneas Mackay, Sheriff of Fife and Kinross, and afterwards Professor of Constitutional History in the University of Edinburgh, also belonged to this group. They all met frequently at a house, the hospitalities of which must not go without commemoration in this book. Mr. James Irvine Smith, who died only a few years ago, was the host and friend of nearly every one of note in Edinburgh. He was a man whose taste for every kind of artistic excellence amounted almost to genius, and his dinners were celebrated. For many years he occupied the position of Reporter to the Court of

Session, and he was intimate with all the Bench and most of the Bar and with scores of literary, artistic, and scientific celebrities besides. Judges, artists, men of letters, professors, and eminent counsel came to taste his claret, in which he had the fine old orthodox Scotch taste, and to admire his Turner drawings, which were almost unrivalled in any private collection. In the earlier days of his career as a host and a connoisseur the festivities which used to take place at his house retained a little of the full-blooded style of the *Noctes*, and it is recorded that his guests in Northumberland Street have been heard to sing Auld Lang Syne to the accompaniment of Steinberg Cabinet at a very advanced hour in the morning. To this convivial group Nicolson and Gibson, above mentioned, belonged, but by the time that Smith became a familiar guest at Northumberland Street, as he did in the course of the first years of his Aberdeen Professorship, the parties, though not less amusing, had become less uproarious and more tinged with a middle-aged decorum. To the end of his life his intercourse with Mr. Irvine Smith was one of his greatest pleasures.

As the years went on, the Edinburgh gatherings came to have their counterpart on a smaller scale in Aberdeen. Sheriff Nicolson and Mr. Gibson frequently came north to visit their friend; and in Mr. White's house in Union Street, and equally memorably at the Manse of Old Deer, there met almost at regular intervals a body of high intellectual and convivial pretensions, who adopted with acclamation the title of "the Aberdeen Academy." Besides Mr. White and the Rev. Mr. Peter of Old Deer, the customary hosts, the Academicians included Mr. George Reid and his brother Archie, Mr. G. Paul Chalmers, Mr. (now Sir David) Gill, who was then Lord Crawford's astronomer at Dun Echt, and Dr. Kerr, who has recorded his experiences in that company.¹

¹ See *Memories, Grave and Gay*, by John Kerr, LL.D. (Edinburgh: T. Nelson & Sons).

Apart from these gaieties, his life in Aberdeen was simple and strenuous. The foundation of the Horatian happiness and contentment which he at this time enjoyed was the enthusiasm with which he threw himself into the congenial work of conducting his classes. Both during the session itself and during the months of enviable leisure which are at the disposal of the occupant of a Scottish theological chair, he was engaged in the constant preparation for his work and the endless study of his subject, which we have already described. As a Hebraist he made rapid progress, but as his erudition grew, he seemed to sacrifice nothing of the interest in universal knowledge which is the most remarkable feature of his career. Thus, in the first years of his professorship we find him engaged in revising the proofs of Dr. Davidson's *Hebrew Grammar*, in a copious and intimate correspondence with Ritschl on theological topics, and in a controversy which he conducted with much vigour and acuteness on the question whether the theological students in Free Church Divinity Halls should any longer be compelled to write Latin discourses. In 1871 he collaborated with his friend Lindsay in a paper on "The Earlier Atomists," which was read before the British Association on the occasion of its Edinburgh meeting in that year; and his papers show that he had made, by correspondence, the acquaintance of Mr. George Henry Lewes and was coaching him, also by correspondence, on mathematical points that arose in his philosophical writings. Most interesting of all—he found time to write at least one important letter to his friend Mr. M'Lennan on Totem Warfare in Coptos and Tentyra, and on sorcery in the Old Testament. On the latter subject his views were already remarkably mature, and the following extract will serve to emphasise the continuity of the studies which occupied him in 1871 with those which in his latest years culminated in *The Religion of the Semites*, and which placed him among the founders of the modern Science of Comparative Religion.

“As to sorcery and the Old Testament, of course the Israelites, being by nature like other people at the time, had a great love for sorcery which creatures like the witch of Endor gratified; but the trade was forbidden, and sorcery stood in direct antithesis to prophecy. The bitter water was probably a relic of an old ordeal not abolished but put under restrictions. The Urim and Thummim may also have been grounded on a similar old usage, especially if Kuenen is right in connecting them with Teraphim. But they were put into such relations to the spiritual Mosaism, and so entirely confined to great crises of state affairs, where moreover they were used in connection with prayer to the spiritual God, that they gained a somewhat different complexion. But at least the rise of prophecy extinguished them, for they are never mentioned after David’s accession. The important point is not that the Israelites *once* used such things, but that Mosaism killed them and knew itself to be opposed to them. That comes out clearly in Deut. xviii. 9-22 (where prophet and sorcerer stand opposed), 1 Sam. xv. 23, and especially in Num. xxiii. 23, which translate thus: ‘There is no enchantment in Jacob: no sorcery in Israel. In due time it is told to Jacob and Israel (*viz.* by prophecy) what *God* doeth,’ *i.e.* the personal moral revelation of a spiritual God dispenses with nature religion and sorcery. I could add many passages. Take only Isa. viii. 19. *Before* Moses’ time the use of divination seems quite naïve, *e.g.* Joseph’s cup, Gen. xlv. 5, and Gen. xxxiii. 27, where for ‘experience’ read ‘augury.’ Does a nation in the course of nature pass through a revulsion of feeling like this, and that *at once* so far as the principle goes, tho’ not without stages in the application of the principle? That is the problem of the Old Testament for students of the philosophy of religion. I should like to see your solution. Kuenen’s is quite a failure, and I don’t expect to see a solution that will hold water without an acknowledgment of the specific difference between the religious history of Israel and of other nations.¹ Remember I don’t deny that traces of nature religion are to be found in the Old Testament; only the Old Testament religion did not, I

¹ The feeling against witchcraft with us is a necessary development of the freer side of the Reformation movement, which was not indeed the church side.



Wm Robertson Smith

From a Lithograph by Sir George Reid, R.S.A. (1876).

hold, grow out of, but confronted and destroyed, these. That is a question for scientific inquiry which we may attack from our opposite points of view without cursing each other."

His advance in years and in worldly consideration naturally increased his domestic cares. He had as yet no establishment of his own, but it is easy to imagine how great his importance had become in the counsels of his family. More than ever he was the idol and patron of "the children," the providence which could be trusted to send "a rabbit or a guinea-pig," or "a stamp begged from the Principal," for their diversion—a pattern of big brothers. But he was now more than this—more even than the dutiful son who provided the latest contrivance in lamps for the manse parlour, and sent a dozen of port on the least rumour of an illness at home. He was a link with the outside world in which he was already something of a figure, a man who could judge soundly of an investment, and advise and assist his brothers in making a start in life. His relations with his father were, if possible, even closer than they had ever been. He was now a trusted colleague in the ministry as well as a son, and their consultations on ecclesiastical affairs were frequent and mutually helpful. "I am not ashamed to confess," wrote the minister of Keig on one occasion, "that my son has often given me advice, and that I have generally found it good to follow the advice so given." In the troubled time which was at hand Smith had no more cordial or more steadfast counsellor. These ideal family relations are reflected in the annual birthday letters which, with an exact and affectionate observance of anniversaries, were punctually exchanged between Keig and Aberdeen.

Extensive and cordial as was his correspondence with British and foreign scholars and men of science, Smith did not neglect any opportunity of maintaining by personal intercourse the many useful and interesting friendships

he had formed, and of adding to their number as occasion offered. He had become very fond of travelling in his student days, and from the date of his appointment to the Aberdeen Chair till the end of his life there was hardly a single year without a foreign journey. In the early autumn of 1871 he made a tour of the battlefields of the Franco-Prussian war with Dr. A. B. Davidson and Mr. Gibson, and the party was joined for a time by his distinguished German friends, Dr. Klein and Dr. Nöther, who were then at the outset of their professorial careers. This journey, however, though interesting, was of much less importance in his history than the visit which he paid to Göttingen in the following year.

That visit was undertaken in the pursuit of new and extended studies by which he hoped to increase his fitness for his academic work. A certain type of Hebrew scholar is content if he knows the received text of the Hebrew Scriptures and the received interpretations. In 1872 Smith was already long past this stage, and he had realised (as indeed is shown by the letter to Mr. M'Lennan above quoted) that if any real progress in his subject was to be made, it was necessary to get behind the current traditions and study the ancient Semitic civilisation as a whole. He had already begun to interest himself in the Arabic language, literature, and civilisation, and it was not unnatural that he looked to Germany for instruction and assistance. Here there was considerable latitude of choice. Amongst pure Arabists perhaps the first place belonged to Fleischer at Leipsic. There were several reasons, however, why Smith should decide to go to Göttingen, with which he already had so many pleasant associations, and where his friend Klein was settled.

At Göttingen the veteran Ewald was still one of the most illustrious academic figures, though no longer in active work, and Paul de Lagarde in 1869 had succeeded him as Professor Ordinarius of Oriental Languages. In this remarkable man, who carried on the tradition of his

predecessor's idealistic political liberalism, Smith found an intellectual affinity. Like Smith, Lagarde was a man of wide and very various erudition, and like him he combined great synthetic power with a high ideal of minute and painstaking scholarship. A glance at the list of his writings, which includes works on politics and education, and even some poetry, "shows the range and variety of his studies: closer examination reveals everywhere in things great and small the same embarrassing affluence of learning, the same incredible painstaking, the same grasp of principles, the same discoverer's gift of combination."¹ Like Smith, too, he had the most enthusiastic faith in the value of critical and philological inquiry as an accessory, or rather as a necessary foundation, of religious faith.² His linguistic attainments were in fact acquired merely as a necessary condition of a true understanding of Theology as he conceived it, "the Queen of all the Sciences," whose task it is to find a way to the religion of the future. Thus, though he occupied the chair of Ewald, in which he was destined to be succeeded by Wellhausen, he by no means regarded himself as merely one of a great dynasty of Orientalists. He valued learning for mere learning's sake so little that, great as was the reputation of his teaching as a professor, the most ardent of his disciples prefer to extol the religious or, as some preferred to call it, the prophetic side of his character.³ In spite of his essential magnanimity, Lagarde seems to have displayed in his relations with colleagues and contemporaries certain angularities and asperities which we shall see reflected in his many letters to Smith in after

¹ Prof. G. F. Moore.

² Compare Rothe's characteristic saying (he is speaking of theology and Schleiermacher's "dialectic"): "Ich kenne nur zwei wissenschaftliche Fühlhörner: strenge, gründliche Philologie und Geschichte."

³ In 1889, two years before his death, he wrote: "Ich unterscheide mich von meinen Zeitgenossen am wesentlichsten dadurch, dass ich mich als Priester fühle, als Seelsorger; als Lehrer ich steige in der Scala abwärts. Der Dienst als Priester ist es, der mich glücklich und gelegentlich aufdringlich macht."

years, and which interfered with his social success and probably limited the sphere of his personal influence. He had had a long struggle with adversity before he was promoted to the chair at Göttingen, and in spite of certain ultimate similarities of view he seems always to have been out of sympathy with his eminent colleague Ritschl, whose influence was predominant in University circles and whose philosophy of life was of a more genial cast than the stern if lofty idealism of Lagarde.

Lagarde, as was natural, had few intimates ; it was not very easy to gain his affections ; yet Smith, attached Ritschlian as he always was, seems from the first to have won his esteem and approval, and the intercourse between the two scholars in 1872 was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. There could be no more striking testimony to the position which Smith already held in European scholarship than his cordial and intimate relations with two savants so eminent and so antagonistic.

In 1872, when Smith paid his second visit to Göttingen, Lagarde was devoting his attention almost entirely to Arabic, and was particularly engaged in the study of the ancient Arabian poetry to which Smith was himself destined to give much attention in subsequent years. He followed Lagarde's instructions with much assiduity during the whole of the summer semester (April-July), and became deeply absorbed in his work. Few details are recorded, but it appears that his diligence was so great as to re-awaken the old apprehensions of his parents lest he might be doing more than was good for his health ; and Lagarde himself, who was a most indefatigable worker, formed such an idea of Smith's devotion to study that most of the many letters to his disciple in after years conclude with earnest and affectionate cautions against overtaxing his strength. An attack of neuralgia, which soon passed off, was the most serious consequence of Smith's industry at this time, and though Arabic absorbed so much of his energies as to encroach

even on his correspondence with Keig, there is enough to show that he thoroughly enjoyed his semester. He describes himself as "living the life of a Privat-docent with great exactness," and at the end of the summer observes that, while he has "not learned as much Arabic as he expected, he has at any rate got some." It will sufficiently appear hereafter that this was a modest understatement of his achievement.

In the intervals of his studies he was not unmindful of other claims on his attention. Soon after his arrival he writes home: "We are going to get up—not exactly a service, but a Sunday evening class among the young English-speaking population here; or, rather, the meeting will be one for talking over a passage. There are here several Baptists and Independents. The thing will be ticklish, but it seems one's duty to seize the opportunity. Perhaps one may be able to exercise some influence."

The class was held in the Aula Academica and, in spite of one collision with an ecclesiastical compatriot whose controversial inclinations proved a discordant element, it seems to have been a great success, and there was some talk of the Free Church making an endeavour to arrange for similar ministrations in future years.

About this time he learned from Scotland with much satisfaction of Mr. Lindsay's appointment to the chair of Church History in the Free Church College at Glasgow. That appointment had been the occasion of some sharp divisions of opinion in the Church, and Smith's comment on the manner in which the affair had been conducted is curiously interesting in view of the events in his own history which took place a few years later. He writes to his father: "His (Lindsay's) victory is most encouraging. He writes that all the leaders except Rainy made a dead set against him. . . . Rainy is the only one of these leaders who is really worthy to lead men. The others may do to conduct diplomatic

business, which is a thing of which there is far too much in the Church."

His recreations were inevitably somewhat academic in character. He of course maintained his personal relations with Ritschl, who enjoyed above all things the society of a brilliant disciple, and among the Orientalists, apart from Lagarde, who, for the reasons above given, was not much in society, he saw most of Professor Benfey, the eminent Sanscrit scholar, with whose family he was on terms of some intimacy. His chief friendships were, however, among the younger generation of teachers, and particularly among the mathematicians and men of science. His intimacy with Klein was already of some standing, and his growing absorption in Oriental studies had by no means diminished his interest in his earlier pursuits. Klein was the means of introducing him to many new and interesting acquaintances, and in his correspondence with Professor Tait, who wrote him several long and characteristic letters in the course of this summer, there are frequent references to eminent foreign contemporaries whom Smith was constantly meeting, and to whom Tait sent numerous messages, not all intended for literal delivery. Among the celebrated persons with whom he became friendly was the illustrious Clebsch, who was venerated by all the mathematical schools of Europe.

On June 26 he writes to his sister :

"I suppose I needn't write about Arabic. So there remains nothing that I can remember except to tell you that I drank *Schmollis* yesterday with Dr. Stumpf, which means that hereafter I am to call him *thou* and not *they*. If you don't know what that means Papa will explain it. I am anxious to arrange to go with him in August to the Bavarian Alps so as to get a thorough run in the mountain air before I come back. I also think that as soon as Lagarde leaves I shall go for a week to Leipsic and Dresden. But that I cannot settle yet."

Shortly afterwards Lagarde's vacation put an end for

the time to Arabic studies, and Smith set out on a tour which was not devoid of professional interest. He was now at leisure to resume his old practice of writing journal letters, so we have very full records of the remarkably numerous visits to well-known theologians and seats of learning which he contrived to compress into a few days' hard travelling.

The first stage was Halle, which he reached on July 11.

"I landed in Halle before eight o'clock, had a stroll through the town, which is not interesting, except at one or two points, and found Riehm at nine o'clock expounding Ψ 32 to a moderate audience of students who did not occupy more than the fourth part of a very large lecture-room. I believe, however, that he has about 200 names on his roll, and that the small attendance was simply one of the many signs of the indifference of most German students to theological study of an exact kind. I went after lecture to Riehm and had about an hour's talk with him."

The same day he reached Leipsic, which he found to be "on the whole a very handsome town."

"I first sought out a certain Dr. Wickes, an Englishman, and friend of Hofmann's, who has been studying *Orientalia* for some time with the view of writing something on the Pentateuch against Colenso. . . . Wickes was very kind to me, and made my residence in Leipsic most pleasant. . . . My business in Leipsic was of several kinds. In the first place, I have secured some books at a very moderate rate. Then I have made inquiries that will be most useful when we come to fill up our library with Thomson's money. Then I called on Fleischer and became member of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*. Further, I visited Delitzsch and had a long and interesting chat with him. He knew me by name because Salmond had told him about our contest, and in general he seemed interested in and fond of Scotland and Scotsmen. Among other matters transacted in Leipsic I paid a visit to Dr Biesenthal, a noted Rabbinit who is anxious to sell his collection of Hebrew books. If we could get hold of them for Aberdeen we should have one of the finest Rabbinical

collections in Great Britain. . . . I stayed in Leipsic till this morning (Monday, July 15), and went yesterday to the University Chapel. The service was peculiar, consisting almost entirely of hymn-singing and sermon. There was no reading, except the very short passage which formed the subject of lecture, and very little prayer. The preacher was Kahnis. He is much more effective in style than most Lutherans—had less mannerism, and seemed to know better what he wished to say. A curious feature was that he read a long extract from Luther in the middle of his sermon as to the nature of faith. From some remarks he made, it is plain that he looks forward to a separation of Church and State as inevitable. Delitzsch spoke to me in the same sense, and apparently does not regret the prospect. Ritschl, on the contrary, is strong for the keeping up of a State Church. The difference in standpoint is probably due in part to the general difference in relation to the Prussian state between strict Lutherans and 'Unirte'¹ theologians."

After attending one of Fleischer's lectures (on Beidhawi, as it happened), he hurried off to Dresden, where he devoted several days entirely to the pictures. Two long letters home are full of the impressions of this remarkable collection, among which may be noted his preference of Holbein's Madonna before Raphael's. The latter, though "in every sense most wonderful," was, to his thinking, "rather heathenish than Christian in conception," and Holbein's creation impressed him more as a piece of *religious* art, though not so fine a picture.

"I went also," he wrote, "to the collection of engravings, which I understand much better than pictures. One can ask for the works of any master one pleases. I gave my attention to Salvator Rosa, Marc Antonio Raimondi, and Rembrandt. One very fine etching of Rembrandt I had never seen before, even in a copy. The subject is the Raising of Lazarus, and the whole treatment is superlatively fine and powerful. The figure of Christ in the centre has a rare majesty, and the variety of impressions produced on the spectators is admirably brought out."

¹ Reformed.

Even at Dresden he contrived to devote some time to purely professional purposes. He records an interesting visit to the Royal Library, where he continued his bibliographical inquiries with the aid of Dr. von Carolsfeld, the librarian, to whom he had an introduction. His next halting-place was Jena, where he settled at Luther's old hostelry, the Bär, and made some interesting acquaintances.

"I called on Diestel," he writes, "and missed him, but presently he followed me to the inn and carried me off to his house, where a small party of professors was assembling for coffee. I found Diestel very pleasant, and indeed the whole circle was most friendly, though some of the elements would probably not have appeared so satisfactory on longer acquaintance. I allude particularly to Lipsius, who, I believe, is a very vain man. I stayed till Saturday morning and saw something of several professors, including old Hase, who was much interested in the Free Church. The theology of Jena is too negative for my taste; but Diestel at least has a higher position, and so for that matter has Hase."

He returned to Göttingen for a day or two in order to pack up his books and settle his sister for the winter; and on Tuesday, August 6, he set out with his friend Klein on a tour in Bavaria and the Tyrol. The travellers went by Eisenach and Nuremberg to Munich, and thereafter spent a pleasant three weeks on a walking tour, during which Smith had his first experiences of Alpine mountaineering, a pursuit for which he showed considerable aptitude, the most memorable feat being the ascent of the Similaun, to which he often looked back with pleasure.

On his return to Aberdeen he threw himself with great energy into the work of his chair, and into the many activities of his academic and social life. His voluminous correspondence with Lagarde began very soon after he left Göttingen, and he got very valuable help from his correspondent when he came to carry out the plan he had

formed at Leipsic of acquiring Dr. Biesenthal's Rabbinical collection for the College Library. The interchange of friendly and scientific letters with his other German and English friends was of course continued. He was kept fully informed of the doings and writings of his old associates, Klein and Nöther, as well as of those of his less distant allies of the Evening Club. In his third session as Professor (1872-73) he was much occupied in writing a fresh series of lectures on the Antiquities of the Hebrews under such headings as "Sacred Worship and Liturgy," "In what Sense was the Old Testament Religion not Spiritual?" "Holiness," "Priesthood and the Office of Christ," "Holy Places," "Holiness of the Ark," "The Ordinances of the great Day of Atonement," "Repentance and Remission of Sins in the Old Testament."

It was about this time that his literary work, apart from the large mass of mere lecture-writing imposed upon him by his professorial duties and his occasional discourses and sermons, began to be considerable. The bibliography attached to this book will show the remarkable variety and volume of Smith's labours both in assisting other people in the preparation of their works and in writing notes for periodicals on learned topics of current interest. In July 1871 he undertook to contribute to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*¹ a quarterly digest and criticism of the principal contents of the German and Dutch theological periodicals as they appeared. In addition to this laborious task he contributed frequent short notices of more important foreign theological works to the same journal. To the *Edinburgh Daily Review*, a newspaper largely owned and conducted by Free Churchmen, he contributed many longer notices of books, such as Crawford's *Atonement*, Miller's *Proverbs*, Strauss's *Ulrich von Hütten*, Williams's *Life and Letters*, Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*. His

¹ Then edited by Principal Dykes, and subsequently by Professor James Candlish.

earliest contribution to the *Academy*, a review of vols. i. and ii. of Ewald's *Biblical Theology*, belongs to the autumn of 1873, and it is interesting to note that his connection with this journal was the occasion of his first acquaintance with Professor Cheyne, with whom he afterwards established most friendly and intimate relations.

A letter from Mr. G. H. Lewes, who had again sought Smith's assistance in connection with scientific points arising in his book then passing through the Press,¹ refers to the impending renewal of the controversy with Hutchison Stirling on the subject of Hegel's criticisms of Newton's mathematical discoveries, which had been one of the features of Smith's Edinburgh period. Stirling, who had not had the best of his adversary in the newspaper controversy of that time, returned to the charge in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law*, which appeared early in 1873. The third and closing section was headed "Hegel and W. R. Smith; or, the Vindication of the Former on the Mathematical Reference," in which Smith was accused of "radical misconception," and of having treated the subject "in a lamentable spirit of gratuitous abuse." "One finds ample revenge for Hegel, however," concluded Mr. Hutchison Stirling, "when one thinks of all the rabid nonsense, not only in English, but even in French, our mathematicians have written against him; above all, when one thinks of the twenty-two pages from p. 491 to p. 511 in the twenty-fifth volume of the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Edinburgh."² These utterances attracted a certain amount of notice; so much indeed that the London correspondent of the *Daily Review*, clearly a Hegelian, thought it necessary to call special attention to the manner in which "the intellectual giant in the world of Metaphysics" laid about him, and to point out that such a vindication of Hegel "could not go

¹ *Problems of Life and Mind: First Series—The Foundations of a Creed.*

² "On Hegel, etc.," see *Lectures and Essays.*

unanswered." Smith had no intention that it should. In a letter to Keig dated January 1873, he wrote: "The next great news is that I to-day received by post Stirling's new book 'from the author.' The attack on me is very fierce and in some parts shabby. But I think I shall be able to give a good account of it either in *Nature* or in the *Fortnightly*." The projected reply appeared in the April number of the *Fortnightly Review*,¹ and was in Smith's best controversial style. After recalling the inconclusive result of the newspaper controversy, to which reference is made in the last chapter, Smith proceeded to restate his position, and succeeded to the satisfaction of his scientific friends and allies in demonstrating once more what he held to be Hegel's absolute incompetence in mathematics, an incompetence which was most clearly proved by "the fact that he never learned to understand such fundamental notions as *Limit*, *Variable*, and *Continuous Quantity*." Incidentally he referred to a "Hegelian Calculus" as contrasted with the Newtonian Calculus, and went on to say that "when Dr. Stirling, disclaiming for himself 'all pretensions to the position even of a student' in mathematics, takes it upon himself to separate the dross from the pure gold of a Newton, the incongruity between the humility of the disclaimer and the arrogance of the enterprise is manifest to every reader." The editor of the *Review* (Mr. John Morley) had permitted Mr. Stirling to see Smith's paper before publication, and Stirling's rejoinder appeared in the same number. Its tendency may perhaps be made sufficiently clear for the present purpose from the public correspondence with which the controversy closed. Smith wrote to *Nature* (April 10), "the single word which still seemed necessary between Dr. Stirling and himself."

"Dr. Stirling now holds that the real question between him and me is whether or not Hegel 'attempted' to produce a 'Hegelian Calculus.' And so it seems to him

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

a virtual concession of the entire case when I say that the phrase 'Hegelian Calculus' is used by me in irony. Dr. Stirling, I fear, misunderstands me. What Hegel has given us on the subject of the Calculus, is, strictly speaking, nonsense. But, as I have shown, this nonsense is not mere metaphysic, but involves mathematical absurdity. It is, of course, only in irony that one can dignify the paradoxes of mathematical ignorance with the title of a Calculus; and if this admission satisfies Dr. Stirling, then our controversy is at an end."

Stirling replied briefly and somewhat darkly (*Nature*, May 8) that he could not, with any respect for himself, enter into further relations with Mr. Smith. "Further proceedings must, so far as I am concerned, be arranged by a friend on the one part and a friend on the other. Longer to trouble the public with these altercations can only seem to it impertinent." Thus, somewhat unsatisfactorily for the Hegelian party, the controversy ended.

In the course of the summer of 1873 Smith paid a short visit to Germany, partly on family affairs; he crossed from Leith to Hamburg in the company of Mr. Gill, and in the course of his travels was able to spend a few days with his friends at Göttingen. In the autumn he had the great pleasure of acting as guide to his friend Klein, by this time appointed Professor of Mathematics at Erlangen, in a tour through the Scottish Highlands. Klein had come to England in order to be present at the Bradford meeting of the British Association, and for the particular purpose of becoming personally acquainted with Professor Cayley and Sir William Thomson. It is on record that he thoroughly enjoyed his expedition, and not least the journey in Smith's company from Inverness to Oban and thence by Dunoon and Glasgow to Loch Lomond, the Trossachs, and Edinburgh.

Smith's reputation in theological and scientific circles, and the rapid extension of his practice as a writer, was now to lead to an extremely important development of his work. By the spring of 1874 Professor Baynes,

editor of the projected ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, had made considerable progress with his arrangements for the organisation of that great work ; but in the list of prospective contributors in the theological department he still had room for one who, while possessing a recognised ecclesiastical position, should combine the most efficient and progressive modern scholarship with a sufficient measure of orthodoxy and a gift for the tactful handling of delicate questions.

“ The higher problems of philosophy and religion,” wrote Dr. Baynes in his preface, “. . . are being investigated afresh from opposite sides in a thoroughly earnest spirit, as well as with a directness and intellectual power which is certainly one of the most striking signs of the times. This fresh outbreak of the inevitable contest between the old and the new is a fruitful source of exaggerated hopes and fears, and of excited denunciation and appeal. In this conflict a work like the *Encyclopædia* is not called upon to take any direct part. It has to do with knowledge rather than opinion, and to deal with all subjects from a critical and historical rather than a dogmatic point of view. It cannot be the organ of any sect or party in science, religion, or philosophy. Its main duty is to give an accurate account of the facts and an impartial summary of results in every department of inquiry and research. This duty will, I hope, be faithfully performed.”

The suggestion that Smith was the nearest possible approximation to this ideal contributor appears to have been first made by Mr. Gibson, and to have been readily accepted as a solution of a difficult problem. Negotiations were opened forthwith, and a series of five articles, “ Angel,” “ Apostle,” “ Aramaic Languages,” “ Ark of the Covenant,” “ Assidaeans,”¹ was commissioned for the forthcoming second volume of the *Encyclopædia*. The first of the series was fated to acquire considerable celebrity in the course of the next few years, but none of them was destined to be of such importance in the history of

¹ This short article is unsigned, but its authorship is known.

Smith himself and of his Church as the article "Bible," which, with the article "Baal," was probably also arranged for at this time, but which appeared in the succeeding third volume.

The months that followed were, on the whole, uneventful; much of his leisure from other duties was devoted to the preparation of his *Encyclopædia* articles, and in the notes to Keig there are occasional records of his progress. For him this was a new form of literature, and he thought out and wrote his contributions with great care and with a sense of serious responsibility. Before the publication of the earlier ones, such as "Angel," "Ark," and "Baal," he took occasion to consult his friends, especially Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Black, as to whether in their opinion what he had written fulfilled the above-quoted prescription of Professor Baynes. The question for consideration was not merely whether the articles were sufficiently accurate and sufficiently full, but also whether they were such as might suitably appear above the name of one whom the Church had placed in a position of acknowledged responsibility. The conclusion arrived at was that, if the articles were to be written at all, they could not well be written otherwise. They no doubt departed from the method of treatment which had hitherto been usual, but they were scientific and objective in spirit, and, in the opinion of Smith's counsellors, could easily be defended against any charge of unorthodoxy if it occurred to any one to make such a charge.

It appears from references in extant letters and from the contemporary press that Smith about this time was taking a rather more prominent part than usual in ecclesiastical affairs, and his intervention in a disestablishment debate in the Free Church Synod of Aberdeen, which took place early in April 1874, is worth noting. It was the occasion of his publishing some characteristic views, which betrayed the influence both of Ritschl and of Lagarde, on the subject of the proper aims and position

of the Visible Church. There had been some newspaper criticism of a speech which he made in the Synod in support of a motion deprecating or disapproving of the agitation of the disestablishment question in Church courts, and he thought it necessary to write to the *Aberdeen Free Press* vindicating the consistency of his action in the Synod with a belief in the political righteousness of disestablishing the Church. He held, he explained,

“ . . . the general principle that in every Church act the *ultimate* aim must be the right discharge of Christian worship. This is the only end for which Church officers are ordained, the only end for the discharge of which they possess special authority and qualification. Thus, all legitimate acts of Church courts fall under two heads, corresponding to the two ways in which the worshipping Church can praise and thank God for His grace in Christ. The Church presents itself before God as a worshipping Church, partly in the ordinances of public worship, partly by active efforts to bring to Christ those who know Him not. . . . When it is proved to me that by moving the government to disestablishment, we are either removing a burden on our own consciences which prevents us as Free Churchmen from worshipping God aright, or else are doing missionary work while we express eucharistically our thanks for Gospel privileges; I shall support such action. But so long as this is not the case, I shall carefully distinguish between my duty as a Christian citizen to protest by the usual civil channels against civil injustice, and my duty as a Church officer appointed to minister in spiritual things.”

This exposition of his theory of the place of the Church in the Christian polity was appropriately supplemented by a discourse on the place of theology in the work and growth of the Church—the subject of the closing address which it fell to him in due course to deliver to the students of the Free Church College at the end of the session of 1873-74.¹

¹ This address appeared in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in the following July, and is reprinted in *Lectures and Essays*.



AN IMPRESSION OF TRAVEL (1876).

From a Lithograph by Sir George Reid, R.S.A.

On his return from an expedition to the Tyrol in the summer of 1874 a new controversy awaited him. He was persuaded by the pressing invitations of friends to pay a visit to Belfast, where the British Association was to hold the meeting that was made memorable by Professor Tyndall's presidential address. Tyndall, whose gift for the popular exposition of science is still so widely appreciated, on this occasion ventured somewhat boldly out of the departments of learning in which he was an acknowledged master, and attempted an historical survey of the progress of philosophy and science throughout the world's history with a view to establishing the pre-eminence of his own somewhat materialistic school of thought. His discourse gave great offence to the orthodox, and was the occasion of much fierce criticism of varying cogency and of several diverting parodies; Professor Clerk Maxwell's verses, printed in his Biography, are less widely known than Mr. Mallock's *New Paul and Virginia*, but are equally worthy of attention. Smith, who, as he proved in his encounter with Hutchison Stirling, could on occasion smite "the metaphysicians" hip and thigh, was a no less dangerous enemy of the materialistic man of science. As we have seen, he had himself contributed to the proceedings of an earlier meeting of the Association some considerations on the value of early physical speculations, and his very various studies had made him familiar with the topics somewhat superficially handled in the address. Tyndall had made some rather serious slips, and Smith found several good openings for attacking the materialist on his own ground. He accordingly wrote a letter to the *Northern Whig* in which he overturned the Professor's views of primitive religion, mercilessly ridiculed his history, which, as the address itself rather naïvely showed, was derived from one or two compendious but rather one-sided text-books, gravely rebuked the "almost indecent" language applied to Aristotle, and concluded

with an amusing denunciation of Tyndall's sciolistic account of the Middle Ages.

"In his estimate of mediæval thought Professor Tyndall is at least a century behind the present state of historical research, and it is pitiful to hear the president of a great scientific association imparting to his audience in two lines the nature of the scholastic philosophy 'according to Lange.' The time for such off-hand judgments on great periods of history is long past, and the Professor may rest assured that something more than 'entire confidence in Dr. Draper' and Dr. Lange is requisite for the understanding of the peculiar intellectual developments of the Middle Ages. How guilelessly Dr. Tyndall in this part of his address accepts all assimilable matter that is put before him appears in a very comic light in the assertion that 'the under garment of ladies retains to this hour its Arab name.' No doubt, if this were true the intellectual superiority of the Moors over the Christians would be clearly made out, but the word *camisia* is older than Jerome."

Tyndall replied to some of his critics in his *Apology for the Belfast Address*, but Smith's letter, so far as the present writers are aware, has remained unanswered. His friends were delighted. Dr. John Brown forwarded an approving comment from Ruskin, and Professor Tait, who highly disapproved of Tyndall and all his works, wrote characteristically from St. Andrews as follows :

O Smith!—Thou hast indeed smitten Dagon in his temple—but, rash youth, hast considered that this will be laid to *my* charge—sending a "bravo" to despatch an enemy one was afraid to meet personally? Nevertheless I have sent the cutting to L.¹—Yours,

P. G. T.

Tyndall's address created a sensation both in the theological and in the scientific world which was quite out of proportion to its importance as a serious attack on the orthodox position. It gave special offence to a

¹ Probably Sir Norman Lockyer, at that time editor of *Nature*.

distinguished group of scientific men who, like Lord Kelvin and Clerk Maxwell and their great predecessor, Faraday, were staunch upholders of the truths of revealed religion. This feeling of irritation was probably the immediate occasion of *The Unseen Universe*, a work of some celebrity in its day, which may be regarded as an elaborate counterblast to Dr. Tyndall's provocative manifesto. The book on its appearance in April 1875 was anonymous,¹ but it was fairly well known even then that its authors were Professor Tait and Professor Balfour Stewart. Smith at the outset of his acquaintance with Tait had been impressed and attracted by his strict attachment to the principles of Trinitarian Christianity; Professor Stewart was in this respect at least equally qualified to defend the orthodox position. He was an eminent physicist and meteorologist, a Fellow of the Royal Society, Director of Kew Observatory, and Professor of Natural Philosophy in Owens College, Manchester. A devoted and fervent Churchman, who in later years was a member of a committee appointed by a Lambeth Conference to promote interchange of views between scientific men of orthodox opinions in religious matters, he maintained throughout his career a deep interest in the more mysterious problems of existence, and became one of the founders of the Society for Psychological Research, over which he presided from the year 1885 until his death.

The book, which was the joint production of these two eminent persons, attracted much notice; it was interesting both by reason of the high enthusiasm with which it was inspired, and the vigour and vivacity of the style in which it was written. No one who studies the history of ideas in England during the later nineteenth century can afford to neglect *The Unseen Universe*. The authors started on the one hand from the received

¹ *The Unseen Universe; or, Physical Speculations on a Future State*, London, 1875.

postulates of religious teaching, and, on the other, from the current hypotheses of contemporary science, and sought to show that these, so far from being irreconcilable, really point to the same conclusions—the existence of a transcendental universe, and the immortality of the soul. Smith, who combined the characters of a theologian and a man of science, was naturally on the side of the collaborators, who developed their thesis at length with a by no means contemptible display of learning in the history of religious opinion and scientific thought. In his light-armed attack on Professor Tyndall he had merely sought to emphasise some of the most manifest shortcomings of the materialistic school. The undertaking in which Professor Tait was concerned must have appealed to him as a more positive service to the cause of reasoned Christianity, and the help which he undoubtedly gave in the composition of the book was no doubt willingly and even enthusiastically afforded. While the first edition was still in the press Professor Tait wrote :

“I have told Constable to send you final proofs (to-night) of the first and last proof sheets (the head and tail of our offending) which I wish you would *very* carefully read. Some matters are now introduced that are not held by the very orthodox, though they are probably nearer the truth than the Shorter Catechism doctrine. I don't wish you to say what is the probability for or against them ; but to say whether you think they are in *place*, and whether they fit the places they are in, which you will own to be a different matter. This of the *tail*. As to the *head*, look at back of Preface and give opinion. . . . Stewart wanted me to ask you to re-read the whole of the proofs, but I said you had been so microscopic before that you would be iconoclastic this time, and expunge whole chapters in prophetic frenzy.”

The book was an immediate success, and a second edition was called for in a few weeks. On the eve of its publication Tait wrote again, and his letter places in a still clearer light the nature of his and Professor Stewart's obligations both to Smith's erudition and to his criticisms.

35 GEORGE SQUARE, EDINBURGH, May 5, 1875.

MY DEAR SMITH—Macmillan gives me *private* information that in a few weeks a second edition of the *U.U.* will be wanted. He deprecated any material change, partly on its own merits, mainly on the inevitable delay it would involve.

Now, while I still most strongly hold to your kind promise to (some day soon) *rewrite* the first chapter¹ for us, I think Mac. is right—that there should be little material change in the second edition—especially as but few of the great critics have yet spoken out, and we must not at once abandon our first essay as if afraid of what may ultimately be said of it. We must be *at first* a Lucretian Atom, not a vortex-ring, strong in solid singleness, not wriggling meanly away from the knife! Will you, therefore, by little instalments as it suits you, give me *soon* all the more vital improvements which occur to you as possible without much altering the pages, etc. (the types having been kept up—so as to save expense)?

You have, of course, seen Clifford's painful essay in the *Fortnightly*. "Il a jeté son bonnet par-dessus les moulins," as the French say of a neophyte in the *demi-monde*. But a little while ago a most advanced ritualist, who put the sign of the cross on every page of his answers in the Senate House, he is now, discontinuously, an absolute pagan. Next year he will be an evangelical, perhaps.

An advanced ritualist, MacColl, has cracked us up in a letter to the *Guardian* last week. This week the other ritualist paper, the *Church Herald*, says our book is *infidel*. Last week the *Spiritualist* said that with a few slight changes the book would be an excellent text-book for *its* clients. The (Edinburgh) *Daily Review* says we are subtle and dangerous materialists. Hanna (late of Free St. John's here) says the work is the most important defence of religion that has appeared for a very long time! Which of these is nearest the truth?

I want to put in (on p. 206 or 207) part of Dante's inscription on the gate of the *Inferno*—not the hackneyed line about "voi che entrate," but the preceding ones, "Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore," etc., down to

¹ An "introductory sketch" dealing with the beliefs of ancient peoples and of the early Christians concerning the soul.

“io eterno duro” as a specimen of the horrible blasphemy introduced by the mediævalists, improving on Augustine. What do you say? Write soon at all events and give hints, promptly and *in order of pages*.—Yours truly,

P. G. TAIT.

P.S.—The *Church Herald* is down on us for your suggestion about “*for a little time* lower than the angels.”¹

Smith, who amongst his other heavy literary labours was now deep in the article “Bible,” did not find time to undertake the more extensive alterations referred to in Professor Tait’s letter. But the authors attached great importance to the services which he continued to render as the numerous successive editions of the book appeared; and, in the following year, when they had resolved to raise the veil, they proposed to acknowledge the assistance he had given in the most handsome terms.

Tait wrote on April 4, 1876 :

“Stewart is greatly exercised in his mind about the additions to the last sheet of U². Do *you* approve? If so, he will be content. But he has had a serious congestion attack, and is only now allowed to sit up, and this may account for his nervous apprehension.

“Another thing is—As the authors are about to name themselves, they wish to know whether aiders and abettors also seek, or desire, or *don’t object to*, naming. We have a glorious, hot-new preface, with a perfect halo of gold and spangles into which to put you. Say, shall it be revealed?”

Smith must have declined the proffered halo, for his name is not mentioned in the Preface to the fourth edition. Unfortunately no record survives of the reasons he may have given.

The year 1875 was distinguished by several events of considerable importance in his history. We find from his correspondence that he had managed to resume his Arabic studies, and that he had actually arranged

¹ For Smith’s latest published views on Heb. ii. 7, see *The Expositor*, 2nd series, i. 138-147.

to conduct a small evening class for the benefit of a few of the more advanced of his students. Towards the end of January he writes : " I am just going up to my Arabic evening class, so I must close here, merely adding that I am at present house-hunting, having quite *built* myself out with books. A serious job ! "

The house hunt ended in the investment of some borrowed capital in a small house in Crown Street, to which were presently transported the books and other belongings which he had gathered about him. In the problems of decoration and furnishing he was helped by the advice of experts, especially that of Mr. George Reid, and by the middle of the year he was comfortably established with room to house his library and his pictures, and to return the hospitalities of his many friends.

Early in the year he was invited to join the Old Testament Company of the Committee for the Revision of the Authorised Version of the Bible.¹ This Committee had originated in a resolution passed by both Houses of the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury in February 1870 ; " Principles and Rules " were laid down by a Committee of Convocation in the following May ; two Companies were formed to deal respectively with the Old and New Testament Scriptures, and the Old Testament Company began work on June 30, 1870. Both Companies originally consisted entirely of Churchmen, but it was soon resolved that scholars and divines representative of other denominations should be invited to participate in the work. Among these were Principal Fairbairn of the Free Church College, Glasgow, and Professor A. B. Davidson, Smith's old teacher. In the course of time, as deaths and resignations occurred, new members were added, but none after October 1875. Smith, who joined the Old Testament Company on the death of Principal Fairbairn, was the final addition to its ranks, and was

¹ The revision, begun in 1870, was completed on June 20, 1884, after 85 sessions occupying 792 days.

the junior member both in years and in standing. The work of the Company was carried on in sessions of about ten days each, and on each day the Company generally sat for six hours. The sessions were held in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster. Smith did his work very conscientiously; there is abundant evidence that he prepared for the meetings with great diligence, and when he could not attend he sent notes, as the Revisers were requested to do. His periodical visits to the Jerusalem Chamber were undoubtedly of much importance; the labour, though great, was profitable even from the point of view of his own studies, and his frequent journeys to London brought him many new and valuable acquaintances, both lay and clerical. Besides Professor Davidson, the Old Testament Company included Principal Douglas (Principal Fairbairn's successor in Glasgow) as representing the Free Church of Scotland, and, among English scholars, Smith now first met Mr. R. L. Bensly,¹ Mr. Chenery,² Dr. Field,³ Canon Perowne,⁴ and Mr. William Aldis Wright, the secretary to the Company.

Joint conferences and occasional correspondence also brought him into touch with the New Testament Revisers, among whom were Dr. Scott, Dean of Rochester, Jowett's predecessor at Balliol; Dr. Hort, Professor Kennedy, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Westcott, and Dean Stanley. In his own Company he found himself in natural alliance with the progressive party, which included Professor Davidson, Professor Driver, Professor Cheyne of Oxford, Professor William Wright of Cambridge, who was destined to be his colleague and one of his most valued friends, and Professor Sayce, who afterwards drifted apart from his early associates. They were often in a minority, especially as

¹ Afterwards Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at Cambridge (1887-93).

² Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at Oxford (1868-77), and from 1877 till his death in 1884 editor of *The Times*.

³ Editor of Origen's *Hexapla*.

⁴ Dean of Peterborough 1878-90; subsequently Bishop of Worcester.

in all important cases the rules required a clear majority of two-thirds of the Revisers, and the sense of the Company was often in favour of the cautious views of the conservative section, who were led by Archdeacon Harrison and Canon Kay.

Smith soon began to find himself quite at home in London. Mr. Gibson had introduced him to Mr. James Bryce, the eminent historian, now British Ambassador at Washington, who was then Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, and had not yet entered on his political career. It was, no doubt, through Mr. Bryce and his old friend M'Lennan, now settled in London, that he was at this time elected to the Savile Club, of which he was a lifelong and enthusiastic member, and which was then frequented by many of his friends. The first of his letters home from London gives an interesting view of his activities, scholarly and social.

“We have had a very contentious week,” he writes, “and have made very little progress with Isaiah. . . . On the other hand, we have had some very good fun among ourselves—*i.e.* Davidson, Sayce, and Cheyne. I have also had some very enjoyable evenings. On Thursday I dined with Bryce, who had a pleasant party. On the other days I have been at the Savile, where one always meets pleasant people.”

During the same session he reports his first visit to Cambridge :

“I have accepted an invitation to go down to Cambridge for a day or two with Mr. Lumby.¹ I shall probably stay over Tuesday, when there is a feast at Trinity to which I am invited by Canon Perowne. I have not much time now for such a visit, but May is the best time, and I am unwilling to lose such a chance.

“We are getting on better this week, and on the whole I am enjoying this session very much. I dined last night with M'Lennan, when I met Shadworth Hodgson, the

¹ Fellow of St. Catharine's. He succeeded Dr. Hort as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity (1892-95).

metaphysician. M'Lennan himself is looking very well and is in great spirits. On Monday I was at John Stevenson's, where Davidson also was. We had a very pleasant evening.

"Yesterday there was a conference of the two Companies about some communications we have had from the American revisers. They wish to vote along with us, which seems impossible. There was also a discussion, without result, as to whether any part of the work shall be printed."

Meanwhile the *Encyclopædia* work was progressing. A letter to Keig early in June announces the completion of "Baal," and he was "getting on with 'Bible'" in his still only half-furnished library at Crown Street. In 1875, for the first time for several years, he did not go abroad. This was due partly to the pressure of his literary work, partly to his new engagements with the Revision Committee, and partly to the natural reaction in the direction of economy after so formidable an outlay as the purchase of a house. Moreover, his wandering instincts were fairly satisfied by his now very frequent visits to London, another of which took place towards the end of June.

"We have a pretty full meeting this time," he writes, "but have not yet got into full working trim. I dined last night with a man Dicey, a friend of Bryce's, and met a rather notable man, Mark Pattison, a great Broad Church leader in Oxford. I did not care very much for him, however.

"To-day I breakfasted with J. F. White, who is in town at present. I go out to the country over to-night with Ginsburg¹ who has generally two or three of us with him. I believe he has a pretty place in Berkshire."

After the session of the Company was over, he went on a walking tour with Mr. Gibson and Mr. Mackay. Of this expedition Smith afterwards wrote :

"We had a very nice tour in Wales, and both Gibson and Mackay were much better for it. So was your humble

¹ Dr. C. D. Ginsburg, a member of the Old Testament Company.

servant. We fell in at Pen-y-gwryd with two nice fellows, a Swiss, Baron de Watteville, and an Englishman, Taylor, from the Board of Trade, with whom we effected a junction, to the great strengthening of our party. De W. was Swiss Alpine Club and engineered our excursions in an interesting way. You should have seen us in the first days when Mackay was flabby and breathless, dragging him up precipices !”

After some further travels in the Highlands and another session of the Revision Committee in London, he returned to Aberdeen in the first week of October for his winter's work. Before the session was well begun, Principal Lumsden, the Head of the College, died after a short illness. In the courts of the Church, where he had usually acted and voted with his contemporary and lifelong friend, Dr. William Wilson of Dundee, Dr. Lumsden had long enjoyed a position of considerable influence, and his death was regretted as removing one of the Church's most faithful counsellors, who, had he lived, would no doubt have been called to the Moderator's chair. In Aberdeen he had for more than thirty years been a respected figure in both civic and ecclesiastical affairs, and it was generally felt there that his removal was a very serious blow to the institution over which he presided. He left no literary remains, but memories still survive of his dignified and kindly personality. Dr. Lumsden never married, but a notable feature of his social relations was the friendly and sympathetic interest he showed in much younger men. He seldom dined alone, and at his hospitable table, where Smith was a frequent guest, there were nearly always to be met a selection of undergraduates and divinity students, and, as a rule, one or other of his young foreign, and especially his young Swedish, friends. He was much attached to Sweden, where he spent most of his vacations, and he was a member of one of the Swedish orders of knighthood.

When in 1870 the vacancy of the Hebrew chair had

occurred, Smith had not been Dr. Lumsden's candidate, but the Principal at once loyally accepted the choice of the Assembly, and the two men, as we have seen, almost immediately became fast friends and allies. Lumsden watched with great delight the growth of his young colleague's reputation. Though he belonged to the old school, he was far from being inaccessible to new ideas, especially when presented by so capable and attractive an exponent as Smith. There is no reason to suppose that he ever saw the article "Bible" in any form, though by the time of his death it was completed, and indeed already in type. But if he had seen it, he would have considered it with candour as well as with indulgence, and there is some ground for believing that, had he lived to take part in the first discussions on that article, which will form the subject of the next chapter, his moderating influence might have prevented many, if not all, of the untoward developments of the "Robertson Smith case."

Dr. Lumsden's death may indeed be regarded as the beginning of Smith's ecclesiastical misfortunes. The situation which immediately resulted was one of great delicacy and difficulty. The Principal had discharged the duties of Professor of Systematic Theology, and besides Smith the only other member of the *Senatus Academicus* of the Free Church College at that time was Dr. David Brown, Professor of New Testament Exegesis, although arrangements had already been made for the establishment and endowment of a fourth chair, that of Church History. To the latter of these chairs Dr. Binnie, who had formerly been Professor of Theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Church,¹ and of whom as yet Smith had no personal experience, was on the point of being inducted; the former had, since 1857, been occupied by Dr. Brown, who was then in the seventy-fourth year of his age. As a professor he was distinguished rather by evangelical fervour than by academic thoroughness, and though he

¹ United with the Free Church in 1874.

possessed abundant vitality—he was destined to survive Smith himself by several years—he was certainly past his intellectual prime. Moreover, though little is said of him during Dr. Lumsden's lifetime, there is enough to show that Smith did not regard him as the more helpful of his colleagues. Mr. Pirie Smith, who had been a great friend and admirer of the late Principal, took a gloomy view of the position of affairs, and when he received the news of the Principal's death, he wrote to his son in a tone prescient of future trouble :

“ We feel very deeply how crushing the removal of so true a friend must be to you. Yet the same God who put it into his heart to receive you into his confidence, and act towards you a fatherly part, can and assuredly will care for your interest and welfare in the future as in the past. Just trust Him who never changes. Do not distress yourself with useless surmises. Go straight forward in the way of duty—commit your way to God, and He will direct your paths. In the meantime a great responsibility lies upon you, and you will need all your manliness, all your resolution, all your faith, all your self-possession, to go through with credit the ordeal that must be gone through in order to keep matters straight at the College with the little aid—perhaps the opposition—you may have from your colleague. Be firm while courteous. Perhaps little or nothing may have to be done until Dr. Binnie is inducted, but something may be attempted, and you must just stand for the right. We will hold up your hands by prayer—and there are surely two or three tried friends who will not fail to advise and encourage you.

“ Above all things, do nothing to injure your health. Be very careful not to expose yourself or overtax your strength either by running about or other work. The fresher you are, the better your bodily health, the more ably and confidently you will manage any business that lies to your hand.”

Smith, with an optimism on which we shall have frequent occasion to remark in future chapters, minimised while he admitted the difficulties which his colleague was

likely to create, and observed: "It will be a serious business to keep up the Hall in an efficient state through the winter. But there is no doubt that the students are much solemnised, and I hope that in many ways our loss may be blessed to us." In the weeks immediately succeeding Dr. Lumsden's death this view of the situation appeared to be justified by events. Suitable arrangements were made for the instruction of the classes which were left without a teacher; Dr. Binnie arrived, and was found to give satisfaction, and Smith himself, though full of activities connected with the welfare of the College, seems to have been able to continue his own work much as usual.

"I last night began my lectures to Sabbath School teachers," he writes on November 15. "There was an excellent meeting—the body of the West Church almost full, the galleries alone unoccupied. This, no doubt, was greatly due to the favourable weather, and I do not expect so large an attendance to continue. I *spoke* instead of using a written lecture, and I believe that this was wise. The audience at least listened well. In all other respects things have gone smoothly. . . ."

His chief preoccupation at this time was of course the question of the Principal's successor. The reversion of the office seemed to belong to Dr. Brown by right of seniority, but for many reasons his appointment was unacceptable, not only to Smith, but to other eminent ministers and professors. Many proposals were made with a view to finding a more suitable candidate, but ultimately a suggestion which was made by Dr. Wilson, the late Principal's friend and ally, found favour, and Smith, perhaps a trifle indiscreetly, expended all his energies to secure the adoption of a scheme whereby Dr. Brown should be passed over in favour of Dr. Binnie.

In the midst of these delicate negotiations the third volume of the *Encyclopædia*, containing "Baal" and "Bible," was published on December 7, 1875, and Smith

went to Edinburgh to spend Christmas and New Year with his friends there with the agreeable feeling of having completed an important piece of work. While in Edinburgh he made arrangements for "some more articles" with Professor Baynes, and he had what he considered to be a satisfactory interview with Dr. Rainy on the subject of the Principalship. His arguments in favour of Dr. Binnie seem to have been regarded as sound by the leaders of the Church. Dr. Brown's advanced age was in itself a good reason for not entrusting him with new duties. But the Presbyteries were beginning to send his name up to the Assembly; there was something like a popular movement in his favour, and in the end it was found impossible to resist his appointment. Dr. Brown's elevation to the Principalship did not formally take effect until his appointment by the General Assembly in the following May, but Smith was soon made to feel how much he had lost by Dr. Lumsden's death. The clouds were already gathering for the storm.

The article "Bible" had at first been read only by a few of his friends, some of whom wrote to thank him for a contribution to biblical scholarship which, they believed, would prove to be a welcome relief to many consciences and a valuable service to a living and growing theology. On January 21 we find him writing to his mother: "I had a very appreciative and kind note from Whyte about my article 'Bible,' enclosing a note about it (also very favourable) which he had from Dods." Its effect on a different but very influential type of mind came later, and will be fully described in the next chapter; but even before the end of February 1876, some murmurs had begun to make themselves heard, and Professor Macgregor, writing on March 3, sounded the first note of warning:

"Until you mentioned it, I was not aware that you had got ill-will on account of your article on 'Bible.' A very able and accomplished layman has spoken to me to-day in terms of strong deprecation of the article. I foresee

that you may have some trial to your Christian wisdom and fortitude in connection with it. And I now therefore regard it as my foremost duty to repeat in writing what I said to you when I last saw you, that I am thankful you have spoken out what *must* be soon said by some one, and what ought to be said first by our qualified experts in Old Testament study."

It would appear from this letter that Smith was already aware that his writings were exciting criticism ; but no mention of the subject occurs in the few letters which survive from this month, and it is to be conjectured that he entirely underrated the importance of these manifestations. He was looking forward to a holiday, and spent the interval in quiet work.

He had arranged a tour with Mr. George Reid, who had become a close friend, and had lately made the sketch of Dr. Pirie Smith which is reproduced in this book. The alliance was a complete success, and was commemorated in a journal jointly written in a large sketch-book and illustrated with charming pen-and-ink drawings in the style with which Sir George Reid's many admirers are so familiar. This journal was reproduced in facsimile by lithography, and was privately circulated ; it is now much sought after, chiefly for the sake of the illustrations, and, bibliographically speaking, is something of a rarity.

The travellers spent some days between Bruges, Antwerp, and Ghent, where they saw the usual sights. At Ghent they were weather-bound and, in spite of the great van Eyck in St. Bavon, a trifle bored. Sir George Reid in his portion of the journal records that one reason among others for the day appearing slow was that " W. R. S. lighted upon a second-hand book-shop. Those who know him know what that means. Fortunately on the present occasion half an hour or little more was enough." This comment was accompanied by the sketch which is given opposite, and shows Smith consoling himself for the



“ Paris Missals, Black-letter Bonaventuras, Baskervilles, and so forth.”

From a Lithograph by Sir George Reid, R.S.A.

disappointments of the day among the "Paris Missals, Black Letter Bonaventuras, Baskervilles, and so forth." The next stage of the journey was Cologne, whence they went by water to Rüdeshcim under a somewhat grey sky; the low hills towards Bonn were all white with cherry blossom, and the journal observed: "Take away the haze which the old painters 'abhorred,' as Ruskin says, and one sees at once where Memling and the other old Flemings got their backgrounds. Towards Godesberg the slopes were almost as white as if they had been powdered with snow,—or, rather, with ground sugar, which is nearer the *feeling* of the scene."

They left the Rhine at Rüdeshcim and reached Frankfurt on April 25, where Smith had undertaken to see to the settlement of two of his sisters for a prolonged stay. At Würzburg Mr. Reid was left to nurse a cold while Smith retraced his steps to Aschaffenburg in order to visit his philosophical friend, Dr. Stumpf. "While G. R. lay in the Schwan with a *Senfblatt* on his throat, Stumpf and W. R. S. were discussing optimism and pessimism in the Spessart. There was much beer and Schnapps after so much dry metaphysic. *Solvitur bibendo.*" The two companions next proceeded by Augsburg to Munich, where Dr. Klein met them with a hearty welcome, and carried them off to his house opposite the Polytechnicum, where he was now professor.

"We were the first bachelors who had been quartered with him, and our arrival caused considerable excitement at the windows of an *Amtswohnung* across the street. We were in Munich till Monday afternoon, and W. R. S. did a tremendous spell of talking with Klein, while G. R. stuck pretty close to the pictures, and found that to be rather hard work. . . . We had great luck in our visit to the Hof-bräu, for the first of May ushers in the *fröhliche Bockzeit*. The court of the old brewery was all adorned with spruce trees, and it was hardly possible to press through the good-natured crowd which stood about, every man with his glass of

Bock in his hand. Bock is twice as strong as any other beer, in fact a good deal like the old Edinburgh ale, and it is notorious that Munich is never in such spirits as during the Bock tide. So it was not amiss in the old Duke to send Luther a tankard of Bock beer at the Diet of Worms. . . ."

Professor Nöther joined the party at Nuremberg, where they spent several days, and at Dresden Smith much enjoyed revisiting the pictures in the company of an expert. Thence by way of Erfurt they went to Göttingen, where, owing to an accident of travel, they had less time than had been intended. Smith, however, contrived to pay flying visits to Ritschl and Lagarde, and on the following day set out on his homeward journey. He and Mr. Reid spent a few days in Holland, the chief feature of which was a visit to Herr Josef Israels, the celebrated painter at the Hague. There they amused themselves with the humours of a boisterous Kirmess "into which they were presently swept" in the painter's company.

"It was Jan Steen over again. . . . We ate apple fritters and waffeln, shot at tobacco pipes and lighted candles, and went with the children to a circus, where all the old tricks proved as amusing as ever. In the intervals of these necessary pursuits we dined, smoked, and looked over the old clothes and half-finished pictures in the atelier."

Israels was delighted to see them, and not only presented Smith with an engraving of one of his pictures, but added to the journal a charming sketch of his daughter Mathilde, which fills the last page.

Early in May Smith was in London, where he had to attend a meeting of the Revision Committee, and where he was soon to hear of a grave development of the agitation against his recent writings.



Facsimile of a cancelled draft of opening paragraphs of article Bible. From a MS. in the possession of Dr. Sutherland Black.

Bible, in ecclesiastical Greek [e.g. in Chrysostom] τὸ βιβλίον, the [divine] books, in barbarous Latin Biblia, Gen. ae., is the collective title, synonymous with the older term scripture, scriptures [Γραφί, γραφαί Rom 4, 3; 2 Peter 3, 16 etc.], for the sacred books of Christendom; comprising the records of the religion of revelation in its pre-Christian and Christian stage, or in the language of the Bible itself under the Old & New Covenants (Ser. xxxi. 31, ~~Mat.~~ Mat. 2628)

Under the influence of the old Latin version we say Testament instead of Covenant,

* thus the full title, Books (records) of the Old & New Covenant (Dispensation) is shortened into a form from which the English reader is apt to think of the Bible as itself a testament or testaments addressed by God to man.

The Bible may be viewed either from a purely theological standpoint (as is done in the dogmatic system), or from the standpoint of literary and historical criticism. The two views are not mutually exclusive, tho' theology has

the Bible of any of the ordinary laws of criticism and exegesis. ~~The Reformers~~
This misguided view, though not quite obsolete even among Protestants, is ~~scarcely~~ ^{scarcely} tenable
only on the medieval conception of the word of God as a supernatural communica-
tion of intellectual (noetic) truths too high for unaided reason, and was
virtually condemned as soon as the Reformers ~~taught men to look on Revelation~~
~~as a personal teaching of God with men~~ seek in the Bible a personal revelation
of the heart & will of God to man calling forth in those to whom
it came the answer of a personal faith. This new & living conception
of the word of God led at once to the well known Protestant principle
that the Bible is to be interpreted by the same methods as other books,
a principle which implies that the authors of Scripture wrote under
the usual psychological conditions on which ^{begins to} the laws of herme-
neutics are calculated. Again ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ the 17th Cent. it ^{became clear that} ^{experienced}
the text of the Bible (especially of the N.T.) has ~~proved~~ ^{been} ^{through} the same
~~kind of~~ ^{sort of} fortunes & must be ~~corrected out~~ corrected by the same
kind of criticism as any other ancient text. Finally ~~in the~~
~~18th century~~ And finally when in ^{the} last century the so-called higher



2/criticism began to take shape and traditional views of the origin and composition of the library remains of profane antiquity were rejected or modified on internal grounds it became plain that the same principles which compels us to ~~subvert~~ ^{justify} traditional exegesis for a method which allows the Bible to declare its own meaning by the aid of a rational hermeneutic, demand also that traditional views as to the origin & composition of the Biblical books be tested by the evidence which the books themselves offer to the judicious critic. The acceptance of this position has been retarded, partly by the extravagances which have disfigured many ~~books~~ ^{premises} attempts to solve as a stroke critical problems which can only yield to patient labour & to the gradual growth of a ~~science~~ ^{method} still very young and in many points unfinished, partly by the fact that critical methods first became current in an age of prevalent rationalism & so naturally associated themselves with rationalistic principles. But these are accidents not affecting the fundamental soundness of the critical position which is in brief that every method of literary investigation which is useful in forming a just notion of the origin, transmission & meaning of ancient records in general

to the Bible thus elucidated, & not to any traditional conceptions of its meaning. The results which have been deduced by the application of this principle are carefully to be distinguished from those views as to the origin & value of the Biblical books which flow from the assumption that there is no specific difference between the religion of revelation and ethnic religion, and that the supernatural element in Christianity is necessarily unhistorical. It must therefore be understood as the ~~object~~ ^{sketch} that while it is the object of this article to give a critical account of the origin, collection and transmission

of the Biblical books. While therefore the plan of the present work prescribes a critical sketch not a theological discussion as the proper business of this article, the writer proposes to follow our account of the origin, collection & transmission of the Biblical writings will proceed throughout on a recognition of the unique religious value of the Bible as the record of a specific and Supernatural Revelation & we shall only ~~very~~ briefly ~~but~~ indicate the divergent views that arise when miracle is taken (as by the Tübingen school) to be a criterion of the unhistorical narrative. It is mainly in the criticism of the

CHAPTER V

THE ARTICLE "BIBLE" AND THE COLLEGE COMMITTEE (1875-1877)

IN the article "Bible," as Smith originally drafted it,¹ the second paragraph runs thus :—

"The Bible may be viewed either from a purely theological standpoint (as is done in the dogmatic system), or from the standpoint of literary and historical criticism. The two views are not mutually exclusive, though theology has sometimes formulated the divine authority of Scripture in a way that excludes all human spontaneity on the part of the writers, and forbids the application to the Bible of any of the ordinary laws of criticism and exegesis. This one-sided view, though not quite obsolete even among Protestants, is tenable only on the mediæval conception of the word of God as a supernatural communication of *intellectual (noetic)* truths too high for unaided reason, and was virtually condemned as soon as the Reformers began to seek in the Bible a personal revelation of the heart and will of God to man, calling forth in those to whom it came the answer of a personal faith. This new and living conception of the word of God led at once to the well-known Protestant principle that the Bible is to be interpreted by the same methods as other books, a principle which implies that the authors of Scripture wrote under the usual psychological conditions on which the laws of hermeneutics are calculated. Again, in the seventeenth century, it began to become clear that the text of the Bible (especially of the New Testament) has experienced the same fortunes, and must be corrected by the same kind of criticism as any other ancient text.

¹ See accompanying facsimile.

And finally, when in the last century the so-called higher criticism began to take shape, and traditional views of the origin and composition of the literary remains of profane antiquity were rejected or modified on internal grounds, it became plain that the same principles which compel us to give up the traditional exegesis for a method which allows the Bible to declare its own meaning by the aid of a rational hermeneutic, demand also that traditional views as to the origin and composition of the Biblical books be tested by the evidence which the books themselves offer to the judicious critic."

The author then goes on to say that the acceptance of this position has been retarded, partly by the frequent failures of the premature attempts on the part of individual critics to solve at a stroke critical problems which can only yield to patient labour and a more perfect method, partly by the fact that, as it happened, critical methods first became current in an age of prevalent rationalism, and by this accidental circumstance came to be associated with rationalistic principles. But these are accidents not affecting the fundamental soundness of the critical position, which is in brief that every method of literary investigation which is useful in forming a just notion of the origin, transmission, and meaning of ancient records in general, ought to be applied to the study of the Bible, and that theological authority belongs only to the Bible thus elucidated, and not to any traditional conceptions of its meaning.

The fragment concludes with the following declaration :

"While, therefore, the plan of the present work prescribes a *critical* sketch, not a *theological* discussion, as the proper business of this article, our account of the origin, collection, and transmission of the Biblical writings will proceed throughout on a recognition of the unique religious value of the Bible as the record of a specific and supernatural Revelation, and we shall only briefly indicate the divergent views that arise when miracle is taken (as by the Tübingen school) to be a criterion of unhistorical narrative."

As the event proved, it would have been (to say the least) convenient had the article as ultimately published contained the explicit declarations of this paragraph. Why they were omitted can only be conjectured. There may have been the consideration of space, and the knowledge that there were to be many other articles which would deal with the theological aspects of the subject, including one on Inspiration, which was eventually written by Professor Lindsay, and is well worth consulting. One thing is certain. They were not omitted because Smith was at that time holding them in any hesitating or half-hearted manner. This had been abundantly shown in many previously published utterances, particularly in his inaugural lecture, and he had frequent occasion in the course of the subsequent prosecution to reiterate them in many forms.

The article, as published on December 7, 1875, occupies fifteen pages of the *Encyclopædia*, and, as we now have it, opens with the following sentence, which is not without significance in the work of a young divine writing fifteen years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*:

"The word *Bible*, which in English, as in Mediæval Latin, is treated as a singular noun, is in its original Greek form a plural—τὰ βιβλία, *the (sacred) books*,—correctly expressing the fact that the sacred writings of Christendom are made up of a number of independent records, which set before us the gradual development of the religion of revelation."

Before the end of the page is reached we have become aware that the Bible is indeed a record of "development," "struggle," and "progress." We are bidden to expect "a general account of the historical and literary conditions under which the unique literature of the Old and New Testaments sprang up, and of the way in which the Biblical books were brought together in a canonical collection and handed down from age to age. "The Biblical development," we are reminded, is divided into

two great periods by the "manifestation and historical work of Christ," and it is further noted (a point on which we shall have to remark hereafter) that the pre-Christian age falls into a period of religious productivity, and a subsequent period of stagnation and mainly conservative traditions. Clearly, it will be the first of these which will chiefly occupy the student. This period was also a period of contest, during which the spiritual principles of the religion of revelation were involved in continual struggle with polytheistic nature-worship on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with an unspiritual conception of Jehovah as a God whose interest in Israel and care for His sanctuary were independent of moral conditions.

"In this long struggle, which began with the foundation of the theocracy in the work of Moses, and did not issue in conclusive victory until the time of Ezra, the spiritual faith was compelled to show constant powers of new development,—working out into ever clearer form the latent contrasts between true and false religion, proving itself fitter than any other belief to supply all the religious needs of the people, and, above all, finding its evidence in the long providential history in which, from the great deliverance of the Exodus down to the Captivity and the Restoration, the reality of Jehovah's kingship over Israel, of His redeeming love, and of His moral government, were vindicated by the most indisputable proofs."

Thus, it will be noted, the period of "evolution" as we might now call it, during which the spiritual principles of the religion of revelation were undergoing development was comparatively short. It was not thought remarkable at the time, though it has a quaint old-world sound to the reader now, that the process of growth was said to have closed in Ezra's time, after which commenced the period of stagnation. Neither does it seem to have been remarked, though the point might well have been seized by adverse critics, how completely the antediluvian and patriarchal periods, which had, until

the time of writing, bulked so largely in the theological text-books, had disappeared from view. There is no reference to anything earlier than what is described as "the foundation of the theocracy in the work of Moses"; "it was only the deliverance from Egypt and the theocratic covenant of Sinai that bound the Hebrew tribes into natural unity." Of the monotheistic worship of Jehovah the chief centre was the sanctuary and priesthood of the Ark; but the still undeveloped spiritual religion "seemed constantly ready to be lost in local superstitions, till the advent of Samuel, who may be called the first of the prophets, the leader of a splendid succession of uniquely gifted men who through the following centuries were steadily working out the spiritual problems of the national faith with ever-increasing clearness." In a word, it is not to the work of Moses, compressed within a single lifetime, or to that of any of the patriarchs, or all of them, but to that of the prophets, extending through many generations, that we must look if we wish to know how the unique religion of revelation in its Old Testament form came to be what it is. The idea was a new one, and might well have been regarded as revolutionary.¹

The author was aware that it must not be put forward without explanation or defence; and accordingly, under the heading "False views of Prophecy" we find the following sentences:

"A just insight into the work of the prophetic party in Israel was long rendered difficult by traditional prejudices. On the one hand, the predictive element in prophecy received undue prominence, and withdrew attention from the influence of the prophets on the religious life of their own time; while, on the other hand, it was assumed, in accordance with Jewish notions, that all the ordinances, and almost, if not quite, all the doctrines of the Jewish Church in the post-canonical

¹ Compare *British Quarterly Review*, April 1870, an article which is reprinted in *Lectures and Essays*.

period, existed from the earliest days of the theocracy. The prophets, therefore, were conceived partly as inspired preachers of old truths, partly as predicting future events, but not as leaders of a great development, in which the religious ordinances as well as the religious beliefs of the Old Covenant advanced from a relatively crude and imperfect to a relatively mature and adequate form."

It is the latter view, nevertheless, and not the traditional one, that is alone true to history. It is to the prophets chiefly that the growth of true religion in Israel, most of its characteristic ordinances and most of its doctrines, are to be traced. Their predictive work is quite a secondary matter.

What, then, are we to understand by a prophet? An adequate description, if not definition, will be found embedded in an early sentence.

"While it was the business of the priest faithfully to preserve religious traditions already acknowledged as true and venerable, the characteristic of the prophet is a faculty of spiritual intuition, not gained by human reason, but coming to him as a word from God Himself, wherein he apprehends religious truth in a new light, as bearing in a way not manifest to other men on the practical necessities, the burning questions of the present."

The article then goes on to show in detail how it came about that the prophets—men who never formed, like the priests, a regular guild, but on whom in each case the gift of prophecy was bestowed by the inward and immediate call of Jehovah—in the course of their long activity continually remodelled the religious ordinances of their nation, formed and re-formed its doctrines, and wrote and re-wrote its history. To this exposition the first half of the article is devoted; the remaining pages, dealing with such subjects as "Text and Versions," "The Christian Canon," "The Transmission and Diffusion of the Bible in the Christian Church before the Invention of Printing," "The Printed Text," "Literature," need not detain us now.

With sixty-one others, the article had a place in the advertisement list of "Principal Contents" that accompanied the issue of the third volume. At first it attracted no special public attention. Nor was it intended to do so; the author, aware of his responsibility in undertaking to set forth a view that was somewhat novel and unfamiliar, had been at great pains¹ to choose such expressions as seemed to combine a minimum of offensiveness and a maximum of defensibility.

During Smith's absence on the continent in April, 1876, the feelings of those who regarded the article "Bible" as a challenge and a menace had begun to find public expression. Smith, however, continued to attach much more importance to the cordial approval and support of his friends, and especially of Mr. Whyte, Mr. Dods, and Professor Macgregor. All three men were personally very sympathetic and helpful to Smith throughout the controversy which soon arose. But it may be remarked that none of the three was either then or afterwards a thorough-going supporter in the particular questions which came into prominence. A word may be useful as to the position of each. As regards Mr. (now Principal) Whyte, whose courageous—almost heroic—public interventions in the Smith case will be chronicled hereafter, it must not be forgotten that he has never publicly committed himself to any of the views of the critical school, and that, so far as is known to the present writers, he has never adopted them. Vastly different was the case of Mr. (afterwards Principal) Marcus Dods, who himself more than once came near to being prosecuted for heresy. His first adventure of this sort was in this very year. In 1876 he preached, and afterwards by request published, a sermon on "Revelation and Inspiration," in which he enforced with great clearness the Rothian doctrine concerning the Scriptures, and did not

¹ This appears from a very early extant draft of the article, written in pencil, with many substitutions and deletions.

hesitate to say not only that there might be but that there were errors in the Bible. Taken to task in his Presbytery, he, after some fight, succeeded in purchasing a rather inglorious peace by consenting to withdraw the offending publication—not, however, on the ground that the opinion he had expressed was wrong, but that its publication was uncalled-for and inopportune. Professor Macgregor, as Professor of Dogmatic Theology, was perhaps entitled, and even bound, to have an opinion on the questions raised by Smith's article; nor did he shrink from expressing it at the proper time, though in doing so he thought fit to disguise himself under the transparent pseudonym of "Presbyter." His view was that these questions of criticism related to literature, not to dogma. "They refer, properly, not to matters of Christian faith, but to matters of Biblical antiquity. They do not directly affect any matter of Christian faith as confessed by our Churches. They may be honestly maintained by men who seriously accept the Bible as the divine record of the divine revelation." So he wrote in July 1876, adding: "It is perhaps a good thing that these positions have been maintained among us by a Christian teacher so earnest and pronounced in his evangelism as Professor Smith. In doing so, he takes away so much wind from the sails of popular infidelity."

So far Smith's friends. Meanwhile the Press had been in no hurry to pronounce judgment. The task of producing an adequate literary notice of a volume of an Encyclopædia can never be a light one, and it is not surprising to find that the *Athenæum's* review of that containing the article "Bible" did not appear until March 11, 1876, while the *Academy's* estimate of the second and third volumes was delayed for another nine weeks.

The writer in the *Athenæum* was of opinion that the volume contained many excellent contributions, but as a whole hardly came up to the standard set by the two previous volumes; he suggested that the

editor would have acted wisely had he oftener sought for aid in England and Ireland, and trusted less to writers nearer home. . . . "The article 'Bible,' which is good on the whole, is too long. The writer should have limited himself to treating the external history of the text in its two divisions of printed and unprinted, the causes of various readings, the sources whence a text is derived, the punctuation, and divisions longer and shorter, made in the text." "The last paragraph is out of place and should have been omitted." The reviewer then proceeded to accuse Smith of certain minute inaccuracies in scholarship, and there ensued a short if somewhat sharp controversy on points of learned detail—such as the true birth-year of Ephrem Syrus—the merits of which need not detain us. Smith was characteristically tenacious, and seems, so far as the present writers can judge, to have been right; but his adversary was equally obstinate, and, as is usual in the case of reviewers, he had the last word.¹

Other critics, if less searching, were more indulgent. In the *Academy* of May 20, 1876, for example, Professor Mahaffy wrote discursively and charmingly on many themes suggested by the volumes before him. The heading "Angling" comes at an early stage in his causerie, and he lingers to point out that the writer "in cautioning the angler not to strike a salmon too fast, does not mention what is really the greatest of all safe-guards—I mean the practice of playing the fly well under the water, so that the fish does not break the surface till he has actually taken the fly." With this and other attractive topics under the same head the best part of a column is occupied, and

¹ We have no record of the emotions with which Smith decided to submit to the judgment of the court that if only he had given A.D. 378 (the wrong date) instead of A.D. 373 (the right date) for the death of Ephrem Syrus, and had not imprudently deleted a reference to Chrysostom that had stood in all the drafts of his article but the last (see facsimile), the *Athenæum* would almost have given him full marks, though with an admonition to cultivate a juster sense of proportion.

when at last we come to the higher branches of learning we find to our regret that "there is no space in this review to speak of the important theological articles, especially the very able and advanced paper on 'The Bible.'"

If the London journals had treated his article in a spirit of learned (or not too learned) trifling, Smith could not complain of any absence of high seriousness in a contribution to the *Edinburgh Courant* of April 16, which was entitled "The new *Encyclopædia Britannica* on Theology."

The contributor turned to Smith's work with suspicions aroused by the article "Adam," in which Dr. Samuel Davidson had declared the meaning of the narrative of the Fall of Man to be "that man's salvation is practicable through the victory of reason over instinct, of faith over sense." From a young Free Church Professor he had expected "something more in accordance with the ordinary opinions of men in this country—probably something orthodox, certainly something vigorous." Far from this, he found himself to be reading a reproduction of the well-known theories of Kuenen, the most advanced theologian in Holland. The article, he proceeded, had the air of having been revised and curtailed by a friendly hand, and this accounted for its not having as yet attracted much public attention. To those, however, who were familiar with the subject, the article suggested much more than it openly said, and the suggestions were startling and disquieting indeed. "Does the writer of the article," asked the *Courant*, "believe that prophets could predict? Those who are acquainted with the subject will easily understand the position of a man who says of the prophets, 'There is no reason to think that a prophet even ¹ received a revelation which was not spoken directly and pointedly of ² his own time.'"

The orthodoxy of the article the *Courant* declines to

¹ A misreading of "ever."

² The correct reading is of course "to his own time." The present writers regard this as a misreading or as a misprint; but the resulting distortion of Smith's meaning was serious, and not without consequences.

criticise, but its inaccuracy must not escape without condemnation, and the final verdict of the writer is as follows :

“ . . . This article which we are discussing is objectionable in itself ; but our chief objection to it is that it should be sent far and wide over English-speaking countries as an impartial account of the present state of our knowledge of the Bible. We regret that a publication which will be admitted without suspicion into many a religious household, and many a carefully guarded public library, should, upon so all-important a matter as the records of our faith, take a stand—a decided stand—on the wrong side. We hope the publisher and the editor will look after the contributors—or after each other—and cease to pass off rationalistic speculations as ascertained facts.”

All this at once arrested attention, and the writer in the *Courant*, as weeks and months and years passed, could pride himself at least on this, that the famous Robertson Smith case had followed exactly the lines that his strategic sagacity had from the beginning laid down for it. The issue might have been broadened by making it turn on the fact that so little prominence had been given to any of the primitive revelations, or might have been complicated by including many points that were afterwards unsuccessfully attacked by less skilful generals. The critic was more astute. “Moses in danger” and (with the help of a convenient misprint) “Predictive prophecy denied” were after all the right cries to go to the courts with.

The writer was universally believed to be Dr. A. H. Charteris, the Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Edinburgh. To the sufficient learning which had gained for him that chair, he added the influence which belongs to a popular preacher and religious writer, and the authority enjoyed in Scotland by any one who can be called, however vaguely, a “leader” in one of the Assemblies. In Free Church circles Dr. Charteris enjoyed at that time more confidence and respect than almost any other of the clergy of the Established Church as it

then was. He was recognised as a sincere and fervent Evangelical, and his *Life of Robertson of Ellon* had touched many hearts.

Such an appeal from such a man was irresistible. In many minds it awakened a sincere concern for the best interests of the faith. In many more it wounded susceptibilities, always sensitive to the taunts of another and a rival communion. The Free Church was represented as permitting one of her responsible teachers under the guise of advanced scholarship to retail a bundle of familiar and exploded speculations borrowed, if not stolen, from the continent, and thereby imperilling the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and bringing discredit on the theological professoriate of Scotland.

The *Courant* article¹ appeared, as we have seen, on April 15, and a month later the Robertson Smith case had begun. Dr. Begg, whose intervention in any controversy was ominous of misfortunes for the Church, appeared as the stormy petrel of a new tempest; and about the middle of May Smith learned that he had given notice to the College Committee of his intention to bring the article "Bible" to the notice of the Assembly. This news came through Principal Douglas, Smith's colleague on the Revision Committee, who in turn had it from Dr. Rainy himself. It is perhaps not surprising that at first most of those who became leading persons of the forthcoming drama had but little idea of the parts they would be called upon to play. The protagonist

¹ It is hardly necessary to explain that the *Courant* did not express by any means the unanimous view of the theologians of the Established Church. The Reverend Principal Tulloch, in an article of which we shall hear more by and by, spoke of the article "Bible" as "a careful paper marked by eminent literary ability." No one, he continued, whose opinion was of any value could doubt that it was one eminently creditable to the talents of the writer, and that upon the whole it was admirably fitted to convey to the general mind a clear and well-informed outline of the attitude of the modern critical school. This was really what was wanted in an Encyclopædia; no one would look there for a mere repetition of old views no longer held by any critical school.

himself was far from suspecting how isolated he was among his ecclesiastical brethren, and how serious was the opposition he had to encounter. "It is very mean to have given me no warning," he writes to his father, "but I will not make myself uneasy. Douglas is to defend the rights of criticism. Have you any advice to give?" And again: "Rainy, Douglas, etc., will defend me, I understand."

Unfortunately perhaps for the best interests of all parties, it was not in the circumstances possible to bring the matter to a direct and immediate issue. Dr. Begg thought it best for the moment to negotiate with the College Committee and to postpone his proposed action in the highest Court of the Church on the understanding that the Committee would deal with the matter according to the powers with which it was invested by Act of Assembly. These powers, which relate to the supervision and administration of the three theological colleges in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, include the right "to originate and prosecute before the Church Courts processes against any of the professors for heresy or immorality, reserving the rights competent to all parties according to the present laws of the Church."

On May 17, 1876, "there was some conversation"¹ in the Committee about the feelings which had been awakened by the article "Bible," and it was thought fit, "in the first instance, to take informal and private means to call the attention of Professor Smith, and also of the various members of the Committee itself, to the impressions which existed, and to the prospect of its becoming necessary more formally to examine into the grounds of them." The communication received by Smith was in the hand of his friend Dr. James Candlish, but it was obviously semi-official in character. It was studiously courteous and considerate in tone, but it hinted not

¹ See Special Report of College Committee on Article "Bible," 1877, p. 3.

obscurely at the desirability of explanation, if not defence. Its most important result was a meeting, which took place in Edinburgh about the end of the month, between Smith on the one hand, and Drs. Candlish and Rainy representing the Committee. Of this important interview, at which the two great antagonists may be said for the first time to have crossed swords, Smith gives the following very interesting account in a letter to his father, dated May 29 :

“ I had rather a difficult task yesterday. Rainy evidently thinks that I have been rash and therefore culpable, and after a great deal of beating about the bush suggested that I might write a letter to the College Committee affirming my soundness in the faith and my regret at having given so much uneasiness, etc., etc. He thought I might go so far as to say that under the circumstances I was ready to reconsider my position both as to matter and manner. I, of course, declined to do any such thing—both because I did not recognise any adequate ground for a reconsideration which should be more than a form of words, and because I thought that it would be a very bad precedent to begin explaining and apologising before my opponents had in any definite way brought forward their objections. Rainy was not pleased, and appealed to Candlish, who, much to his mortification, thought it should simply be reported to the College Committee that there was no ground for suspicion or inquiry. This practically ended the matter. I closed by saying to Rainy that it seemed to me to be the duty of the College Committee to demand a *definite* accusation from accusers, and not at once to act on any vague complaint. To this he could say nothing. Of course there was a great deal more, but that is what is essential. Candlish behaved admirably, and was quite clear that I could not do what Rainy asked. They are to report a belief that I have written in the persuasion that my teaching is confessional, that I decline to make any defence, complaining of the manner in which my accusers have acted, and finally—my one concession—that I profess myself anxious with all Christian prudence to consider in my literary work the respect due to feelings of people in the Church who may be shocked. But I said distinctly that this last consideration had to be weighed

against reasons for speaking out, and that I could not say how far (so weighed) it might influence practice. Nor did I admit that I have been rash or wrong."

Throughout the tedious and troubled years which followed Smith never departed from the position which he took up at this interview. The passage above quoted contains, in fact, the fundamental principles of his defence, and it is now clear that the antagonism with the leader of the Church in which he now found himself was already irreconcilable. Dr. Rainy made a further attempt to persuade Smith to make at least a show of recantation, and in a letter written early in June observes that he thought Smith owed it to himself "to remedy misconstructions of which the occasions were so palpable." Smith remained unmoved. The truth of his views, and (as yet) even their compatibility with the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, had not been explicitly called in question by any one in his own Church. All that so far existed was a vague and indeterminate uneasiness as to the general tendency and possible effects of an article which few of his colleagues had so far even seen. The task of inquiry and consideration had been remitted to the College Committee, and Smith had refused to express penitence before it was established that an offence had been committed.

Such was the comparatively simple situation with which the Committee had to deal. It was very soon complicated by a series of incidents which imported a new element of bitterness into the controversy. While the Committee was deliberating, and in fact almost before it could begin, others who felt a responsibility for maintaining the Church's orthodoxy had taken the field. On June 12 there came into Smith's hands an anonymous pamphlet entitled, "Infidelity in the Aberdeen Free Church College," which was the work of a certain Robert Young, LL.D., though Smith at the time ascribed it to another pen. Dr. Young, who achieved an accidental

notoriety from having become at an opportune moment the exponent of the reactionary view of Smith's writings, gave in three sentences what he conceived to be the drift of the article "Bible": "It is no longer the contents of Scripture that are upon their trial; it is the depository, the entire record of revelation. Its authenticity, its veracity, its morality, its integrity, its authority, are all questioned. It is uncertain, contradictory, scandalous, mean, and fictitious from Genesis to Revelation." Smith's critical positions, according to Dr. Young, might be summed up under ten heads:

(1) The Pentateuch was only finished 800 years after Moses; (2) Prophecy never extends beyond the prophet's own time; (3) Job, Jonah, and Esther have poetical inventions in them; (4) Isaiah and Zechariah are mixed with other unknown authors; (5) The text of the Psalms has been systematically altered; (6) Canticles is a political satire against Solomon; (7) Ecclesiastes is very long after the exile; (8) Daniel has no place in the prophetic writings; (9) The three synoptical gospels are non-apostolic digests of tradition; (10) The strength of the negative critics lies in the internal evidence against the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament Books.

Smith was stung to the quick. He bitterly resented as a personal insult the imputations, not only of unorthodoxy, but of bad faith contained in the pamphlet. He also saw an opportunity, which was far from unwelcome to one of his controversial temperament, of striking a blow at his assailants and at the same time justifying his own position. He therefore composed a letter which he intended for the newspapers, and proceeded to consult his friends and colleagues about the advisability of its immediate publication. He believed that by taking this course he could secure all the advantages of a public profession of orthodoxy, so much desired by Dr. Rainy, without compromising his case by going out to meet an accusation which had not as yet been formulated by any responsible person. Dr. Rainy saw clearly that Smith's

proposed action would have a much less sedative effect on the controversy than a private, and more or less submissive, communication to the College Committee; and he did not conceal his dislike and disapproval of the more aggressive course. It cannot be thought surprising in the circumstances that Smith decided to persist, or that he should have considered that a complete vindication of his sincerity as a religious teacher, and a public repudiation of imputations of infidelity, should be satisfactory to the leaders of his church. He telegraphed to Mr. Whyte, to whose charge he had committed the proof of the letter, that it was forthwith to be published in the *Daily Review*, and immediately afterwards he wrote :

" I have already telegraphed that I wish my letter to appear, and that at once. I wrote Rainy some days ago that I thought he might be satisfied with it.

" If the Committee inquire into my teaching on any point, I will try to satisfy them, but I refused, with Candlish's consent, at the interview you know of, to go further and make any general acknowledgment that I have perhaps gone too far and am ready to reconsider my position. I am much surprised that Rainy should now return to the charge. He does not, so far as I can see, allow any weight to a conscientious persuasion that certain views are true."

Both the substance and the manner of the letter, which appeared on June 21, are noteworthy. Smith began by striking at his assailant's obvious insignificance as a scholar which was ill redeemed by " a double portion of theological acrimony," and proceeded to repel with indignation the suggestion made by Mr. Young that he had been unfaithful to his ordination vows. " I accept the view," he asserts, " that the Bible is the one sufficient and authoritative record of Divine revelation as heartily as any man can do." His critical views in no degree affected the sincerity of his adherence to the Evangelical doctrine of the Free Church, and were the fruit of studies carried out under the guidance of her

own teachers in the New College. These studies had been conducted on the Reformation principle of letting the Word of God speak for itself, and while this might lead to divergence from the traditional way of construing the historical manner and progress of revelation, it could not lead to "infidelity" so long as it was honestly held that "the knowledge of God and His will necessary unto salvation" is to be found laid down in an authoritative manner in the Scripture record.

He meets the ten particulars with his characteristic appeal to scholarship which used to cause unbearable irritation to his ecclesiastical opponents. His statements that the Book of Isaiah is composite and the date of Ecclesiastes late can, he thinks, arouse no suspicion in the mind of "any competent person." "An anonymous prophet is as truly an inspired writer as Isaiah himself; and no one will propose to make an article of faith of the authorship of Ecclesiastes." To the same class of "perfectly unobjectionable" statements, he is disposed to add the first—that relating to the Pentateuch. The date when the Pentateuch was finished has never been a matter of faith. Presuming the real matter of offence to be that parts of the legislation are spoken of as later than Moses, he calls attention to the express statement in the article that "the development of Old Testament legislation took place under the guidance of prophets and prophetic ideas, *that is, under the guidance of inspiration.*" On this view the one and only point which may possibly give offence to weak faith is the way in which he regards the *whole* legislation as now *interwoven with the history of the Mosaic age.*

"I explain this in the case of Deuteronomy by observing that the dramatic form of putting a new statement of theocratic law into the mouth of Moses just before his death serves to express in a concrete and tangible shape the fact that the author's object is not to give out a new law, but to expound and develop Mosaic principles in relation to new needs and with the same divine authority

as belonged to Moses' own words. It seems to me plain that the author of Deuteronomy was at liberty to choose such a way of setting forth his inspired admonitions. The use of literary forms is not fraudulent when the nature and object of the form are as transparent as they must have been to the first readers in the case before us. . . . It may indeed be objected that the use of a didactic form which in the course of ages came to be misunderstood is contrary to the principle of the perspicuity of Scripture. But that principle implies only that Scripture is always plain enough for practical guidance to God's people; and when the whole Pentateuch came to be viewed as Mosaic, this mistake did not affect the practical use of the law."

The other heads he takes up in order. The second is that, according to Professor Smith, "Prophecy never extends beyond the prophet's own time."

"To ascribe this view to me is sheer untruth. I say that the prophets always spoke directly and pointedly to their own time—that is, to the needs and difficulties of their own time, and with a direct view to the immediate edification of the Church. But that one means of such edification was prediction of Messianic times is expressly asserted in my article. The statement of the pamphleteer is therefore no blunder, but deliberate falsehood. And here I may observe as a singular coincidence, that the very same falsehood appeared some time ago in a review in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (April 1876) which I did not at the time think worthy of notice. The writer in that paper (whose malevolence was probably dictated by ecclesiastical jealousy of the Free Church, and who expressed himself with so little knowledge and so great an air of authority that one seemed to hear the voice of a raw preacher thrust for party ends into a professor's chair) did not hesitate to make out his point by falsifying my words within marks of quotation. Where I have said that 'there is no reason to think that a prophet ever received a revelation which was not spoken directly and pointedly to his own time,' my honest reviewer writes, 'of his own time,' and concludes that I deny prophetic prediction.

"(3) I certainly hold that there is poetical invention of incidents in Job, and have yet to learn that such a

view impairs the value of that grand book. As to Jonah and Esther I only reported opinions . . . and the opinion that Jonah is not to be taken as literal history is certainly not confined to those who deny the supernatural.

"(4) I certainly express the opinion that the Psalter does not always present the Psalms just as they came from the hands of their authors. I cannot understand how any one can hold a different view.

"(6) My view of the Song of Solomon will appear at length on an early opportunity.¹ But I hold its chief motive to be ethical.

"(8) While I say that the Book of Daniel is separated from the proper prophetic writings by its apocalyptic form, I also say that in its intrinsic qualities it is akin to them. Does my critic know that in the Hebrew Canon Daniel is not placed among the prophetic books, but among the Hagiographa?

"(9) When my critic speaks against the possibility of the synoptical gospels being non-apostolic digests of tradition, he is at issue not with me alone but with the preface to the Gospel of Luke.

"(10) Perhaps the most serious and malignant of all the charges brought against me lies in this proposition and in the remarks by which it is supported. Any one except the pamphleteer and his unscrupulous colleague in the *Courant* would see at once that, while I endeavour to maintain a perfectly impartial attitude, and give fair play to the negative critics, as was proper in a purely literary article whose business was to state the case on both sides, the whole weight of my remarks on the Tübingen school goes against their ingenious but unsubstantial theory. I point out that the external evidence for the New Testament books is as strong as can reasonably be expected. I observe accordingly that the arguments of negative critics 'do not for the most part rely much on external evidence.' And then I say that 'the strength of the negative critics lies in internal evidence.' But I by no means imply that this strength is strong enough to maintain their position. On the contrary, while admitting, as every candid mind must admit, that *they have raised difficulties which still await explanation*, I suggest a series of questions on which the controversy

¹ "Canticles," in vol. v. of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, was published in 1876.

seems to turn, and which I believe cannot be answered in a sense favourable to the views of the Tübingen school."

The effect of the letter was for the time all that Smith could have desired. The College Committee met on June 20, and "seemed satisfied" that Smith had done all that need be expected in the meantime, and decided, pending further consideration, to postpone the matter to another meeting. Professor Davidson, Dr. Marcus Dods, Professor Lindsay, and other friends, wrote expressing high approval; but it was soon clear that the demon of unrest had not been exorcised. On the eve of a journey to London and the Continent, Smith, writing to his father, expresses regret that the quarrel is being taken up by the *Scotsman*, and adds, a little ruefully: "It was perhaps a fault to point so clearly to Charteris." This may now be freely admitted by Smith's most ardent admirers, some of whom felt at the time that the reference to the professor's pulpit eloquence was hardly just and certainly irrelevant.

Dr. Young's intervention was not Smith's only trial. Professor Macgregor who, as we have seen, had originally been one of the first to cheer Smith on, now emphasised more strongly than he had previously thought necessary a depressing warning that Smith must expect a "trial to his wisdom and fortitude." Even Dr. Davidson feared that "something positive" would have to be done with regard to the article "Bible."

"In addition to what you expressed," he wrote, "I tacitly understood a great deal of what I knew personally, and what your position as a professor implied. . . . I imagined that what you meant to give, and what was most probably desired, was an account of the historical rise of the Biblical Books so far as the Hebrew authors were concerned. It did not occur to me that if this alone was given, it could ever be supposed that there was nothing more to give. I daresay you wrote yourself under an impression somewhat similar.

"Now if that is the case, I believe that all that is

needful to allay the uneasiness that prevails is that you should in some suitable way say so much. It would be a great gain to be able to devote ourselves to our quiet pursuits of study, without fearing the rising of a tempest which might rage for a lifetime."

Professor Smeaton also wrote from the New College a letter in which he almost hysterically implored his old pupil to shun the broad road leading to destruction. "Using the liberty of a man twice Smith's age," he remonstrated with him in the most solemn manner.

"I would beseech you to pause, to take counsel with your father and your seniors," he said, "before committing yourself to positions from which you will find it every day more difficult to recede. Who has not been drawn—if he has thought at all—into speculations and opinions on which he now looks back with contempt and grief? The peril is in a public committal to crude notions. I wish I could do something to rescue a gifted young mind and save it for the future usefulness which we all fondly anticipated."

Professor Smeaton appealed to a fatiguing experience of more than forty years' reading of the higher criticism, and expressed his surprise that Smith's mathematical mind should find any attraction in that barren field.

"Are not the theories without any basis of solid historical fact? and what is the worth of such theories where the basis is mere conjecture or petty internal criticism leaping to arbitrary conclusions? I hope your mind will soon revolt from this castle-building in the clouds.

"But in the meantime the matter is serious. I fear that many a Christian's mind has been shocked by your inconsiderate attack on what is regarded as sacred, and it will not mend the matter to reflect on 'a weak faith' either on the part of the simple Christian mind, or of the practical ministerial mind. We, as professors, are not appointed by the Church to teach what tends to shake the faith of any, or to advocate a criticism which is not legitimate."

Smith's article, according to his old teacher, was the first instance of an attack from within any Scottish

Church on the genuineness of the Bible. He had imitated the "chartered audacity" of Germany and Holland, and, though perhaps he did not himself practise the worst excesses of the Tübingen school, there was the gravest danger in naturalising such views in Scotland.

"I cannot suppose," he continued, "that the sad and bitter harvest produced by that criticism in such men as Baur, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, Schenkel, Keim, Scholten, Kuenen, and others still more extreme, can find much approval in your own mind. But where will it stop if it is legitimated? There will arise others much more extreme than you, as a Strauss arose out of the school of Baur, and how could we suppress it, if we make all criticism legitimate? Nay, how could we check it in the pulpit when the pupils go further than their teacher? Would you like to hear your own pupils saying from the pulpit that Matthew was 'non-apostolic' and *consequently of no authority because not an eye-witness?*"

All this pointed to the fact that in spite of Smith's disclaimers there was growing agitation, if not already panic, in high places, and, as is not uncommon in such a case, the more talkative of the rank and file seized the opportunity of putting themselves forward. The most prominent of these was the Rev. George Macaulay of the Roxburgh Free Church, Edinburgh, who was destined to play somewhat conspicuously the part of jackal to the heresy hunters. Mr. Macaulay was a typical Celt who combined great earnestness of conviction with very considerable powers of expression, and a deep sense of having a vocation. He enjoyed some reputation as a "popular preacher," had long been in the habit of contributing to the press, was the sole inventor of an original theory of Shakespeare's sonnets, and seems to have been on more or less friendly terms with the editor of the *Scotsman*. His publications were for the most part ephemeral pieces, and even the curious will find them difficult to trace. What does survive is entertaining enough, though candour compels the present

writers to add that it is easy to understand how contemporary critics came sometimes to apply to him such adjectives as "bumptious" and "blatant," with appropriate nouns. Be that as it may, Mr. Macaulay's defects, no less than his qualities, fitted him for the activities of an ecclesiastical agitator, and the leading theological event of July 1876 was his course of three lectures on the question of the hour. The title of the first of these was, "Have we a Bible?" They were all more or less fully reported in the Edinburgh newspapers, and their general effect was that the doctrine of the Free Church is found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and that, if the Courts of the Church declare that Professor Smith's "critical views" are compatible with adherence to the public confession of the Church, they will inaugurate a new era which will be marked and branded as the era of doctrinal corruption.

These alarms served to keep public interest alive, but the case may be said not to have commenced officially until August 9, when the first word was spoken about the article "Bible" in any Church Court. On that day, in the Commission¹ of the General Assembly, Dr. Begg put a question, of which he had given private notice, as to what the College Committee were doing or proposing to do in the matter of Professor Smith's article. The Convener of the Committee (Mr. Laughton) replied at length, but his speech may be briefly summarised. The question was an anxious one, both for the Church at large and for the Committee. No statement could yet be made regarding the conclusion at which the Committee would arrive. Communication must first be entered into with the professor himself. The greatest respect was due to Professor Smith's high character, rare gifts, and great attainments in Biblical learning, and they must avoid the danger of misinterpreting his views. There was, however, the other

¹ A body to which each Assembly at its rising delegates *ad interim* certain of its powers.

danger that the young men under the professor's instruction might be "unsettled" "by dealing in certain speculations," however sound their preceptor's own convictions might be. Thus hemmed in by anxieties the Committee could for the moment do nothing but reiterate their promise to use the utmost care and discretion in the matter, and the subject dropped for the time.

It is now time that we should return to the doings of the body from which so much was being expected and promised. The College Committee at this time consisted of twenty members, eleven of them having the status of ministers and nine that of elders.¹ To most of these Smith was personally known, and with some of them his relations had been, and were, very close. Dr. James Candlish, as we have seen, before he removed to Glasgow, had been minister of the important congregation in Aberdeen of which Smith was a member and an elder. He had also been editor of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* since 1875, and many of Smith's papers had passed through his hands. The relations of esteem and affection which subsisted between these two scholars are made very clear even in the mere fragments of their correspondence which are all that can be given in these pages. We have already had occasion to note Smith's friendship with Mr. Whyte, who, while still an Arts student in Aberdeen, had been an occasional visitor at the manse of Keig. He had passed through the classes of the New College only four years before Smith, with whom he had become specially intimate after his settlement in Edinburgh in 1870. Drs. Rainy and Smeaton had been among the heretic's teachers; Principal Douglas of Glasgow was a

¹ Drs. Rainy, Douglas, Brown, Smeaton, Candlish; Sir Henry Moncreiff, Drs. Wilson, Goold, and Purves, and Messrs. Laughton and Whyte—*Ministers*; Messrs. David Maclagan, N. C. Campbell (Sheriff of Ayrshire), William Henderson, Robert Lumsden, William Ferguson, John Cowan, John Pringle (M.D.), Hugh Miller (M.D.), and W. G. Blackie, publisher, Glasgow, (Ph.D.)—*Elders*.

fellow-professor, and an associate at the board of the Old Testament Revision Committee. As for the aged Dr. Brown, Smith's Principal and colleague, it must be supposed that he occupied a position of peculiar influence in the Committee. No member of that body had enjoyed the same opportunities as he of knowing and judging the nature and tendency of Smith's work and influence in Aberdeen, and in particular how these affected the students under their common care. Not to speak of numerous other occasions, he had heard Smith's opening lecture in 1870, and his closing addresses in 1874 and 1876, and all these lay in print before him. In these, and in other articles, as, for example, that on "The Critical Schools of the Continent" in the *British Quarterly Review*, he had representative specimens of his colleague's teaching, and for further elucidations, had he desired them, he had only to turn to that singularly accessible mind. It would not have been surprising had some feeling of *esprit de corps* led him to seek to throw a shield over his colleague, or at least to refrain from taking a foremost place in the ranks of his accusers. It can only have been under a strong sense of duty that he found it necessary to complain, as he afterwards did, that the censure proposed by the College Committee was too weak; and, this being so, one can appreciate the motives of delicacy which restrained him from calling the Committee's attention to the further matter for blame contained in other writings of Smith, the nature of which he had special facilities for appreciating.

These men and their colleagues were prominent in the counsels of the Church, but among them was one who enjoyed exceptional influence and who played a very important part in the subsequent proceedings. Sir Henry Moncreiff, the tenth of a line of Nova Scotia Baronets, in which there has been a remarkable alternation of forensic and clerical eminence, was one of the brightest social ornaments of the Free Church. His family has always

been widely esteemed in Scotland ; his personal character displayed most of the aristocratic virtues, and his intellect had been cultivated at New College in Oxford where, as a youth, he is said to have enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Gladstone. On his return to Scotland he had entered the ministry of the National Church, and at the time of the Disruption was a member of the more moderate wing of the Evangelical party. Sir Henry took time to consider his position in 1843, and he did not arrive at his final decision to join the Free Church in time to be one of those who took part in the historic scene of May 18. He was perhaps not technically entitled, therefore, to claim the style of Disruption Father, though he was always one whom the Church delighted to honour. He seems to have shared the legal and judicial temperament of his family, for we find that, as a minister, and especially as the manager of a heresy case, he was more distinguished for his grasp of Church law and ecclesiastical procedure than as a master of theological learning or a Hebrew scholar.

Up till the Commission of August 9, 1876, there had been some hopes that the tempest might blow over. Dr. Rainy's attitude was condemned by the more progressive theologians, and Smith appears to have believed that the pressure which they were exercising on the Principal would "bring him to his senses." Unluckily, however, there was always some one ready to fan the flames, and Dr. Begg, who had the whip-hand of the official leaders, had made it clear that inaction on the part of the Committee would not be tolerated. Accordingly, after a good deal of "informal and private" conference, a sub-committee of seven (Principal Rainy, Principal Douglas, Sir Henry Moncreiff, Professor Smeaton, Dr. Goold, Professor Candlish, and Mr. Laughton), was appointed on September 19 to consider the article "Bible" and the article "Angel," which, it now appeared, had also been "objected to." Smith was kept apprised,

by the Convener of the Committee, of these proceedings, and early in November was on the point of responding to an invitation to send a statement of his views to the Committee, when a disagreeable and disquieting incident occurred. Dr. Begg and his friends had become dissatisfied with their prospects of obtaining justice, as they conceived it, in the ordinary course of church discipline, and sent out a printed circular to a selected body of adherents, summoning them to a meeting to discuss the situation. The circular was signed by Dr. Moody Stuart and Dr. Duff, as well as by Dr. Begg himself, and those attending the meeting were requested to produce it at the door. Such a gathering of his avowed opponents, at a time when his case was under judicial consideration, naturally produced a most painful impression upon Smith's mind. He sent strong remonstrances both to the Convener of the Committee and to Principal Rainy, and for a moment he threatened to discontinue all communication with the Committee. The present writers must observe that this was in their view a natural and proper course, though this opinion does not seem to be shared by Dr. Rainy's biographer.¹ Be this as it may, the difficulty was overcome, and Smith, after seeing a draft of the sub-committee's Report, sent a statement of his views, which, while defending the Confessional character of these and the legitimacy of the exercise of the higher criticism, could not be regarded as otherwise than conciliatory and, on the whole, reassuring. Dr. Rainy, however, was not satisfied, though he admitted that "the temper was good, and there were statements of positive belief which would be welcomed." He thought that Smith should go a good deal further, and he took the extraordinary step of sending to Dr. Whyte the draft of a letter written by himself in the character of Smith to Professor Candlish, which embodied everything that the Principal considered proper to be said by the

¹ *The Life of Principal Rainy*, i. 322-323.

author of the article "Bible," with a view to putting himself right with the Church.¹ The Principal's object, it would appear from Dr. Simpson's account, was to teach Smith by example (precept having failed) how to humour his fellow-Christians' susceptibilities and fears in a manner "which involved no sacrifice of intellectual integrity." There is no record of Smith's opinion of the lesson, and the present writers do not feel called on to express one on his behalf. In any case it had no effect on the progress of events. Smith neither altered nor added to his statement, which was laid before the Committee on November 14. By the end of the year the Committee's Draft Report was ready; on January 16, 1877, it was finally adjusted; and on January 17 it was made public.

As regards the proceedings of the Committee Sir Henry Moncreiff has recorded, in his *History of the Case* (1879), that there were "discussions and conversations relative to views of prophecy, of the Synoptic Gospels, and of angelic agency, expressed by Professor Smith. It was earnestly contended by Professor Smeaton that these views called for judicial action, and for a decided indication to that effect in the Report." The opinion which prevailed, however, was that, while the suggestions regarding prophecy and the Synoptic Gospels furnished ground for remonstrance respecting the manner in which the subjects had been treated,² yet the explanations and admissions of the professor in his "Remarks" were sufficient to exclude more serious censure. Most of the

¹ This curious piece, already printed in *The Life of Principal Rainy* (i. 325-327), is considered by the present writers of sufficient interest and importance to be preserved here also for convenience of reference, and it is accordingly given in an Appendix to this volume.

² Sir Henry himself, for example, thought, he tells us, that the phrase "non-apostolic digests," ought to have run "non-apostolic though inspired digests," and that "a different mode of expression should have been used than is involved in the words 'Many essays.' These last words convey to the ordinary reader the idea of the existing Gospels being the result of human effort improving on the past."

members had a similar conception as to several other features of the article (in fact, it would seem, as to almost all the other points specified in Dr. Young's pamphlet), but agreed that any decisive procedure regarding them was beyond the functions of the Committee. The chief discussion, says Sir Henry, was about the theory of Deuteronomy; much of it arose out of the denial by Professor Candlish, Dr. Purvis, and Mr. Whyte that there was any ground for grave concern regarding that theory.

The gist of the Report is contained in the following extracts :

“On a survey of the whole case, the Committee do not find sufficient ground to support a process for heresy. The article defends some positions¹ as to the history of the Biblical books, which in point of fact have frequently been associated with the denial of inspiration, having formed part of theories which explain the history of the Bible on the footing of excluding Divine influence. Whether these positions are well grounded is indeed a serious question, and the Committee . . . cannot profess to be surprised that the article, from what it contained and what it omitted, awakened anxiety or created suspicion with reference to Professor Smith's views on the inspiration of Scripture. But . . . they are glad to be assured by Professor Smith that his faith in Deuteronomy, as part of the inspired record of revelation, rests on grounds apart from his critical conclusions, viz. ‘on the witness of our Lord and the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*.’

“The question remains, no doubt, whether Professor Smith has maintained critical opinions which, in their own nature, subvert the doctrine he professes. It is in this connection that those views of Professor Smith come into consideration, of which his theory of Deuteronomy is the leading instance. The Committee have freely stated their view of that theory, that it appears liable to objection, and is fitted to create apprehension. The objection to it is, that it ascribes to the author of the book the use of a device, or as Professor Smith prefers to term it, a literary form, which to many thoughtful

¹ Cp. Dr. Young's ten points.

minds, familiar with the subject in all its aspects, appears unworthy and inadmissible in connection with the Divine Inspiration and Divine Authority of such a book as Deuteronomy. The apprehension felt in connection with it is, that the theory of an inspired and non-deceptive personation will not generally command assent; and then the admission that the statements of the book regarding Moses are not true in the obvious sense, will operate, it may be feared, in the way of unsettling belief. Notwithstanding, the Committee are not prepared to say that Professor Smith's views infer a denial on his part, either directly or constructively, of the doctrine that, in the books of the Old and New Testaments, the revelation of God and the declaration of His will are committed 'wholly unto writing,' and that 'they are all given by inspiration of God to be the only rule of faith and life.' The Committee lay stress on this, because the doctrine now referred to is not only the technical ground in the *Confession* which must regulate ecclesiastical procedure, but is really the essential and fundamental truth which it is vital to maintain.

"The Committee gladly recognise Professor Smith's high character, and express their cordial sense of his great learning. All the more they lament that an article written by him should have given rise to anxiety and suspicion. They cannot withhold the expression of their opinion that the article, in opposition to Professor Smith's avowed intention, is of a dangerous and unsettling tendency. But as regards the grounds on which his critical judgments are based, and the general line of his thinking, those are points on which the Committee have touched only so far as seemed necessary in order to explain the views under which they have decided the question before them."

In a word, the Committee, while not considering that a *prima facie* case of heresy had been made out, advised the Assembly that Smith's critical opinions as expressed in the article "Bible" were hardly compatible with his position as a teacher of candidates for the ministry of the Church. This, however, was by no means a unanimous finding. Some prominent members of the Committee entered and recorded their dissent from the Report, the printed form of which already showed that there were

two parties, one of which protested against any censure whatever, while the other clamoured for a drastic application of ecclesiastical discipline in its severest form.

It is not necessary to make extensive quotations from Professor Smeaton's dissent. It may, however, be well to record that he thought the conclusion of the Report quite inadequate to the gravity of the offence. Also, in his opinion, the Committee should have reported on the article "Angel," as well as on the article "Bible." He thought Professor Smith's explanation of his views on Prophecy was even more unsatisfactory than his original statement, as showing an attitude of absolute indifference to the commentary of an inspired Apostle.

"I hold," observed Professor Smeaton, "that the doctrine of Inspiration and Professor Smith's views are irreconcilable." "An attack on the genuineness and authority of the Scripture, whether dignified by the title of the higher criticism or prompted by the lower scepticism, ought never to be permitted within the Church on the part of any office-bearer. We can keep criticism within its proper limits, and this occasion may have been permitted to occur that we may show to other churches how we can act in the exercise of our independent jurisdiction."

Dr. Brown's dissent was to the effect that it was the duty of the Committee to call attention to the article "Angel" inasmuch as that article did not also discuss the existence of the Devil.

The leaders of the party of toleration in the Committee both dissented from the Report. Dr. Candlish objected to the main proposition which affirmed, in a phrase which became classical, the "dangerous and unsettling tendency" of the impugned writings as fitted to create apprehension and disturb belief. "There is no sufficient ground for grave concern about Professor Smith's view of certain parts of the Pentateuch, and therefore it is unnecessary and inexpedient for the Committee to express an opinion as to the force of the evidence

which is supposed to establish the non-Mosaic authorship of some Deuteronomic Laws."

Mr. Whyte's dissent does the greatest credit to his courage no less than to his common sense. He thought that the Committee should have kept to their instructions and simply reported that they had found no ground to support a process for heresy. If anything was to be said "beyond an exact report on the legality of Professor Smith's teaching, the opportunity should have been taken of relieving their brother of the odium which had unfairly fallen upon him," and of characterising in proper terms the published criticisms on his article which were the real source of it. Questions such as those treated in the article were for specially equipped scholars, and the Committee might well have suggested that the Assembly should impress on both ministers and professors the desirability of their acquiring such equipment "as a sure means of warding off all unreasonable panic on the one hand and of escaping intellectual stagnation on the other." The timid phrases of the Report were unworthy of the Committee, who should have made hearty acknowledgment of the Divine goodness to the Free Church in raising up among them a succession of eminent theologians and teachers which might well excite the envy of other Churches. It might perhaps be regretted that Professor Smith had not sufficiently considered the fact that he was not addressing an audience of experts, but the Committee should have insisted that "those who cannot be familiar with critical and scientific questions are not to be allowed to trammel the hands and brand the names of men who are doing some of the Church's selectest and most delicate work."

Meanwhile Smith went on quietly with his work in Aberdeen, rewriting his lectures on Prophecy, reviewing Kuenen, and generally going through the ordinary literary and lecturing routine. We have seen how deeply he felt and how keenly he resented the attacks

which were being made upon him, and it is easy to imagine the anxiety with which even at this early stage he observed the ever-increasing encroachments made upon his time and energy by barren controversy with prejudiced and ignorant opponents. In these troubles he had the support of a body of distinguished and devoted friends. In particular, most of the intelligent laity were on his side. Some of these, like his allies in the Church, wrote expressing approval of the incriminated writings. Dr. John Brown, for example, sent a kind message about the article "Bible," saying that he regarded it as "the very pith of common sense, and as tight a bit of work in word and thought as has been done in these times." But for the most part there was no parade of sympathy, and he never for a moment allowed his ecclesiastical difficulties to disturb his private life. It would indeed be possible to compile a large selection from the extant letters of this period, giving a full account of his doings from day to day, in which no mention whatever of the case occurs. He was at this time sitting to Mr. George Reid for the portrait which now hangs in the combination room at Christ's College, and both the letters and the little pocket diary (which he still rather unsystematically kept) are full of dinner engagements and interesting glimpses of Aberdeen Society.

Thus he writes to his sister Lucy :

"For a week back everything has been very quiet with me : but before that I had great doings. Gibson was with me, and at the same time also Sheriff Nicolson, whose performance of 'the Phairshon' would have delighted Alice. Then at the same time there was in town, with J. F. White and Reid, a famous French etcher called Rajon, and all of us had sundry dinners and lunches and excursions together. For one thing we were at Dunottar Castle, where we had a grand day. In the evening we came home in a railway carriage without lamps ; so we burned vestas and newspaper torches and sang songs at the top of our voices all the way in under Nicolson's guidance. It was a great day ! Then the whole party

came up to me and were regaled on chops and potatoes, including Mrs. J. F. White, who enjoyed herself extremely, and was smoked to an extent which even a German lady might have disliked.

"Another day Gibson and I and Rae . . . went up Bennachie from the Oyne side, which is quite different from the Keig side. We got a great deal of rain, but it was a capital excursion notwithstanding, and we also saw the *Maidenstone*, an old Scotch sculptured stone which I had long wished to visit.

"Finally, at the end of last week, Millais, the greatest English painter, came to visit Mr. Macdonald of Kepplestone, and I met him at Mr. White's. After all this excitement I am glad to be quiet again. . . ."

The College Committee had deliberated, like legislative assemblies in time of Revolution, with the roar of an impatient mob at its doors. The newspapers, which foresaw a pretty quarrel, and hardly concealed their glee at the prospect of a pitched battle of theologians, published innumerable letters, most of them now wholly negligible, though they had their influence on public feeling at the time. The bitterness which seems to be inseparable from any religious controversy was on this occasion intensified by an inevitable appeal to the old jealousy of the Established Church. "The interminable, yet scarcely commenced heresy case against Professor Smith of Aberdeen was virtually set agoing," as the *Scotsman* openly remarked, "by one of the most vigilant professors of the orthodox establishment." That Establishment, the mass of the Free Church rightly or wrongly believed, had stolen a march on them by obtaining the Church Patronage Act¹ from Mr. Disraeli's Government in 1874. It was therefore intensely galling to them to find that the Erastians were not only invading their monopoly of Disruption principles, but also questioning

¹ This act put an end to lay patronage in the Church of Scotland, and many Free Churchmen feared that this "rehabilitation" of the Establishment would induce many of their members to revert to the State Church.

their orthodoxy. The *Courant* reviewed the College Committee's report on January 18, 1877, pointing out the evidence it contained of the working of the "curious mind of Principal Rainy, worming like a corkscrew through material soft enough to be perforated by a chisel thrust." Its sympathies were with Professor Smeaton. Whyte is "querulous and weak." As for Smith himself, "his touching faith in himself" is such that there is little hope of his speaking "with reasonable respect for those who differ from him," or of showing "that genuine tenderness of feeling needed by those who would estimate the claims of Holy Scripture."

In the later months of 1876 Mr. Macaulay had been pursuing his studies of the Dutch divine whom in his July publication he had consistently called "Quenen," and towards the end of the year he began a second course of lecturing and pamphleteering.¹ He was taken up by the *Glasgow News*, which had assumed a share in the responsibility for Christian orthodoxy currently discharged by the *Courant*, and on January 11, 1877, in an article on Professor Smith's "plagiarism," spoke of his "pleasantly paraphrasing the latest results of Dutch negative criticism" as "a literary immorality which should not have been altogether left out of the ken of the College Committee." It was not left to Smith to repel this base accusation. The article and Mr. Macaulay's charges were promptly brought to Kuenen's notice, and he at once repudiated in a long letter the idea that Smith was under any particular "obligation" to him. Smith and he no doubt agreed on several points of Old Testament criticism, but how could it be otherwise? On other not less important points Smith adopted opinions at variance with his own. Mr. Macaulay appeared to have deliberately suppressed this fact, and the points of agreement which he cites are common to de Wette, Ewald, and Hupfeld as well as Kuenen. Mr. Macaulay's whole pamphlet is one continued

¹ *On Professor Smith's Obligations to Dr. Kuenen*, Edinburgh, 1876.

proof that he knows nothing of recent criticism except from the English translation of Kuenen's *Religion of Israel*. "In the name of common sense and honesty" Kuenen protested against the unscrupulous imputation which had been made.

"I do not enter on the relations of Professor Smith to the Free Church authorities," he concludes, "but let not my name be abused to transfer the question to a different field, and avoid the decision of the point really at issue—the right of the Protestant theologian to communicate with impartiality the results of other men's investigations about the Holy Scriptures and to bring forward openly the fruits of his own studies."

At a much later stage of the deplorable conflict which was to follow, we shall find that Mr. Macaulay sank to even deeper depths of disreputable controversy, and we shall have occasion to reiterate the natural reflection that it would have been better for the credit of the party who ultimately triumphed, if they had associated themselves with Dr. Kuenen's manly rebuke and openly disavowed Mr. Macaulay and all his works.

Another and more honourable, if equally mistaken, critic was silenced by the intervention of a new and formidable combatant. Mr. Kennedy (now Dr. Kennedy, librarian to the New College) published about this time *Observations on Professor W. R. Smith's Article "Bible" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica."* In the previous year he had put forth, under the initials "M. N.," a brochure entitled *Remarks on Professor W. R. Smith's Article "Bible,"* which, perhaps, may now appear to him to have hardly done justice to Smith's arguments, but which was undoubtedly an honest remonstrance in the interests of "true spiritual life" on the one hand, and, on the other, a protest against the "blind and servile faith fostered by the Church of Rome." The *Observations* now offered to the public were more elaborate, but need only be noticed here as having provoked an important letter to the Press from Professor A. B. Davidson, who censured

Mr. Kennedy somewhat severely for want of fairness and accuracy in his exposition of Smith's views on the date of Deuteronomy, a point which had assumed great importance from the outset of the case, and which in the subsequent proceedings became crucial. It was important to point out very clearly that Smith did not believe Deuteronomy to be as late as the time of Jeremiah, and that the insinuation made by Mr. Kennedy that he considered the finding of the book in the Temple not to have been a *bona fide* discovery was quite without foundation. This Professor Davidson did, and took occasion also to protest in general terms against the nature and methods of the attacks on the article and its author.

“It is one of the misfortunes connected with this case,” he observes, “that those who, without official call, have taken in hand to meddle with it, have shown themselves so slenderly equipped for the undertaking. . . .

“I cannot help thinking of doubtful fairness, not to use a more serious word, this practice adopted by Mr. Kennedy of writing pamphlets under two different designations. Of course he meant no harm by it. But there can be no doubt that it tends to increase the agitation in the minds of those to whom the pamphlets are sent when they see what they suppose to be one writer after another thinking it necessary to appeal to them and warn them. Or, to take a less serious view of the matter, it is really cruel to alarm Professor Smith and fill his mind with the idea that his foes are increased, and that he is being assailed by ‘two rogues in buckram,’ when all the time what frightens him is only Mr. Kennedy with a ‘false face.’”

These episodes, with many others of less interest and importance, led up to the regular meeting of the Commission of Assembly which took place on March 7, 1877, when the Report of the College Committee was presented. The outcome of the deliberations of the Commission was a unanimous agreement to refer the matter to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which had jurisdiction over Professor Smith. The Presbytery was to meet on March 13, and, after seeing the articles and all the documents relating to the

case, was to take such action "as they may deem competent and necessary, and as may, by the blessing of God, issue in securing the object so devoutly desired, viz. that the Church does not suffer or sustain any prejudice."

In the course of the debate, which is not otherwise interesting, Principal Rainy made a speech which contained some memorable passages. Having referred to the painful impression which Smith's articles had made upon himself, and his still more painful anticipations of their probable effect on others, he declined for the time to formulate any expression of his views on the theological questions involved, though he allowed it to appear that these were on the whole conservative. He was more explicit on the question of what he believed to be the powers and duties of the Church in presence of the Committee's Report.

"I hold," he observed, "that the Church is quite entitled to look into the question whether a man against whom she is not prepared to lay a libel for heresy is, as regards the general character of his teaching, teaching so that the Church should be called upon to continue and extend her confidence to him in that office. . . . I thoroughly admit the view that I might be holding opinions in regard to the Confession of Faith which would not enable you to lay a libel for heresy against me, and yet I might be teaching in such a way, by sheer folly or some other form of intellectual perversity, that you might be entitled to say, 'We will not have you as Principal or Professor in the New College.'"

After a reference to the duty providentially cast upon the Church of remaining calm and firm in the presence of the serious difficulties with which she was faced, the Principal administered a slight check to the incautious impetuosity of Dr. Begg and his friends.

"I do not vary much from the ordinary opinions generally accepted amongst us as to the wise line to take in regard to the judgment to be formed in regard to the evidence as a whole on that point [the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch]. I do not regard that as a matter of faith

at all. I do not believe that Jesus and His Apostles ever said anything on that subject. There are materials in the Pentateuch in regard to which I hold no man in his senses will ever dream of asserting decisively that they are of Mosaic authorship."

He then commended the course of ordering a thorough investigation of the whole case, and especially of any question about Deuteronomy, by the Presbytery. "*Behind that question,*" he significantly added, "*you have the question what is the safe and right and reasonable course to pursue.*"

Carefully guarded as this utterance was, and even qualified by a remarkable admission that the Pentateuch might be at least composite in character, there was in it the germ of a policy which was not developed or avowed till much later, but which in the end supplied the means whereby Dr. Rainy forcibly imposed peace on the Church. The speech which he delivered in March 1877 was the first in which he publicly expressed his opinion on the subject of the Robertson Smith case: the persevering reader will be struck by its remarkable anticipation of the attitude which he finally adopted.¹

Next day Professor Smith wrote to the *Aberdeen Free Press* a letter, in which he made reply to certain arguments that had been used by Drs. Beith and Moody Stuart in the Commission. Some sentences may be quoted; "judicious" would hardly be the adjective to apply to them, yet it is worth remembering that Dr. Beith's conversion to a different view of the Smith case from that which he had hitherto been holding came about not long afterwards.

"I regret," he says, "that so respected a father of the Church as Dr. Moody Stuart should allow himself to speak so hastily on difficult matters. I do not feel it necessary to say a word on his astounding argument about the destruction of the Canaanites, for I am not aware that any critic of repute has taught that the author of Deuteronomy wished to preach a new crusade against

¹ See Chapter X., page 414.

the remnant of the Canaanites. Nor is it wise for so ill-equipped a critic to charge Dr. Kuenen with a 'baseless assertion' when he says that in the seventh century the Canaanite tribes had no longer an independent existence. (Dr. Kuenen does not say a substantive existence, but *geen zelfstandig bestaan*). Dr. Stuart himself appears to recognise as probable what those who read the Bible in Hebrew know to be certain, viz. that, according to the narrative of Chronicles, the remnant of the Canaanites had acquired as early as the time of Solomon the position of *gerim* or privileged strangers, a class to which the Book of Deuteronomy extends special protection. The *ger*, I need hardly say, is a man who has lost his former nationality. On Ezra ix. 1, Dr. Stuart may consult Bertheau's *Commentary*. I am not without hope that Dr. Stuart will still regret his rashness in this matter. I have in my hands a full and frank apology for an attack upon my article which he made by letter to me last summer,¹ and withdrew in the most candid manner when I showed him his unintentional injustice. I had hoped that this example would have taught him caution, and I abstained, as no important issue was raised, from pointing out how wholly his pamphlet on the 51st Psalm had failed to apprehend the argument of those who assign it to the period when the destruction of the Temple suspended *all* sacrifice—not merely the sacrifice of one man,—till Jerusalem should be rebuilt. But I have not been able to pass over this new attack, which, made publicly, calls for public answer."

With the reference to the Presbytery the case entered on a new phase in which compromise and moderation became more difficult for either party. Even after the lapse of a generation, those who read—much more those

¹ Dr. Moody Stuart in July 1876 had written to Smith accusing him of asserting "that the law of high places was not acknowledged till the time of Josiah," and had somewhat impertinently presumed to lecture the author of the article "Bible" on a rashness and ignorance unbecoming in any writer and deplorable in a son of the manse. Smith was able to show that the accusation was unfounded, and administered a grave rebuke, which elicited from Dr. Stuart the apology referred to; "I ask your forgiveness," he wrote, "for the hasty and unjust imputation, and am sincerely sorry for the pain I have given you. Since writing to you I have been reading Kuenen, which if I had read before I should not have so misapprehended your position."

who write—of such a conflict as was now inevitable will find it difficult to avoid taking a side as partisans in the turmoil of debate. The issue in truth lay deeper than the most intelligent of the combatants could have been expected to realise. It is fortunate for any system, whether of philosophy or of religion, when the general principles to which it appeals progress *pari passu* with the knowledge of facts out of which such principles must inevitably be constructed. When science outgrows philosophy, and facts are assimilated faster than existing theories can assimilate them, the occurrence of one synoptic mind is enough to produce the most serious disturbances even in the “Metaphysics of true belief.” With the best intentions in the world, with the most profound and sincerely expressed loyalty to existing standards, such a mind is apt to find itself at the head of a revolution.

In 1876 the Evangelical Protestantism of Scotland had arrived at one of these critical moments. The Confession of Faith, founded on the Biblical theology universally current in the seventeenth century, betrayed a dangerous lack of elasticity when it was called upon to find room for the advances in Biblical scholarship which had been achieved between 1843 and 1875. The mere statement of these advances by one who explicitly and repeatedly avowed his adherence to the strictest evangelical orthodoxy was sufficient to strike terror into the devout, and to make it impossible thenceforth for even the faithful to believe quite in the same way.

Smith was far from understanding how rapidly he was drifting into this position, but the fury of his more extreme opponents, and the grave concern which Dr. Rainy felt from the outset, show that there were some who realised—not explicitly, perhaps, but clearly enough for practical purposes—the real implications of the views he had put forward. Others, not involved in the domestic quarrel, and by no means ill-disposed to Smith, had seen it too. Shortly before the special meeting of the Aberdeen Presbytery,

Principal Tulloch, the eminent Established Church divine, who was a leader of liberal opinion in that communion, contributed an article to the *Contemporary Review*, entitled "Progress of Religious Thought in Scotland."

Towards the end of that article Tulloch pointed out "the obvious bearing of Professor Smith's views upon the whole basis of dogmatic Protestantism—a bearing which appears to us irresistible, however repudiated by Professor Smith himself," and referred to the prospect of their leading to an entire and fundamental change in the attitude of the Scottish mind towards the Bible, notwithstanding the "hard winking" of the College Committee, or any avowal of Professor Smith that he continues to hold the Protestant "doctrine of the Word of God."

"All dogmatic authority has in Scotland, as in Puritanism generally, been supposed to rest on the Bible, 'its corporeal perfection' (so to speak in the words of a well-known living statesman¹), and its absolute Divine character. That the old 'rigid conceptions,' of which the Free Church itself, in its constitution, is a result, can survive such free handling, is simply impossible. Changes of all kinds must come with a changed view of Scripture . . . [the view that regards it] as an uncertain and progressive Literature rather than a literal code or transcript of the Divine mind. The beginning of theological reconstruction within the Christian Church lies in the new idea of Revelation which connects itself immediately with this advanced view of the Bible—a reconstruction which need by no means be negative, although it must be largely agnostic—leaving alone many questions which the Church has hitherto sought to settle. If Mr. Smith has prepared the way for a higher conception of Revelation and a more comprehensive interpretation of the progressive thought as it unwinds itself through the prophetic ages, his country will have reason to be thankful to him; but he will certainly find that there have been larger consequences in his criticism than he himself now imagines. As yet his tone is too coldly analytical. As both his historic and spiritual sense grows deeper, and the relation betwixt

¹ Mr. Gladstone.

Dogma and Revelation becomes more intelligible to him, he will learn to state his conclusions with less confidence ; and to see that freedom of thought is the vital atmosphere of all theological labour and not merely of Bible criticism."

These were plain words, and at this distance of time the candid student will hardly deny that they were wise, weighty, and prophetic. This, however, was by no means the view taken of them by Smith. An occasion arose which gave him an opportunity of publicly speaking his mind about Tulloch's article, and the orthodoxy of his comments was so edifying that some of the more sanguine of his supporters believed that the case was at an end.

Smith had now had to do with no less than seven academic generations in the Theological College. He had therefore had opportunities of influencing the rising ministry such as might well justify the apprehensions of the more orthodox that he might give them a bias in the direction of theological liberalism. It will appear at a later stage that his students were not all of them submissive disciples, but he always had many admirers among his hearers, and at this time his classes were apparently almost unanimously on his side. They decided, at any rate, to mark their sympathy with their professor ; and, on the eve of the meeting of Presbytery which was convened for the purpose of taking disciplinary action about the article "Bible," they met together to present him with an illuminated address and the gift of a handsome clock. "Without venturing to express an opinion on the merits of the present controversy," the junior pupils felt constrained to record their appreciation of "his moral earnestness, his high Christian character, and his deep spiritual sympathy with evangelical religion." The senior students expressed their obligation to him for the valuable help he had given them towards the understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, and towards the defence of their faith against negative and rationalistic thought, "not by denunciation, but by showing us its origin and foundations,

by tracing its course, and by direct criticism of its results."

Smith replied to these addresses in two short speeches which, although he little knew it, were destined to be the last words he ever spoke from a theological chair. He did not need to assure them that he did not feel the views he had adopted to be at variance with the principles of the Church. The Church must ultimately decide whether they were views which she was willing to allow him to hold. It was particularly pleasing to him to know that his students at least did not think that he had lost hold of the realities of faith. Addressing himself to the elder students, he expressed his gratification that they had realised so clearly the principle which he had always sought to inculcate, that the authority of Scripture is the "one and all-sufficient source of our knowledge of God's way of salvation," and he proceeded to repudiate with some heat the principles of dogmatic evolution which Dr. Tulloch as "a leader of liberal theology in Scotland" had put forward in the *Contemporary Review*. He rejected the Principal's statement "that any attempt to get beyond the old traditions as to the received composition of the Old Testament and other books necessarily involved a change of the doctrine of the authority of the Scripture." He begged his hearers not to be misled "by so-called liberal progressive theologians," and declared that the question was one in which Principal Tulloch had against him "the whole scriptural consciousness of the Church." "The Bible," he declared, "is the supreme authority. It is an authority in this sense, that all that the Christian can wish to have for salvation is in it, and also that he will not find anything in it contrary to truth. He will find that the sense is not ambiguous or uncertain, and yet that the whole sense is not exhausted at once, and that we require not only additional exegesis, but also historical and critical studies in order to get to the whole sense. That seems to me a reasonable plan of progress. . . ."

How reasonable the plan was, and in truth how far it would on analysis be found to differ from Tulloch's proposed evolution of Biblical theology, are problems which must not detain us here. Smith's solution did not satisfy his opponents; they were charmed "that he had so decidedly protested against the Broad Church views entertained in the Established Church," but they set their teeth in his theory of Deuteronomy, which they did not cease to regard as not only untenable but dangerous. For the time Smith himself was well satisfied with the effect of his pronouncement.

"The students have done nobly," he writes to his brother Charles, who was by this time in India. "The clock and the address are both very pretty and tasteful, but of course that is nothing in comparison with the value of their kind feelings. . . . It is felt that what I said about Tulloch has cleared the atmosphere. I have this opinion not only from men in town but from Whyte, Dr. W. Smith, and Dr. John Brown (Rab).¹ . . . I have received this morning a capital sermon on 'Revelation and the Historical Books of the Bible,'² just printed by Marcus Dods. It will do good. Altogether I think the tide is turned."

In this confident spirit, with the watchwords of progressive scientific investigation and living faith in the Living God, he went to meet the Presbytery, which, as had been anticipated, found great initial difficulties in deciding on the precise steps to be taken. Smith began by formally admitting the authorship of the incriminated writings, but he maintained his original position that he was not disposed to make any general statement of his views except in reply to a regularly arranged statement of whatever charges there might be against him, and there was a somewhat angry extra-judicial discussion of the means which in the first instance had been taken to bring the case to the notice of the Church.

¹ Dr. John Brown simply sends his card with the words: "Most excellent homily and effectual—*Medulla Leonum*."

² Or, rather, "On Revelation and Inspiration." See above, p. 185.

It soon became clear that the two parties which had manifested themselves in the Church at large were each strongly represented in the Presbytery. The leader of the party of reaction was Dr. David Brown, whose share in these proceedings did not enhance his reputation as a controversialist. Smith's leading supporter was Professor, afterwards Principal, Salmond, who henceforth became a prominent champion on the liberal side. Smith's well-known learning, and the recent experiences certain fathers and brethren had had of his pugnacity, seem for a time to have deterred individual opponents from coming forward as his accusers. There was a general disposition among the reactionaries to screen their personal objections behind the decorous procedure of a committee. One of Dr. Brown's party rather simply observed that it would be "very painful for people to give in objections in their own names." Smith's friends, however, stood firm, and it was decided merely to invite members of the Presbytery to send in questions and criticisms relating to his incriminated publications.

On these lines the proceedings were conducted, and they continued at intervals through March and April, ending inconclusively on May 10. The fight was long and arduous, but Smith as usual was on the whole in buoyant spirits, and did not neglect the society of his friends. There survives from these days at least one record of a sitting of the "Aberdeen Academy."

"I was at a wonderful dinner at Old Deer after the Presbytery with George and Archie Reid, J. F. White, and one or two others. George Reid sang an original song of considerable humour, and sat up till three in the morning—which is a novelty for him. We had a very nice evening, and I had just two hours in bed—having to rise next morning at six, at which hour I ate a capital breakfast. It was a capital distraction just after the ecclesiastical row."

This, however, was early in the proceedings, and a month later in a somewhat different key he writes from

Keig to his sister. "I have had two dreadful days of bother in the Presbytery, and am beginning to be quite tired of being called a heretic. So I have come out here for a couple of days' rest before the thing begins again on Thursday."

The questions submitted by members of the Presbytery were sorted into three categories. The first included those which the Presbytery agreed to put judicially to the professor; the second those which, while not officially adopted, were "transmitted" to him and left to his courtesy to answer. The third contained such interrogatories as the Presbytery disapproved of altogether. The battle raged chiefly about the last category. Thus the Presbytery rejected the question, "Wherein does Inspiration, according to Professor Smith's view of it, differ from Spiritual illumination?" by a majority of twenty-two votes to eight. A similar fate met an inquiry about Smith's view of the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs, and a general request for a statement fitted to remove the painful impression that the authority of all the books of Scripture was prejudicially affected by his insufficient recognition of their Divine Authorship, by his "pervading disregard of the views which are entertained respecting Christ, and by a tendency to obliterate the distinction between the Scriptures and mere human writings." Dr. Brown's chief anxiety was, as already mentioned, about the Devil, and he wished to ask Professor Smith why he had not at least inserted an allusion to the subject, were it only "See article Satan," in the article on "Angels." This question was rejected by a somewhat smaller majority than in the case of the others, and the finding of the Presbytery was in fact reversed at a later date by the Assembly; but by that time further and more important proceedings had deprived the matter of any significance.

To the questions finally put and to those which the Presbytery "transmitted" to him, Smith made a reply,

which he reserved the right to consider provisional. The paper containing his answers on such points as the predictive element in prophesy, the historical character of the books of Jonah and Esther, and, above all, on the Deuteronomy question, is full of ability, but he had already covered much the same ground in his dealings with the College Committee, and he was destined to thresh out the question even more thoroughly in the next stage of the case. It will not therefore be necessary to analyse his statement to the Presbytery here. In view of the imminence of the meeting of Assembly, the Presbytery decided merely to report progress to their ecclesiastical superiors, leaving it to them to take the next step.

Meanwhile it is clear that the heretic and his friends were looking forward with some little anxiety to the conflict on the floor of the General Assembly. Principal Rainy's speech at the March Commission had, as we have seen, contained some remarkable admissions, and a prominent supporter of Smith had written,¹ "I derive great consolation from the fact that Rainy has at last spoken out in a way he has never done in public before. He cannot afford to divorce himself from the young intellect of the Church, and his other companions cannot do without him." The Presbytery proceedings had, however, revealed the extent of the opposition to any change in the traditional view, and Smith at a very early stage of the case had also discovered that, though he could usually carry his own Presbytery against the reactionaries, he had formidable and irreconcilable enemies in Edinburgh and elsewhere in the South.

The spirit displayed and the tactics used were certainly deplorable. Dr. Pirie Smith, after one of the hottest encounters, wrote to his son :

"I read the *Free Press* report, and after that I read one or two passages from the Gospels and the Epistles. The conclusion I came to was that the spirit displayed by

¹ Professor Lindsay.

your enemies was far more difficult to reconcile with the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles than your teaching with the Divine Authority and Inspiration of Scripture. I could not help thinking of Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite."

All the more gratifying was the receipt of a friendly letter from Rainy himself, inquiring as to a passage in Smith's speech on Tulloch which the Principal wished to quote in a projected contribution to the *Contemporary Review*,¹ and concluding in almost affectionate terms, "My mind often turns to you and to the difficulties and trials of your position. I trust in God to guide you and each of us, in the way that will prove to have been right for us to take when all these misunderstandings and collisions have passed away." Smith's comment on this was, "His note is this time genuinely kindly and marks a distinct advance towards sympathy with me." There were rumours of an appeal to what a German contemporary observer with unconscious prescience termed "ecclesiastical lynch law." It was thought that Dr. Begg, anticipating the course of history, meant to move a suspension of the Professor without further hearing of the case, and Rainy's undoubted, though, as it afterwards appeared, merely temporary, leaning towards progressive theology, raised Smith's spirits considerably. On the evidence before them the present writers must observe that he seems even then to have overestimated the probability of his cause having any effective support from the leader of the Assembly.

"Candlish and Bruce," he writes to his brother Charles, "are members of Assembly expressly, as I understand, in order to give me fair play. Rainy is understood to be contemplating pretty decided action in my favour. He said to Bruce, 'I have almost made up my mind to cast in my lot with you fellows,' but he seemed to anticipate that such a step would cost him his leadership."

¹ It does not appear to have been published.

These were so far benign symptoms, and in addition there was a pleasant conversation with Rainy in London, in the course of which the latter reiterated his conclusion that he now considered it impossible to lay any weight on the New Testament references to the Pentateuch as determining authorship. "This," Smith was rash enough to conclude, "is so important in view of the weight which has been laid on the point by men like Moody Stuart that I believe it is practically equivalent to an assurance that Rainy is now identified with me." Nevertheless he looked forward to the Assembly in the full expectation of "a serious row," and in this at any rate he was not mistaken.

The General Assembly of 1877 met on Thursday, May 24, and rose on Tuesday, June 5. Two days were devoted to the Robertson Smith case—Saturday, the 26th, when the various appeals from Aberdeen Presbytery were heard, and Tuesday, the 29th, when the Report of the College Committee fell to be discussed. It seems hardly necessary to discuss the fate of the appeals (which have already been alluded to in the account of the proceedings in the Presbytery), as the subsequent course of events deprived them of importance. But the debate of Tuesday, which formally arose out of the Report of the College Committee, deserves, and indeed requires, to be followed with attention. It was opened by the first of Smith's remarkable series of Assembly speeches, in the course of which he announced his intention to take a step decisive of the future conduct of the case.

Notices of motion had been given by Dr. Wilson of Dundee, Junior Clerk of Assembly, and Professor Candlish, which clearly brought out the attitudes of the various parties in the House. Dr. Wilson proposed that in view of the College Committee's finding that the article "Bible" contains "statements of a dangerous and unsettling tendency," the Assembly should suspend the professor from his duties until the proceedings in the Aberdeen Presby-

tery had been terminated. Professor Candlish's motion was to the effect that the proceedings in the Presbytery should be allowed to take their course, and declared that the Assembly deemed it inexpedient to pronounce any opinion for the present on the College Committee's Report, or on any point connected with the case.

Dr. Rainy, in the absence of Dr. Laughton, opened the proceedings by formally submitting the Special Report of the College Committee, without a speech, and the principal clerk then intimated that now was the time if Professor Smith wished to make any statement. He then, "amid breathless silence" and "with becoming modesty and perfect firmness," as contemporary reporters have it, spoke from written notes as follows:—

"Before the House proceeds to the discussion of motions on this subject, I think it due to the Assembly to make a statement which may possibly facilitate matters. I do so in entire confidence in the justice of the Assembly, and because I do not believe that any member of the House can desire to censure me without full judicial investigation. I am persuaded that the course which I propose to take will be seen to secure all the ends which the Church naturally seeks to attain, and I trust to the justice of the Assembly to accept and act upon it. I feel as strongly as any member of our Church can do that every legitimate step should be taken to preclude even the temporary suspicion that the teaching in our Halls is subversive of sound doctrine. And from what has already emerged in the case it also appears to me that my teaching cannot be purged of suspicion except by a regular judicial process. Under these feelings, and with a view to prevent the possibility that next session may come on before the matter has taken definite shape, and that so I may be called upon to meet my classes without being re-established in the confidence of the Church, I have come to a resolution which I think it due to the Assembly to intimate at this stage. At next meeting of the Aberdeen Presbytery I will ask that all the charges against me be reduced to the form of a libel, and that according to the ordinary operation of the

rules of procedure, and without prejudice to any interest concerned, my functions as a teacher may be suspended until the case is exhausted, and the Church has given her judicial decision on the points involved."

A judicial decision of all the issues was now inevitable, but Smith's statement did not satisfy those who were pressing for immediate action, and Dr. Wilson proceeded with his motion in a speech marked by great clearness, conciseness, and (granted the premises) cogency. While a Professor was under suspicion of holding views of a dangerous and unsettling tendency, the Assembly was bound in the interests of truth and of duty to the students to save them from possible injury. The suspension proposed was not intended as a censure, but simply as a precaution. The difficulties of the case would not be met by the course proposed by Professor Smith. Under a process of libel a professor could not be suspended until the libel had been declared relevant, and the College Session would probably be at an end before the Presbytery could possibly arrive at that point. Before sitting down Dr. Wilson, who discharged his ungracious task with considerable tact and dexterity, took occasion to declare that his motion was "framed in the most friendly spirit towards Professor Smith, for whom he entertained sentiments of most affectionate regard. It is the earnest wish of my heart," he observed, "that this whole business may be concluded in a way not only in harmony with Divine truth but in vindication of Professor Smith's position, so as to preserve to the Church at large, and to us, his valuable services."

Dr. Moody Stuart, still smarting from his last encounter with Smith, seconded the proposal, and, after some discussion, was allowed to read a speech dealing with the whole question of the admissibility of the views stated or implied in the article "Bible." He was understood to say that for him these views stripped certain books of the Bible of all authority, robbed them of all

their value, and criminally set at nought the testimony of the Apostles and of Christ Himself.

The counter proposal, that the Assembly should for the time do nothing, was moved by Professor Candlish and seconded by Mr. Ferguson of Kinmundy, one of the lay members of the College Committee, in speeches which can hardly be said to have stirred the House. Proper emphasis was laid on the Professor's well-known and frequently declared Evangelical orthodoxy, on the effectiveness of his defence of the Church's faith on more than one public occasion, and on the credit reflected on the Church by his eminence in Biblical scholarship. With equal propriety the Assembly was warned of the danger of hurrying into a theological position which might afterwards prove to be untenable, and of the injustice of ordering a suspension in the case of Professor Smith which was not customary in ordinary cases of procedure by libel. These contentions so far succeeded as to make a few members of the House uneasy about the justice of first suspending and then trying a man, and an attempt was made to find some middle way. No sufficient body of support for this was, however, found, and the debate proceeded on the lines at first laid down.

Professor Bruce pleaded earnestly for caution and delay. The result of further consideration might be to show that Professor Smith was not so far wrong as was being at the moment supposed, the simple truth being that his views had come rather unexpectedly upon a community ill-prepared to receive them and to understand clearly their bearings. Time would probably show that views now considered dangerous were really harmless and capable of being treated as open questions. The numerous pamphlets which had appeared were of no value and entitled to no weight, though by their misrepresentations they had sent up to the Assembly a large number of prepossessed judges. Dr. Bruce did not conceal that there was great perplexity in his own mind in respect of many

of Professor Smith's statements—a perplexity shared, it would seem, by the College Committee. This was not matter of reproach, but was emphatically a reason for acting cautiously.

Dr. Begg delivered a characteristic speech, appealing with truculent sophistry to the ignorance and prejudice of his hearers. He was clearly of opinion that Professor Smith's theory about Deuteronomy could not be allowed in the Free Church. Professor Candlish had objected to its being called a theory of personation, but it was. On this Dr. Candlish rose to protest that it was not the case that Professor Smith believed it to be personation, and with the *aplomb* of the hustings Dr. Begg replied that he did not know what Professor Smith believed, but whoever used the word had, he thought, made a very good selection, and so forth.

Dr. Rainy handled the situation with all his parliamentary skill, contrived, with his customary reserve, to keep his engagements with the Liberals without prejudicing the other side upon the theological issues, showed enough and no more than enough sympathy with the defendant and his friends, and paid a proper tribute to their abilities and character. He rebuked Dr. Begg more gently than he deserved, but sufficiently to maintain the credit of the tribunal, by declining to take seriously the suggestion that Professor Smith regarded the book of Deuteronomy as a product of fraud and personation. He viewed some matters in Professor Smith's writings with deep concern, but some of the questions therein raised were such as the Church must face. There were some questions as to the history or composition of certain books regarding which he had no doubt, but on which he would not seek to bind the beliefs of others. He himself, for instance, had come to the conclusion that the book of Isaiah was by a single author, but he handsomely allowed that Professor Bruce might be equally orthodox in thinking otherwise. "There

were, in fact, some questions of criticism upon which they had hitherto held a common belief which he was prepared to admit as open questions. . . . But, on the other hand, there was much in Professor Smith's modes of stating things calculated to give great concern, and which had given great concern ; and, more particularly, there appeared to be danger attaching to his method in so far as it was calculated to give young and ardent men an example of confidence in conjectural opinions which might be more unfit for them than for himself." After some earnest words upon the dangers of unreasoning panic, Principal Rainy, turning to the question of procedure, cast his influence unreservedly on the side of Dr. Wilson. Like him, he disclaimed the association of any idea of censure with the temporary suspension of Professor Smith, and indicated that if any such suspicion should arise, it would be owing in a large measure to those who needlessly imported it into the motion.

The Assembly consisted of 710 members ; of these 604 took part in the vote between the two motions, when it was found that Dr. Wilson's motion had been carried by the overwhelming majority of 378 (491 to 113).

On Monday, June 4, this decision was followed by another, giving unusually extended powers to the Commission as a court of final appeal. This does not, however, greatly concern us here.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST LIBEL (1877-1878)

SMITH being suspended from his academic duties was free to devote the whole of his time and energy to his defence. He felt his suspension very deeply, and in the intervals of the controversy we already begin to find him facing the possibility of the termination of his official connection with the Church, though he still regarded this as remote, and though his courage and cheerfulness in the actual struggle never seemed to flag. He returned to Aberdeen immediately after the Assembly proceedings, and in a letter to Keig observed :

“I now feel very much tired out, but otherwise I am quite well, with good spirits and attitude. . . . The last proposal made to me was one from Balliol College that I should sign the thirty-nine articles and take the next vacant Balliol living !¹

“I have good hopes that all will still come right in the Free Church.”

Two days later he wrote to the Presbytery, formally requesting that the charges against him might be reduced to the form of a libel, and then left Aberdeen for a few weeks' much-needed holiday. On his return, he set out for London to resume his labours on the Revision

¹ Some months later he wrote to his brother : “I preached twice for Dr. Allon, Editor of the *British Quarterly Review*. The English Independents seem generally to take my side, and I got a plain hint from Allon, who is one of their leading men, that, if I was turned out, they would be glad to make room for me in one of their colleges.”

Committee. He writes to his brother in India from the Jerusalem Chamber in the intervals of a discussion on the book of Hosea :

“ Since Assembly time I have had a very pleasant holiday. I came back to Aberdeen thoroughly tired out, and went south to visit Mr. Campbell of Tullichewan. He is, as perhaps you know, one of the great Glasgow merchants, and his place, Tullichewan Castle, at the foot of Loch Lomond, is charming, with a magnificent view of Ben Lomond ; and the Campbells are excellent hosts. Mrs. C. is a great Liberal in thought and very much inclined to be friendly with heretics. Her husband is a very liberal man in giving and a very kindly good man, but it was not generally expected that he would show the kind interest in this case which he has displayed. I stayed at Tullichewan for a fortnight, doing almost nothing but enjoying idleness and a little lawn-tennis. Then I went on to Oban by the beautiful route through Glenfalloch and on by Dalmally. There I joined Mr. J. Stevenson of Nile Street, Glasgow, and spent a week in his large yacht the *Blue Bell*. We had light and contrary winds which hindered us somewhat from doing all we proposed. However, we got to Tobermory the first night, then to Loch Coruisk, Canna, Rum, Staffa, etc. So I have seen a good deal of the most beautiful part of the Hebrides. Our main disappointment was that we were prevented by the wind and weather from getting to Iona.

“ We had Dr. Walter Smith and his wife on the yacht. Dr. Smith is excellent company, and so is Mr. Stevenson, who, by the bye, is a cousin of my friend John Stevenson here, with whom I am living as usual.”

Meanwhile the Presbytery had in his absence held two meetings to consider his demand for a libel. They showed the greatest perplexity, and ultimately decided to do nothing until August, after the holiday season. Following the formal tenor of the decision of the Assembly, they considered it necessary to put the questions about which Dr. Brown had appealed, and Smith was once more summoned to state his views on the 110th Psalm and on the real existence of fallen angels

and the agency of Satan. To this requisition he replied that he considered himself precluded for the present from answering, in view of his request that he might be put on his trial, a request which he again respectfully pressed upon the Court. To this there could be but one reply, and in August a committee was appointed to frame a libel against him.

The task imposed on these gentlemen was not easy. Apart from the substantial difficulties inherent in almost any prosecution, and particularly in a prosecution for false doctrine, the forms which had to be observed by the promoters of a process for heresy were in those days very intricate. If a similar case arose (or could be imagined as arising) at the present time, the defender would be presented with a simple and business-like document setting forth the names of his accusers and stating at length the false doctrine with which he was charged, with explicit references to the passages in the standards of the Church on the one hand, and on the other hand to the writings in which the heresy had been published. The procedure in the Robertson Smith case followed the stately fashion of our ancestors.

It will have become apparent, even to those unacquainted with the terminology of the Scots Law, that in ecclesiastical proceedings a "libel" corresponds almost precisely with the indictment in a criminal process in the secular courts. In Smith's time indictments and libels alike were drawn in the old ratiocinative form, bristling with "words of style" and verboriosities of all kinds, and intolerably cumbrous in the exposition of a complicated matter. The Procedure Act 1887 has reformed indictments in the Criminal Courts of Scotland, and the improved practice of the Assemblies has simplified libels, to the great advantage of the administration of justice. In 1877 the old Form of Process was obligatory. Then the major or leading proposition, according to the prescription of the learned Baron Hume, still stated "the appellation of

the crime meant to be charged " or, if it had no proper name, described it at large, and characterised it as a crime that is severely punishable. The minor proposition averred the panel's guilt of the crime, and supported the averment with a narrative of the fact complained of. The conclusion inferred that, on conviction by the verdict of an assize, he ought to be punished with the pains by law attached to his transgression.

Assistance was of course not wanting to the Committee in finding a correct technical model for the expression of their charges, but as the weeks passed it was rumoured that more serious difficulties had arisen as to what precisely these charges should be. These difficulties, of course, came to Smith's ears, and not unnaturally caused him some satisfaction.

" I have got some news this morning about the libel," he writes to his father on August 27. " First, I saw Selkirk, who had asked Selbie¹ what the major was to be, and had gathered that they had got no major from the Confession. But I have more news from Hendry. . . . It is, at all events, Selbie who is understood to have said . . . that they were in very low spirits in the Committee. For, firstly, they had not got nearly so much material as they expected, then the material they *had* found was very hard to put into shape, and, finally, they found that I had been very guarded. Altogether I gather they are making little of it."

After a month's deliberation the document so far took shape that it was laid in draft form on the table of the Presbytery, though it was found necessary to allow another month for private consideration before advancing it a further stage. Its progress was delayed by the necessity of invoking the help of counsel for the settlement of details, and by the death of Mr. T. Gardiner, the most prominent of Dr. Brown's lieutenants. Of this event Smith wrote: " What a sad thing Gardiner's death is. It is painful to have met a man for the last

¹ A hostile member of the libel committee.

time in contest, and to remember that he was irritated. Still, I don't think I overstepped what was necessary. But it is a lesson to be on one's guard. I suppose Dr. Brown must now step into the gap. I hope there will be no new delay."

The libel from the first reflected the uncertainty and perplexity of its framers, which became more marked as the document approached its final form. The Presbytery took over and adopted the allegations of "tendency" which had formed the substance of the observations of the College Committee, but which when expressed in the legal phraseology of the Form of Process lost much of their original cogency. Smith was very active in "looking up old cases and precedents, and in general settling a good line of action." He consulted many friends, both ecclesiastical and legal, among whom are prominently mentioned Mr. Gibson, Mr. Taylor Innes, Dr. Whyte, and above all Professor Candlish of Glasgow, who became day by day a more firm and affectionate ally. The result of these consultations is shown in a letter from Glasgow written about the middle of October :

"After looking up as much information as possible in Edinburgh, I came here yesterday forenoon.

"I found by looking through the old heresy cases, with the aid of Taylor Innes, Gibson, etc., that it will be unwise to plead any formal objections to the libel at this stage. Other libels, notably that against Wright of Borthwick, which is Moncreiff's specimen libel in his book, were extremely unsatisfactory in form and yet were allowed to stand.

"So I have resolved to make no objections *in limine*, and I have advised Salmond, while trying to get some of the most glaring faults corrected, if possible by consent, not to risk an appeal at this stage to the Commission."

This decision not to raise technical objections and to hasten the inevitable encounter on the merits of the case was no doubt a wise one, and shows, contrary to what was and is frequently said of him by his opponents,

how little disposed Smith was to take advantage of the law's delay. What did annoy and alarm him was the disposition to shirk the main issue of the heretical or non-heretical character of his writings, which had already been manifested in the "tendency" charge, and which about this time began to manifest itself in a new and even more insidious form. In all times of critical debate there is apt to emerge a body of weak and veering opinion which advocates a compromise unacceptable to either party to the real quarrel. Such compromises rarely fail to complicate and confuse the issues, and the good intentions of their proposers do not redeem the dangers which result from their interference. Something of the sort happened in the Aberdeen Presbytery, where some of Smith's least courageous supporters became alarmed at the show made by the enemy, and thought it necessary to conciliate public opinion by getting into the libel a charge of less gravity than the others, on which, if the worst came to the worst, Smith might, as they thought, be nominally condemned without any very serious consequences. Following this plan, which Smith rightly regarded as highly dangerous, they procured the insertion of a third general charge, which was really the "tendency" charge in an attenuated form, to the effect that "the neutrality" of Smith's "attitude" to the Holy Scriptures and "the rashness of his critical construction," "tended to disparage the Divine authority and inspired character of certain books." "Even a condemnation on such a charge," observed the defendant, "will give Begg, if he has a majority in the Assembly, a pretext for some violent action." The mischief was done, however, and the charge of "neutrality," to use a convenient short title, remained part of the libel.

The last months of the year were laborious and trying for Smith, in spite of his enforced relief from College work. He had at least one journey to London for the Revision Committee, and several others had to be undertaken for

the purpose of consulting his friends in the south. The case of Dr. Dods, who had been prosecuted in the Presbytery of Glasgow for the sermon on "Revelation and Inspiration" mentioned above, and the somewhat unsatisfactory and inconclusive course which it was taking, was another cause of anxiety to him at this time. He was already engaged in drawing up a formal answer to the libel, and the Presbytery proceedings at Aberdeen, where his brethren were wrangling over the verbal alterations in the libel suggested by the legal adviser to the Free Church, required constant watching. All this, as might have been expected, at times placed an excessive strain on Smith's health, and produced symptoms which Sir Lauder Brunton, whom he consulted while in London, traced directly to overwork in connection with the defence, to which Candlish and others of the progressive party, depressed by the Dods case, were looking forward with hope not unmingled with anxiety.

The preliminary stages were now, however, nearly over. The alterations proposed by counsel were, in at least one point, favourable to Smith's interests. In the major proposition, "contradiction" of the doctrine of immediate inspiration was substituted for "subversion," which had stood in the original draft. This after a struggle was accepted by the Presbytery, to the annoyance of Principal Brown and his party, who loudly complained that "it destroyed their libel and that they could not prove contradiction." The libel was corrected in this and other respects, and was duly transmitted to Smith on February 12, 1878.

It is now time to take a comprehensive survey of this remarkable and elaborate document. The major proposition, as it emerged from the long preliminary discussion, was unusually complicated. Its foundation was "the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth and Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as

set forth in the Holy Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith." It laid down as self-evident that (a) to deny this doctrine, (b) to tend to deny it, and (c) to adopt a neutral or not sufficiently cordial attitude regarding it, "are severally offences, especially in a Professor of Divinity, which call for such censure or other judicial sentence as may be found adequate."

These three alleged offences, which came to be called the first, second, and third general charges, formed the true substance of the major, but it was necessary for the prosecution to particularise more carefully. Accordingly they specified eight heretical opinions,¹ each of which might be considered under the three general aspects of denying, tending to deny, or not sufficiently asserting the Divine inspiration of the Bible, and which were to be found in Smith's incriminated writings. The authentic text of the libel has been printed in an Appendix to this volume, where it may be consulted by the curious; but in giving a clear enumeration of these opinions, which is necessary for the understanding of the subsequent course of the case, it will be profitless and confusing to preserve the interminable involutions of the ecclesiastical syllogism. The following summary omits nothing, it is hoped, but the verbiage of the original:

Primo.—The laws and ordinances of the Levitical system were in great part not instituted in the time of Moses.

Secundo.—Deuteronomy does not possess the character of a historical record which it claims, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age.

Tertio.—The sacred writers took freedoms and committed errors like other authors. They gave explanations that were unnecessary and incorrect; they put fictitious speeches into the mouths of their historical characters;

¹ As was to be expected, these opinions played a great part in the case, and became very familiar to every one concerned. They were currently—and almost affectionately—referred to as "Primo," "Secundo," etc., and we shall find it natural and convenient to follow this practice.

they gave inferences of their own for facts; they described arrangements as existing at a certain time which did not come into existence till long afterwards; they wrote under the influence of party spirit and for party purposes.

Quarto.—Certain books of Scripture are of the nature of fiction, and in literary merit they are not all on the same level.

Quinto.—The book of Canticles is devoid of any spiritual significance, and only presents a high example of virtue in a betrothed maiden.

Sexto.—The New Testament citations of Old Testament books by the titles then current cannot be regarded as conclusive testimony as to their actual authorship.

Septimo.—The predictions of the Prophets were due merely to so-called spiritual insight, and were not predictions in the sense of being direct supernatural revelations of events long posterior to the date at which they were uttered.

Octavo.—The reality of Angels is in the Bible a matter of assumption rather than of direct teaching, as also is their endowment with special goodness and insight analogous to human qualities.

The minor proposition followed with the complaint that "true it was and of verity that he, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith," had, in certain passages of certain writings acknowledged by him, expressed such opinions, and the conclusion inferred that he ought to suffer the appropriate pains and penalties. As Smith admitted the authorship of the articles complained of, the sole duty of the prosecution was to establish the "relevancy" of any or all of the charges. That is to say, they had to show that the eight opinions alleged to be heretical were in fact expressed in the passages of his writings to which reference was made in the minor, and that, so expressed, each or any of them contradicted, tended to contradict, or did not sufficiently assert, the fundamental doctrines set forth in the major proposition. As in most heresy cases, the contest began and ended with the question of relevancy. "Probation," that is,

the proof that the alleged acts had in fact been committed by the "panel,"¹ which is naturally the most important part of a criminal case, was necessarily an entirely formal and subordinate part of the proceedings.

While the libel was receiving its finishing touches, Smith was assiduously engaged in preparing his written answer.

"The defence is a very ticklish bit of work," he writes to his brother on the last day of January, "as one must make the faults of the libel very plain, and yet not irritate the people needlessly or embarrass one's own friends, or give a handle to misrepresentation. However, thanks to Gibson, Bryce, and Mackay, I think I have set the tendency charge in such a light that they will be afraid to persist in it. . . . Begg is in very ill odour since his approach to the Lord Advocate,² which will help my friends. But matters look very uncertain. Rainy is said to be studying the question of Scripture. Should he not have done so before?"

A week later he was able to announce to his father, "I have only now to put a sting in the tail of my answer in one or two sentences. . . . I feel much relieved! And I am not really so fagged as I was some days ago—indeed am remarkably well and vigorous." Shortly after this the "Answer to the Draft Form of Libel" was published in the form of a pamphlet of sixty-four pages. It is a spirited performance in the best and most dignified controversial style and in every way worthy of its author. The ability and good temper with which the accusations were answered will sufficiently appear from the summary and extracts which it is necessary to give here for the purpose of the narrative.

Smith began by waiving the points of form which he might have argued, having "no wish to embarrass a case already overloaded with technical difficulties." He proceeded to admit the general relevancy of the first general

¹ A term of the Scots Law signifying the accused party.

² With overtures towards a reunion with the Established Church.

charge of promulgating opinions contradictory of the Confession of Faith, and further that such contradiction need not be verbal. "I admit," he said, "that it is quite enough to infer Church censure that my statements should be proved to be logically inconsistent with what is taught in the Standards, by a chain of strict reasoning in which every link is complete."

As regards the two alternative charges of "tendency" and "neutrality" he stood in a different position. As regards "tendency" the exact meaning of the accusation was difficult to discover, but might be conjectured to be that the habit of thought fostered by the opinion complained of was likely to encourage the adoption of views not easily harmonised with the Standards, or with views popularly associated with the Standards, or "with views which have been sometimes used to support or illustrate the doctrines of the Standards. In short, the opinions libelled under this alternative are held to increase the difficulty of believing, and on that account it is proposed to suppress them by an act of judicial censure without inquiring whether they are true or false." He proceeded to prove from the explicit language of the Form of Process that it was illegitimate to call Church censures into action "by the simple will of a majority in order to put down opinions from which they apprehend some contingent danger to Faith."

"But if the charge is inconsistent with the constitution of the Church, it is also utterly opposed to the ordinary principles of justice. It is a charge which no reasonable and equitable Church court could recognise, because it is too vague and indeterminate to be brought to a clear issue. It is a charge which can hardly be repelled, because different men will attach different meanings to it. It falls under the dangerous and invidious class of constructive offences which have been banished from the law of constitutional countries as necessarily involving grave injustice to the accused, and placing the definition of what forms matter for charge not in any clear and ascertained constitution, but in what may happen to be

the opinion or feeling of those who are called at the time to be administrators of the law. Such a charge is dangerous to justice in any court, but it is doubly dangerous in a court of popular constitution.

“To admit before a popular court a charge which cannot be referred to fixed principles, which cannot be defined with precision, or made to mean the same thing to every one concerned, and which, therefore, must be ultimately measured by the feeling of the judges, is to obliterate the distinction between justice and the will of the majority, between unpopular opinions and offences. To allow such a charge to be brought before the Courts of the Church would offer direct encouragement to popular agitation as a means of controlling the course of justice, and place in the hands of any one who can gain the popular ear a ready instrument for repressing discussion, giving scope to injurious imputations, and practically working grave injustice. No Church which does not pretend to infallibility could venture to embarrass the administration of its judicial functions by admitting a charge which in principle nullifies every legal precaution against the miscarriage of justice, and makes it possible for a majority to inflict judicial censure on any fresh movement of Christian life in the Church.”

The rest of the argument is devoted to the consideration in detail of the eight specific charges of heresy. Smith's line of defence on these will be made clear in the ensuing narrative.

The Answer was widely circulated and met with much approval from Smith's friends. Mr. Gibson wrote :

“The impression produced by your defence outside seems to me excellent, and what must seem the best to you is the keen interest awakened in it in people who don't generally care for such questions; . . . from all neutral quarters you may rest assured that there is only one opinion as to the ability and good taste of your defence, and that is enough to rest on; for whatever comes of it you have done more to advance the light by this process than fifty years' lecturing would have accomplished, so you needn't grudge the time.”

His old teacher Lagarde sent his good wishes from

Göttingen, but the most remarkable communication he received was from Professor Ritschl. In the Robertson Smith case Ritschl saw Ritschlianism on its trial, and his letter is a striking and rather diverting illustration of the advantages of the onlooker who is not directly concerned in the game :

“. . . Your Answer is first rate, and I have greatly enjoyed the manner in which you light up the question of the danger to faith that may be involved in doctrines not themselves erroneous. I am glad too to learn that the Westminster divines give to the doctrine of inspiration a meaning so broad that we can be content with it. If it were compulsory to interpret the clauses of the Confession in accordance with the theological usage of the framers, the case would perhaps be otherwise. I wish you all success in your defence, but am not without anxiety on account of the πνεῦμα κατανύξεως¹ with which the majority of your Assembly last summer showed itself to be filled. My hope is that the leaders of your Church—a Church which, like every other, is open to secular influences—possess a proper respect for the public opinion of your country, which I am glad to see takes you under its protection.

“If you were right last year in calling me the ‘only begetter’² of the Aberdeen heresy, I wonder if it will be any consolation to you to know that a follower of my theology who belongs to the Moravian brotherhood has just been dismissed from his school. Against him also the allegation was made that the Bible cannot be God’s word, if it merely contains the early records of Christianity (as if the two branches of the disjunctive had any relation to each other!) and that his theology says nothing about the pre-existence of Christ, the Virgin birth, and so forth (as if one were bound to say everything that can be said—however irrelevantly—about any subject that comes up for treatment at all).”

The “adversary,” as Smith began about this time half-humorously to call the prosecution, could not be expected to take such a favourable view. Smith had renounced his opportunity of raising technical points.

¹ “Spirit of stupor,” Rom. xi. 8.

² *Urvater*.

His opponents seized the first opportunity of being litigious, and, at the very first meeting of Presbytery at which the libel came up in its finished form an attempt¹ was made to exclude the Answer, on the ground that it could not be admitted before the libel as a whole had been found relevant. This objection was not sustained, and the Answer was accepted by the Presbytery as a document in the case. The next manœuvre attempted by the prosecution was very severely criticised by Smith's friends, and cannot, on the most lenient estimate, be described as dictated by zeal for the discovery of the truth of the matters before the Court. Dr. Brown's policy, it appeared at the next meeting of Presbytery, was to take the case in bulk, to approach the libel, so to speak, in the impressionist spirit, and proceed to pronounce all the charges relevant without more ado, steadily and strenuously refusing to be committed to any of the details.

The first general engagement in the campaign was fought on this issue, and lasted until far into the night. Principal Brown was gradually driven back, and finally agreed to discuss particulars under each general charge. The discussion which preceded this very important decision need not detain us. Smith had a substantial majority with him in his claim that "the contention that it was only necessary to prove generally that he had been teaching against the Confession, without proving the particular and individual things which he had done contrary to the Confession, was one that, if adopted, would do him the gravest injustice, and make the whole course of legal process absolutely ridiculous," and no one will now be disposed to deny that, in deciding as they did, the majority acted like sensible and honourable men.

¹ This was due to the ingenuity of Mr. D. Mitchell, an Aberdeen advocate (solicitor), a lay member of the Presbytery, who had stepped into the position of chief assistant to Dr. Brown, which had recently been vacated by the death of the Rev. Mr. Gardiner (see above, p. 238).

The Presbytery next devoted a series of five sittings to the eight particulars under the first charge of contradicting the Confession of Faith, and in these debates the Defence, as Dr. Brown had been inclined to fear, proved victorious all along the line.

The discussion on *Primo*, which alleged unorthodox opinions on the subject of the Aaronic priesthood, very nearly went by default in Smith's favour. In his written Answer he had in substance stated that he had never doubted that Aaron was Priest before the Ark in the wilderness, or that in the wilderness the tribe of Levi had been consecrated to its special vocation. In view of this explanation, the discrepancy between what Smith had written and the charge which had been based upon it was so obvious that after *Primo* had been read by the clerk there was a long and awkward pause. As no one seemed ready to move the relevancy of the charge, Smith claimed that it dropped of itself. Dr. Brown in response to such a challenge proved equal to the occasion, and formally moved that it be held relevant. The brief discussion that followed gave Smith the opportunity of reiterating what he had said in the Answer, and of adding that he had always taught that the institution of the Levitical priesthood was under the direction of God Himself. A party division followed, in which the prosecution mustered their full strength, and the result was that the charge was declared irrelevant by eighteen to fourteen. On no subsequent occasion did the numbers voting in the majority fall below twenty-four, and only once again did the minority number so many as fourteen.

Secundo, the charge on which in the event the case was destined to turn, formed the burden of discussion at the next meeting. Smith's views of Deuteronomy had always been regarded as the head and front of his offending, and we have already seen how prominent a place they occupied in the writings and in the imagination

of "the adversary." The Answer had pointed out that the libel had, no doubt unintentionally, misrepresented his meaning. The article "Bible" by no means affirmed that Deuteronomy was a book of a professedly historical character, which did not in fact possess that character; on the contrary, it showed that the book, or rather part of the book (the legislative section of Deuteronomy), which at first sight might *seem* to be strictly historical, appeared on a closer consideration not to be so, and not to have been so intended by the author. Smith utterly repudiated the charge that he held the author guilty of making his book assume a character which it did not possess, and of doing so in the name of God. "The supposition," he had written, "that Deuteronomy contains a fraud put forth in the name of God is as abhorrent to me as it can possibly be to the authors of the libel." The whole character of the book excludes such a hypothesis.

"But, on the other hand, there are facts connected with the laws it contains which to me and many others seem to exclude the idea that it is simply the report of a speech by Moses containing no ordinance that he did not give to the Israelites. We cannot give up the Pentateuch as a book which from its very origin was a hopeless riddle, and therefore we must call in critical inquiry to help us to understand why one law-book contains precepts which not only appear inconsistent to us, but which in many cases must have been equally puzzling to the Hebrews themselves. Now the critical solution starts from the hint afforded by the peculiarity that Israel's statute-book is also a history. Suppose the case that, after the original laws had long been current in historical form, it became necessary to introduce, under adequate prophetic authority, some new ordinance to meet the changing conditions of political, social, and religious life. It cannot be said that this is an impossible case, or that legislation by prophets later than Moses is inconsistent with the spirit of the Old Testament dispensation. But how could such a law be added to a statute-book which had the peculiar shape of a history of Israel in the wilderness? Apparently, says criticism, the only way to make the new law an integral part of the

old legislation was to throw it into such a form as if it had been spoken by Moses, and so incorporate it with the other laws. Of course, if this plan was adopted the statute-book ceased to be pure literal history. The ascription of a law to Moses could no longer be taken literally, but could only indicate that the law was as much to be observed as if it came from Moses, and that it was a legitimate addition to his legislation. Such a method of publishing laws would not be free from inconvenience ; but the actual unquestioned inconveniences of the Pentateuch, when measured by our ideas of a law-book, are so great that this cannot prove the thing impossible. On the other hand, there is no deceit implied in the use of an artificial literary form proceeding on a principle well understood, and so it is a pure question of literary and historical evidence whether the Hebrews did at one time recognise and use such a principle. There is one piece of direct historical evidence which seems to show that they did, for in Ezra ix. 11, a law is quoted from Deuteronomy vii., expressed in words that throw it back into the Wilderness period, and yet the origin of this law is ascribed not to Moses but to the Prophets."

To the argument which, in view of its importance, has been here given at some length Principal Brown and his friends vouchsafed no articulate reply, but contented themselves with a formal motion of relevancy. The victory of the Defence was secured by a party, the members of which took up the legitimate but comfortable position that they disagreed with the views complained of but did not believe them to be contrary to the Confession. No one could be found bold enough to sustain the position, which had been defended by Dr. Begg and repudiated by Dr. Rainy in the last Assembly, that Smith had deliberately represented Deuteronomy as a product of fraud and personation, and the majority for toleration rose to six. Dr. Brown, however, still felt that the Divine Authority of Deuteronomy had been compromised by the article "Bible," and he recorded that opinion in a dissent which practically repeated the words of the rejected charge.

On *Tertio*, the evidence for which was drawn entirely from the article "Chronicles," the allegations of lowering the character of inspired writings by imputing human inaccuracies and unveracities to their authors, utterly broke down. Dr. Brown admitted that he did not in his conscience believe that contradiction of the Confession of Faith was clearly proved under this head, and as a solution of the casuistical difficulty in which he found himself he proposed not to vote at all. Smith pointed out that in the circumstances the Principal was bound to vote for the rejection of *Tertio* as irrelevant, to which Dr. Brown, according to the shorthand note, made the rather curious reply, "I beg to say that I shall claim my liberty to act as I please . . . my mind is in a state in which I do not choose to go into the distinction that has been drawn by Professor Smith. And allow me, when you are insisting on this line, to remark that you shall not have my vote."

The results of these controversial days, and the progress which the views represented by the article "Bible" and the "Answer to the Draft Form of Libel" were making out of doors, were very satisfactory to Smith and his friends.

"We have had a *very good day*," he observes, in a letter to his mother written after some hard-fought sederunt, and perhaps immediately after the ignominious collapse of Dr. Brown which has just been described. ". . . The *Free Press* will give you details. I am tired but well. . . . I continue to get very nice letters, etc. My Answer is in the second edition—first edition 500 copies exhausted same day. We have much to be thankful for,—even to the bitterness of Brown and Mitchell, which is helpful in every way. Papa comes out at midday to-morrow. Good night! Keep cheery, and come in with Papa on Tuesday."

The success he had already had in convincing the Presbytery of the confessional soundness of the Higher Criticism made it easier for Smith to take a conciliatory

tone, and in the debate on *Tertio* he took the Court so far into his confidence as to tell them of the cancelled paragraph (see facsimile, p. 180) which he had at first intended to prefix to the article "Bible," and in which he had stated his distinct dogmatic views on the point now raised. He pointed out that in that paragraph he had assumed the Bible to be a record of Revelation, and had stated the ground of that assumption, formally opposing the contention of the Tübingen school, whose hypothesis is that everything which is supernatural is untrue, and explaining that, while he acknowledged the Divine characteristics of Holy Scripture, he would in the course of the article treat solely of its literary aspects.

The prosecutors were of course quite entitled not to allow this important declaration to influence their judgment, and, in spite of the growing hopelessness of their case before the Presbytery, they went on manfully to further defeats on *Quarto* and *Quinto*, for which one meeting was found sufficient. On the former charge Smith had no difficulty in showing that it was no matter of faith that the book of Job was throughout a record of literal fact, and no disparagement to the canonical standing of books of Scripture to say that writers and copyists used freedom in modifying and rearranging texts. Was it denied, for instance, that some one composed Psalm cviii. out of Psalms lvii. and lx.? These things did not interfere with the perfect adequacy of the Bible as a rule of faith and life, and they had no more right to stumble at them than at the errors of grammar, inconsecutive sentences, and other human imperfections which Scripture, with all its Divine perfection, contained. If he had separated the Book of Daniel from the prophetic writings he had done no more than is done in the Hebrew Canon itself, where the book is placed, not among the Prophets but in the Hagiographa.

There was a certain languor, and perhaps also a certain delicacy, in the discussion of *Quinto*, the burden of which

was the precise construction which should be placed upon the Song of Solomon. The majority declined to associate themselves with the mover of the relevancy of the charge (Dr. Longmuir) in being "shocked" at the "account" which Professor Smith had given of Canticles, and *Quinto* was summarily dismissed.

Sexto failed because, while it charged Smith with opinions which contradicted or ignored testimony given in the Old Testament, and also that of our Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament, on the subject of the authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures, the prosecution were unable, on being challenged, to quote any passages containing such testimony, nor did the extracts from Smith's writings contain any such opinions as were alleged.

Septimo, which dealt with alleged disparagement of prophecy by "representing its predictions as arising merely from so-called spiritual insight," and by excluding prediction altogether in the sense of revelation of future events, was a charge of considerable importance. The Answer, after setting forth the three passages of the Confession of Faith which relate to the subject, had briefly summarised what had been Smith's own uniform teaching, and had appealed to the Presbytery to "judge whether these statements could have been penned by one who was not in full accord with the doctrine of the Confession." When the libel spoke of representing the predictions as arising merely from so-called spiritual insight, based on the certainty of God's righteous purpose, these were not his expressions. He did not say that the predictions were based on the certainty of God's purpose, but that the encouragements and threatenings in connection wherewith prophecy took a predictive shape were so based. Again, he did not speak of "spiritual insight," much less of "merely so-called spiritual insight." But he did speak of "spiritual intuition"; and that for two reasons,—because in the Old Testament the prophetic

word is called *Chazôn* (חֲזוֹן) a "seeing" or intuition, and because this intuition, as its object is supernatural, is necessarily spiritual. "As for the charge of excluding prediction in the sense of direct supernatural revelation of events long posterior to the prophet's own time, it is irrelevant; for the Confession makes no distinction between direct and indirect prediction, and does not speak of any predictions save those foreshadowing Christ, which I have amply acknowledged."

In moving the relevancy of this charge Dr. Brown once more revealed the impotence of the prosecution by an attempt to evade the issue as defined by the legal adviser to the Church and accepted by the Court. He explained in the course of his speech that he was now allowing himself a certain judicial latitude in his interpretation of the word "contradict," as he thought that "subvert" would have far better expressed what he believed to be the real nature of the offence. His seconder, Mr. Bannatyne,¹ improved on this and explicitly declared that he maintained that every vote under the first general charge was given under covert of and in accordance with the complaint of the minority against the changing of the word "subvert" into the words "contradict or are opposed to." For this statement Mr. Bannatyne was very properly ruled out of order by the Moderator, and the usual majority for the Defence was recorded.

The last particular, *Octavo*, related to Smith's offence against the received doctrine of Angels. It will be remembered that, dear as this charge was to Dr. Brown and his friends, very little could be made of it by the College Committee. The Presbytery proceedings were destined to dispose of it finally. In the Answer Smith had pointed out that the libel ought rather to have accused him of holding that the Old Testament rather takes the reality of angels for granted than makes it matter of direct teaching. Nay, more, the authors of the libel might have observed

¹ Now Professor Bannatyne of the Free Church of Scotland.

that in the Confession itself the creation and reality of angels are taken for granted, and do not form matter of direct teaching. Again, when he is blamed for saying that the ascription of certain endowments to angels appears (viz. in the Old Testament) as a popular assumption, not as a doctrine of revelation, he is merely making a statement of fact. The allusions to an analogy between the goodness and wisdom of men, and these qualities as displayed in a special way by angels, occur in speeches of Achish the Philistine, the woman of Tekoah, and Mephibosheth,—not one of whom, surely, was a mouthpiece of revelation. The relevancy of *Octavo* was rejected by twenty-five to five, the finding of the Court being that *Octavo* was irrelevant under the first of the major, inasmuch as the contents of that particular and of the corresponding extracts in the minor, when properly understood, are in entire consonance with the Scripture and the Confession of Faith.

Thus the Presbytery in open court, discussing the libel in detail, arrived on every point at the conclusion that Professor Smith's writings contained no heresy—the same result as had been reached by the College Committee sitting *in camera* on Dr. Young's ten accusations.

However satisfactory this result might be to the victorious party, they had always before them the unpleasant prospect that all the charges would be tried again by the Synod of Aberdeen, and ultimately in all probability by the General Assembly, sitting as courts of review, with the exception of *Octavo*, on which Dr. Brown and his party did not feel themselves in a position to appeal. Besides this there remained for the consideration of the Presbytery the second and third general charges of "tendency" and "neutrality," under each of which—if the endurance of the brethren held out—it would be competent to discuss all over again each of the eight particulars. The extracts from the Answer, given earlier in this chapter, will have enabled the reader to take the

measure of the fairness and propriety of these charges. Smith, as we have also seen, flattered himself that he had put the "tendency" charge in such a light as to make it impossible to persist in it, while the accusation of "neutrality" seemed hardly fit to be taken seriously either by the judges or by the Defence. "Tendency," however, was now the best hope of the adversary, and even "neutrality" was still thought good enough to keep in reserve.

After the rejection of *Octavo* the Presbytery adjourned till March 12, and Dr. Brown spent the interval in making technical appeals to the Commission of Assembly on points of procedure which gave him an opportunity of ventilating his grievance about the substitution of "contradict" for "subvert," and other matters. The result of these proceedings was, however, quite inconclusive, and, as they had no effect whatever on the progress of the case, the reader will no doubt be content to pass them by.

When the Presbytery met on March 12, the conflict was renewed with great vigour on the general issue of "tendency." The first point which came up, viz. whether the libel was "alternative" or "cumulative," was settled in Smith's favour after a somewhat sharp passage between him and Mr. David Mitchell, in which the latter had the worse, and it was decided that the Defendant, in the least favourable event, could be convicted only on *one* of the three general charges. The meeting then passed to the main issue of debate.

As regards the handling of the charge of "publishing and promulgating opinions of a dangerous and unsettling tendency" the Court occupied quite a new position. The Defendant, as he himself had said, could not but admit the general relevancy of the first charge against him of teaching contrary to the standards of the Church. He had been acquitted by the Presbytery, on the ground that it had not been brought home to him that his teaching was of that character. As we have explained, he had

taken up quite a different attitude towards the charge of "tendency," and had denied that it was a charge which could properly be brought against him at all. The discussion, therefore, which followed was on the question whether the second alternative in the major could stand, and the proceedings have a different and more concentrated interest than those which we have been obliged to follow at length in the preceding pages.

Relevancy was moved in a motion in support of which it was argued with some plausibility, not only that a high authority—Sir Henry Moncreiff—had declared it competent for the Church to frame a libel against a minister or a professor for *anything* which it thinks deserves to be interfered with ("his teaching may be dangerous to the Church, injurious to its doctrines, compromising or misrepresenting"), but further, that Professor Smith himself had asked that all the complaints against him should be reduced to the form of a libel. The counter-motion was brought forward by the Rev. Mr. Yule. In its original form it was perhaps of somewhat evil omen: for it ran, "that the Presbytery find the second charge irrelevant because 'tendency' is not a matter that can be disposed of under the libel, and while it is their opinion that a dangerous and unsettling tendency does exist in some of Professor Smith's writings . . . they consider that until the libel is disposed of it is not competent for them to proceed by way of admonition with regard to this 'tendency.'" But after a brief conversation the mover agreed to limit himself to the negative part of his motion to the effect that "tendency" was not a proper subject for a libel. At this point the debate was adjourned. In the interval Smith writes to his father:

"I am glad we got an adjournment, for we could not have done justice to the matter to-day. I shall be much better of a day's rest and hope to give a good account of the adversary. But the thing is gradually becoming sickening in its tediousness.

“ I hope you got well home and are now feeling more at ease. Don't be uneasy about me. Whatever the Presbytery may decide, the debate will do much to open men's minds, and perhaps it may in the long run be better to have the discussion kept open—as will be the case if Yule's motion is defeated. . . .”

At the adjourned debate Smith delivered an elaborate argument showing that this was a new kind of charge, and that, if it was to be allowed as a precedent, they would never again see a charge of heresy without this alternative. The difficulties thus raised would be enormous, for, as a man was never charged with heresy unless there was some peculiarity in his opinions, every one who was offended by these peculiarities would be enabled to vote against him on the alternative charge,—a state of things which no Church could possibly contemplate. The official reply was that the charge was perfectly definite and fair. It was obvious at once, for example, how the new theory of Deuteronomy was dangerous to the doctrine of Inspiration by suggesting the idea of fraud. The result showed how half-hearted had been the support of some who had voted him innocent of heresy, for, on a division, Smith found himself defeated by one vote. On this occasion, and on this occasion only in the course of the proceedings, he took part in the division himself, and he did so, as he made clear, in order that he might be entitled to dissent and complain to the Synod of Aberdeen against the finding of the Presbytery. This he did in due form, and he also took another step with a view to future events. The Presbytery, having held that “ tendency ” was in itself a proper charge, had now to consider whether on any or all of the eight particulars this charge could be brought home to the accused. Smith, therefore, requested an adjournment for a fortnight in order that he might have time to prepare a statement with reference to the eight points embraced under the “ tendency ” charge. Despite some demur on the part of Dr. Brown and others it was agreed to adjourn further consideration

of the libel till after the meeting of Synod, and to allow Professor Smith to lay the statement to which he had referred before the Court.

Smith was by no means dismayed at this first reverse.

“ I suspect,” he wrote in a hasty note to Keig immediately after the sitting, “ that, after all, the result of yesterday’s work will be for the best. So narrow a majority is not enough . . . in an important constitutional question. There will be strong popular feeling in my favour, and now the Presbytery is bound to go into the whole scientific evidence before condemning me, and I have a month to prepare a new pamphlet on these lines.

“ I feel very well to-day and wonderfully fresh, while I get daily proofs of growing public sympathy in various quarters. . . . I propose to take a box of books next week and go to Tullichewan.”

Meanwhile the tenor of his life was practically unbroken. He preached frequently, and carried on his literary work much as usual. It was in these very days that he completed and sent to press his article “ Eve ” for the *Encyclopædia*, though he was obliged to abandon the article “ Ezra,” which he had promised to write, in view of the new defence of his critical views which had to be prepared at such short notice. Among the “ daily proofs of growing public sympathy ” was a letter from Dean Stanley thanking him for a copy of the Answer. In the course of this letter Dr. Stanley observed :

“ I quite concur in your general contention that all questions of literary criticism are wholly outside the Confession of Faith—not because the authors shared the enlightened views of Luther and Calvin on the authorship of the sacred books, but because these questions did not enter into their consideration. I do not feel the same assurance about Angelology and Prophecy—partly because I do not gather exactly what your own views are, and partly because the legal question can always be raised, whether these topics are in the Confession treated as primary or as incidental.

“ The most obvious danger, it seems to me, in your

path is the sentence you quote from the Form of Process. That looks to me almost like a legal recognition of the claim which the 'orthodox' or 'popular' theologians of all churches are always trying (and happily in vain) to establish—viz. the pretension to insist on their own interpretation of the Bible, and their own acts or usages, as overriding the authorised liberties of the Church."

The Dean ended by expressing his good wishes for an issue which would tend to the larger freedom "by which alone the reasonable faith of the next generation can be secured." Similar hopes were expressed by Smith's distinguished acquaintance, Sir William Huggins,¹ one of whose many interests had led him to make some study of Hebrew literature in the original tongue.

"I am sorry to find," wrote Sir William, "there was a small majority against you as to tendency—that is, if certain things are proved. Painful in the extreme as this persecution must be to you, I think that you may have the satisfaction of feeling that the attempt to smother truth and a spirit of research will do more probably to advance your views than even your own writings. . . . I think David must have been before a presbytery, for I do not think any circumstances so well as those in which on several occasions you have been placed could have suggested his lament: אַבְרָם בָּשָׁן כְּתֹרֵבֵי פָעוּ עָלַי פִּיִּדָם" ²

The Free Synod of Aberdeen met on April 9 and 10, and after all parties had agreed to refer to the Assembly the appeals on the charges which had been decided in Smith's favour by the Presbytery, the House proceeded to discuss the question of the general relevancy of the "tendency" charge. The principal contribution to the debate was Smith's own speech. He repeated the main points already urged upon the Presbytery against a charge which placed the Church in the curious position of condemning opinions she had not refuted. If the

¹ Sir William Huggins, O.M., K.C.B., the illustrious astronomer, President of the Royal Society from 1900 to 1905.

² Psalm xxii. 12, 13 (E.V.): "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round; they gaped upon me with their mouths."

existing standards of the Church did not exclude such opinions, steps should be taken by means of the legislative powers possessed by the Church to supply the defect. "Why," he asked, "is that not sufficient? I can imagine a practical reason. I can imagine that it is thought possible that the Church may be willing to condemn one man for an opinion, but that it will not be willing to add to its Confession clauses which may drive hundreds of its office-bearers and thousands of its members out of the Church." This was received with great enthusiasm by his supporters, and it appears that the members of the public attending the sitting were so demonstrative in their expressions of approval that the Moderator had to address a reproof to the galleries.

"Surely," Smith concluded, "it has always been the principle of Protestantism that every man is bound to judge for himself of the Word of God. No doubt, if by judgment for myself of the Word of God, I come to something which is at plain issue with the constitution of this Church, then there are before me two courses—one is to lay my divergence before the Church and endeavour to prove that I am right and the previous confession wrong, and if I fail to do so it will be my duty to seek for myself another Communion. Here is a very different thing from a process which would enable the Church at any moment, without any principle to refer to, to stop the exercise of the inalienable right of every believer,—the right to search the Scriptures."

Dr. Brown, who had a very mixed reception from the meeting, and others representing the prosecution, again developed their case, and the discussion ended with a brilliant debating speech in reply by the Defendant, who sought to show that the precedents relied on by his opponents were inapplicable to the circumstances of his case. He so far succeeded that the finding of the Court below was exactly reversed, the Synod sustaining his appeal by a majority of one. Notice was thereupon given of the inevitable protest and appeal to the Assembly.

The immediate result of this finding was for the time

being to spare the Presbytery the discussion of the eight particulars under the "tendency" charge.

The situation at this moment is well summed up in a letter to his brother Charles in India, in the course of which Smith writes :

" . . . For the last three weeks or so I have been very busy with a new defence of the truth of my views in answer to the charge of 'tendency'—as opinions are clearly not dangerous in tendency in a censurable sense unless they are false. However, as you will see from the papers, that is now of no use: for the Synod has reversed the Presbytery's finding and found 'tendency' an inherently irrelevant charge. This is a great advantage; for everything now comes up to the Assembly as having been given in the first instance in my favour. Everything, at least, except Laidlaw's absurd charge (of 'neutrality') which I hope will be easily thrown out. Now I don't think the Assembly will venture to find direct heresy in my views. Then at worst they can only find 'tendency' relevant in the abstract and send the details back to us, when we may succeed in throwing them out. But from some lectures of Rainy's in London I suspect (taking other indications with me) that he will oppose the 'tendency' charge. If anything is done against me I think it will be in a more indirect way, viz. by forbidding me to teach certain views, on grounds of expediency, without settling any doctrinal principle. Moncreiff, on the other hand, is keen for the 'tendency' charge. . . .

"I must now consider what to do with my second defence, which is partly printed. I think I'll probably go on with it for the information of the Church."

This plan was carried out; the Additional Answer¹ was published in the beginning of May, and occupies an important place in the remarkable series of published vindications of the Higher Criticism which Smith issued in the course of the case. The finding of the Synod had for the time rendered it unnecessary for him to

¹ The full title is: *Additional Answer to the Libel with some account of the evidence that parts of the Pentateuchal Law are later than the time of Moses.*

reply in detail to the "tendency" charge, but the Presbytery could not withhold its consent to the publication of the new Defence which, from every point of view, tended to clear the issues, and to simplify the difficult task of deciding what was to be the Church's final attitude towards the Higher Criticism.

No arguments which were at variance with his previous acquittal on the charge of contradicting the standards of the Church could, Smith contended, be admitted under the general charge of tendency. The impugned opinions classified under the familiar eight heads from *Primo* to *Octavo* must be refuted on their merits, or at least on grounds other than their alleged inconsistency with the Confession of Faith. Careful attention must therefore be given to all arguments favourable to the critical opinions in question, nor will it be enough to say, after examining them, that these arguments do not appear on all points to be quite conclusive.

"It cannot be proposed to stifle historical inquiry because it has not yet reached its ultimate goal." It is the duty of the court to condemn no opinion as dangerous until it has been demonstrated to be false, and to master the whole scientific evidence for each opinion before venturing to assert that it is untrue, and in its untruth dangerous to faith. In almost every case, he proceeds, it will be found that the offence which has been given by his writings, and the dangerous tendency which is thought to appear in them, are not due to anything in his positive critical construction, but merely to the fact that he rejects old views as inadequate. He has said, for example, that in his opinion there are insuperable difficulties in the old view that all the Pentateuchal laws are of Mosaic date. He proposes, therefore, to show the court that the traditional views which he has surrendered as inadequate are themselves really encumbered with difficulties so grave that it cannot be safe—nay, it is highly dangerous—for the Church to pin

her faith to their accuracy, or to forbid her members to aim, with such scientific helps as they can command, at the construction of some more consistent account of the Biblical facts. The remainder of the Additional Answer accordingly (some seven-eighths of the whole pamphlet) is devoted to the defence of this thesis; considerations of space lead him to confine his discussion to *Primo* and *Secundo*; but it is added that the other six particulars may be discussed later if the course of the case makes this necessary.

Many scholars expressed themselves in terms of warm admiration of the clearness and force with which these arguments were set forth. Professor Diestel of Tübingen, for example, by no means an unbelieving critic, sent his best wishes for the complete victory of the righteous cause. He had read the Additional Answer, or rather devoured it at once, with the intensest interest.

"You marshal your evidence," he observes, "with a clearness and keenness that *must* produce a deep impression. Some of it is new to me, at least in the form in which it is presented. I cannot remember, for example, to have met anywhere before your remarks (with which I entirely agree) on the bodyguard of the Temple according to Ezekiel, or the conception of *ger*, or the *ma'alot* of the altar. And what you say on the law of tithes is new and most apposite, especially in this illuminating combination."

Smith had not been mistaken in his estimate of the effect likely to be produced on the Presbytery by Dr. Laidlaw's charge of "neutrality." It came up for discussion on April 16, and after a short debate was dismissed by a majority of 27 to 9, and finally disappeared from the case. Smith wrote laconically to Keig that the case was finished and the "adversary very disheartened." It was by no means finished, as soon appeared, but the party in the Presbytery which had been responsible for the "neutrality" charge thought the moment opportune for an attempt to take a short way with the whole

question of Professor Smith and his heresies. It was proposed during his absence in London, where the Revision Committee were "having a very dull time with the unintelligible minor prophets," in the first place that the Presbytery should drop the appeals against the Synod's finding on the general charge of "tendency," but that they should express the opinion that there are many statements in Professor Smith's writings which in their mode of expression and in their bearing on opinions generally accepted in the Church have given deep offence and caused wide uneasiness, and which afford sufficient ground for conference with Professor Smith and admonition by the Presbytery or other competent judicatory of the Church.

This proposal, which is interesting as the first of several similar endeavours to get out of the increasing difficulties of the case, was discussed at some length and with some acrimony. The substantial result was that both parties agreed that the time was not yet come for such a summary solution, and the matter was left to the Assembly which was now imminent.

We have already seen that a rumour had been current to the effect that Dr. Rainy had been studying the subject ; and we have it on good authority that he had expressed himself to a relative as feeling that he was "bound to give any help he could to people's thoughts about it." His efforts resulted in four lectures, delivered at the theological college of the English Presbyterian Church in London, "to an audience of young men, belonging to various professions and walks of life," and afterwards published in a small volume entitled *The Bible and Criticism* (London, 1878). We are at the outset warned, with much frankness, not to expect too much. "Some readers may naturally think that the subject invites a historical sketch of what criticism has been" (one might add, some account of what it now is). But any such hopes are doomed to disappointment. For,

it is explained, the story "could not be told without constantly expressing, or implying, a judgment on the merits of critical opinions . . . while it would have been impossible within the limits to convey an intelligent apprehension of the grounds of the judgment." Moreover, a modest doubt is becomingly enough expressed as to the competency of the tribunal.

"Criticism is not my department. . . . [Its] questions interest us all. I, like others, have attended to them as much as I could. But on many of them my judgment must be provisional. I have not had time to master the accomplishments, or form the habits of mind, which justify a man to speak as an expert, conversant at first hand with all the kinds of evidence adduced in connection with these questions."

Very characteristic is the stipulation that the lecturer is not to be understood as deciding questions which are at present pending in the courts of his church. When in the course of his exposition he dissents from an opinion, he does not thereby decide whether it ought to be a forbidden opinion; *when he recognises an opinion as in general compatible with faith, he does not thereby decide whether it should be free to men to teach it in his own church.*

It does not appear from the lectures themselves what at the time of their delivery were Principal Rainy's views as to the various counts of the libel from *Primo* to *Octavo*; we know, however, from other sources that he was averse from any binding pronouncement on the subject, and, as we have just read, Smith seems to have gathered that he was not likely to press the "tendency" charge. As his biographer remarks, he "leaves the argument in a balance." At one time he seems to be with all his heart accepting the teaching of Rothe, Ritschl, and Smith himself, to the effect that what criticism teaches us to look for in the Bible is simply the history of redemption, the story being thrown into any form that

“. . . makes sincere history for the object in view ; not perhaps into forms that would be counted sincere or exact history for some totally different object. For the one thing the Bible has to say of a man may give us a very different impression about him from that which we should have if we had before us twenty other facts which might have been told. The Bible, whether or not free from minor inaccuracies, at least does not undertake to guarantee us against false impressions about them.”

Much of this could hardly have been better or more strongly said by the heretic himself. On the other hand, Dr. Begg had to be consoled, and his consolation consisted in such exhortations as these: “ Let a man stand by what he knows, especially what he knows in his inward experience. . . . Let us never undervalue the instinct of the believing mind which rises up against anything that threatens to rob it of its treasure.” “ Some of the things which criticism says, or at least which are said in its name, create in various degrees discomfort ;” and solicitude is naturally awakened when “ views claim acceptance of which it is feared that they make dangerous concessions or approximations to the enemy, that they virtually give up the Christian position or some essential part of it.” However, in the end, those who are tempted to be impatient when criticism comes forward with assertions based on microscopic points that have no apparent connection with edification, and “ takes liberties with things that the Christian heart delights to reverence,” are frankly reminded that “ though questions will arise, and processes of proving will take place, which the devout mind would feel it more comfortable to avoid,” yet nevertheless it is “ part of (their) duty to knowledge to investigate whatever can be investigated.”

Before giving an account of the Assembly proceedings it is once more necessary to take a brief survey of the precise situation of the doctrinal quarrel. The perspicacious reader will by this time have realised that under

the first general charge of contradicting the standards of the Church, the most vital particular, and the one on which the most dangerous misconceptions were current, was *Secundo*, under which Smith was accused of representing Deuteronomy as a professed record of contemporary history which did not really possess that character, but was deliberately made to assume it at a date long subsequent to that of its ostensible composition. At the risk of being tedious we again venture to restate briefly the truth about this.

There are three possible views of Deuteronomy, of which the first is that it was all written by Moses. The second is that Moses wrote none of it, and that the book is a literary forgery perpetrated for more or less pious purposes, probably by Hilkiyah the High Priest towards the close of the seventh century before Christ. According to this view Hilkiyah, anticipating the ingenuity of the authors of the forged Decretals, put off his handiwork on his young master King Josiah as the genuine production of Moses, and supported his story by a pretended discovery of this treasure of antiquity in the Temple where, according to his account, it had lain hid during the political troubles of previous reigns. Smith opposed both these theories. He maintained that the author of Deuteronomy was neither Moses nor Hilkiyah. He believed *ex animo*, and frequently stated his belief, in a system of Mosaic legislation directly given by God. He believed further that the development of this legislation, though it began with Moses, did not end with him, but was continually being revealed to a divinely appointed and divinely inspired order of prophets who from time to time, *under the guidance of the Holy Spirit*, adapted the Mosaic system to contemporary needs, following out a genuine evolution of Mosaic ideas. In so doing they used a convention, legitimate and recognised in all ancient literatures, but more particularly in the literatures of the East, and incorporated their new and necessary ordinances with

the history of the first institution of the law of Moses, presenting them as part and parcel of that law.

The uncritical piety of this period—of which Dr. Begg was the most prominent, and Sir Henry Moncreiff the most respectable representative—held, or professed to hold, the first of the views which we have just stated. Even by this school of thought, however, difficulties had been felt in maintaining throughout the Mosaic view, and various orthodox expedients—such as the recognition of a recension of the Pentateuch by Ezra—had already been resorted to for the purpose of solving such problems as those raised by the account which is given of the death of Moses himself in Deuteronomy, ch. xxxiv. This compromising temper was, however, emphatically disowned by those who were responsible for the agitation which had been conducted since the publication of the article “Bible.” Their position as accusers did not perhaps require them to make explicit and reasoned statements of their own opinions, but it did place them under a very strict obligation to understand and do justice to the views held by the accused. It cannot be denied by any candid inquirer that they signally failed to discharge this obligation. In spite of Smith’s frequent and lucid explanations of his own position, and of his vehement and reiterated repudiations of that held by Kuenen and others, they persisted in representing his view of Deuteronomy as the view which presented that book as a product of fraud and personation. The standard of intelligence necessary to avoid this error is not exorbitantly high, and, as persistence in it became the main support of the prosecution, it can only be described as due to an intellectual dishonesty which was only half unconscious. Whatever its origin, we deliberately say here that the identification of Smith’s position with the position of those who held and hold that Deuteronomy was fabricated by Hilkiyah was neither more nor less than a gross perversion of the truth.

Such perversions are not by any means uncommon in history, and the orthodox will no doubt philosophically regard them as divinely permitted for the confusion of heretics. Smith unfortunately failed, like most heretics, to realise how great was the respect for this peculiar conception of sincerity which the Free Church demanded of her servants. The point is admirably put by Dr. Carnegie Simpson in his *Life of Principal Rainy*.

“If the Church,” he observes (i. 314), “was taken by surprise by Professor Smith’s views because they seemed to shake her faith in the Bible, not less was Professor Smith taken by surprise by the way they were received, because it seemed to shake his faith in the Church as a body ready to consider any new light on truth. . . . This feature of Professor Smith’s mind has not been sufficiently appreciated beyond his own circle of friends. That undoubted inconsiderateness of temper to which I alluded . . . prevented many people from doing justice to it. It was one of the purest and most interesting qualities of his mental character. . . .”

Smith’s surprise that the Church should condemn views which were at least so far true that she could not prove them either to be erroneous or in contradiction with her creed, was a new and disconcerting feature. We shall see that it became so displeasing even to those who substantially admitted he was right, that they combined with the ignorant multitude in declaring him to be “impossible” and fit only to be driven into the wilderness.

These, however, in their completeness were later developments. On the eve of the Assembly of 1878 Smith with his habitual overconfidence seems to have regarded the charge of contradiction as being finally disproved, and his anxieties centred in the charge of “tendency,” the vagueness of which gave the utmost scope to his accusers.

He knew by this time that Sir Henry Moncreiff and also Dr. Wilson, Sir Henry’s colleague as Clerk of Assembly, held to the opinion “that tendency would serve in lack

of a better charge," and that "this might infer deprivation though not deposition." But he "hoped that the two old gentlemen might not persuade the Church," "and at any rate," as he observed in a letter to his brother, "unless the Assembly lynch me, we gain a year, which ensures victory." On the other hand, Dr. Rainy's lectures did not forbid the hope that his powerful influence would be cast on Smith's side. How far this expectation was realised will now appear.

In 1878 the General Assembly of the Free Church met at Glasgow on Thursday May 23, and sat until Tuesday June 4; it devoted the whole of Monday (May 27), the whole of Tuesday (May 28), and a long sitting on Friday (May 31) to the Smith case, which also came before it in certain matters of detail on Saturday June 1 and Monday June 3. The first business was, of course, to take up the appeals from the inferior courts. It was decided almost at once that it would not be advisable at the stage which had now been reached to alter the wording of the libel. Dr. Brown therefore failed in his endeavour to have "subversion" of the standards substituted for "contradiction" in the first general charge. He was no more fortunate in his attempt, which he renewed with remarkable pertinacity, to have the libel taken in bulk, and the appeals were therefore considered *seriatim*.

The House then proceeded to hear the appeal on *Primo*, and Smith had another opportunity of repudiating the charge that he had ever denied the divine institution of the Aaronic priesthood. The Assembly, before coming to judgment on this particular, resolved to hear the pleadings on *Secundo* also; these extended over the whole of Monday evening, and Smith once more expounded with great fulness his view on the authorship of Deuteronomy. It was not an opinion which he expected would that night, or next day, or even for a long time, be commonly adopted. It was one which always would to some extent be the peculiar property of scholars, and which, therefore, any

Professor would feel it his duty to put in a very subordinate place. He would never feel it to be part of his work for the Church to give such critical work an important place in his teaching, which was mainly directed to prepare the students for their pulpit work. In conclusion, he said that the present controversy would be an easy one if the Church would say that there was to be no criticism whatsoever. If it was the Church's opinion that they should accept traditional views without inquiry—that they were not in anywise to go against tradition as to authorship—then, of course, the question was a very short and easy one. But he was quite sure that was not the opinion of the Church. It was now admitted by all that a plurality of documents in the Pentateuch might safely be admitted, and the same arguments which led to this conclusion seemed to the vast majority of European scholars to lead, in the very same way, and without any rationalistic assumptions, to the conclusion that different parts of the legislation had different authors and different dates. It would be a serious matter for the Church to say that one kind of criticism was to be allowed and another forbidden, and in laying down such hard and fast lines it would be necessary for the Church to be cautious, lest haply, in fencing the boundaries of truth, she might be found to have excluded some portions of truth; and all truth was precious, whether reached by revelation or by the exercise of faculties which God Himself had given for our use.

The House then proceeded to judgment on the first particular, and on the motion of Sir Henry Moncreiff the appeal was dismissed without a division, the mover remarking that "that part of the libel had, to say the least, not been well drawn"; in fact, it had represented Smith as having said what he had not said. The hour was now late, and before the House rose, Sir Henry Moncreiff gave notice that on the morrow he would on *Secundo* move as follows:

“The General Assembly sustain the dissent and complaint against the judgment of the Presbytery in relation to the second particular as applying to the first charge, and reverse the judgment of the Presbytery so far as to find that part of the libel relevant, to the effect that the statements quoted in the minor proposition as those of Professor Smith regarding the book of Deuteronomy amount to what is expressed in the said part, and are opposed in their legitimate results to the supposition of the book being a thoroughly inspired historical record according to the teaching of the Westminster Confession, while his declarations on the subject of inspiration are the reverse of satisfactory, and do not indicate his acceptance of the book in that character.”

This motion, it should be observed, was not proposed until after Smith had exhausted his reply on *Secundo*. The obscurity with which it was expressed was severely criticised in next day's debate, and it was further complained, with equal justice, that it contained an important variation of the charge and introduced new matter on which the Defendant had had no opportunity of pleading, and which was likely to perplex still further the complicated issues presented for the decision of the Church. It is probable that the motion was the unaided product of Sir Henry's powers of invention, for it soon appeared that he had not taken counsel with the Leader of the Assembly at any rate, and was not to receive his countenance. Dr. Rainy, explicitly affirming the consistency of his action with his former concurrence in the Report of the College Committee, gave notice that he would move that the Presbytery's judgment should be sustained.

The student who has leisure, curiosity, and patience enough to carry him through the speech delivered by Sir Henry in support of his motion will continually be tempted to remark that the πνεῦμα κατανύξεως which Ritschl thought he could detect in the Assembly of 1877 had by no means wholly passed away. The somewhat discontinuous narrative and argument, which seems to

have occupied more than an hour in delivery, is by no means easy to follow, but its drift may perhaps be compressed into a sentence or two. Sir Henry began with an expression of his anxious desire alike that the Church's orthodox testimony should be unimpaired and that Professor Smith, to whose ability, zeal, and earnestness he paid a cordial tribute, should suffer no injustice. He ended with a declaration that, fully realising as he did the importance of both these objects, he was no longer content to be regarded as acquiescing in the Report of the College Committee so far as the Deuteronomy question was concerned. At the time of the framing of the Report he had indeed thought Professor Smith's statements very dangerous, but at the same time the Professor's statements about inspiration had appeared to him to be such as rendered a charge of heresy impossible. However difficult their reconciliation, he had been willing to regard the one group of statements as counterbalancing the other. He now saw the matter in a different light,—the light exhibited in the motion now before the House. The reader may here be reminded that the College Committee's Report had contained this sentence: "They are glad to be assured by Professor Smith that his faith in Deuteronomy as part of the inspired record of revelation rests on grounds apart from his critical conclusions,¹ viz. on the witness of our Lord and the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*." This sentence Sir Henry apparently took as meaning that Professor Smith, on the authority of Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, accepted as inspired and therefore infallible history, a work which otherwise on the precarious grounds which criticism supplies he might have been disposed to regard as something other than history. It is needless to show here at any length that this was an entire misapprehension on Sir Henry's part. In the course of his speech Sir Henry

¹ An earlier draft of the report had said "apart from the precarious conclusions of criticism."

repeatedly referred to "alleged arguments" in favour of the post-Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy; but condescended only upon two (the attitude of the book towards the kingship and towards a central sanctuary), merely for the purpose of asserting that there was "no force" in them. As for Professor Smith's complaint that injustice had been done him in so framing the accusation against him, as if he had said, "I am of opinion that Deuteronomy though professing to be historical, is not really so," and "I am of opinion that the writer of Deuteronomy made his book to assume an historical character which it did not really possess, and that he did this in the name of God," Sir Henry was astonished that Professor Smith or any one else should regard these as misrepresentations; to his mind they were fair and clear expressions of what Professor Smith had said.

Dr. Rainy's speech in moving that the judgment of the Presbytery be sustained was on a very different plane. The reader will be sorry to learn that it did not convince the audience to which it was addressed;¹ it is still more to be regretted that, as events proved, Dr. Rainy's admirable speech failed permanently to convince even himself. He assured the Assembly that evening that he was clear in his own mind—never clearer—as to his own course, and clear, too, as to what should be the policy of the Church. Premising that the views expressed by Professor Smith—fraught as they were with elements fitted to give rise to disquiet and apprehension—compelled the attention of the Assembly because of his position as an accredited teacher of the Church, he reminded his hearers that if they adopted Sir Henry's motion, their decision would not be an administrative remedy merely, but would be a *judicial pronouncement on the faith of the Church*. He then marshalled the considerations in the case favourable to Professor Smith.

¹ Dr. Rainy afterwards wrote to Professor Salmond (*Life*, i. 349), "In this business, most emphatically I am not the 'leader of the Free Church.' Sir Henry occupies that position."

His position in the chair which he held made it his duty to apply his mind to the questions which he had raised, and which had been pressed upon the Church by the current of modern thought and criticism. In writing on such questions he had to keep in view the results or supposed results of such thought and criticism, in order that he might meet and answer them. He honoured Professor Smith for the honest and able manner in which he had grappled with the difficulties of such an undertaking, and the frank, touching, and almost amusing simplicity with which he had presented his conclusions. Dr. Rainy unintentionally diverted the House by a confession that if he himself had adopted the same views as Professor Smith he might have presented them in such a manner that it would have been impossible to call him to account. But he proceeded to justify this manner of educating his party as approved by innocence as well as wisdom. He held it to be his duty, in cases where opinion was divided and was not definite, to take care that new views should not be presented in such manner as to cause harm or even offence. Proceeding to the merits, Dr. Rainy traversed the arguments of Sir Henry Moncreiff. He especially repudiated the argument founded on the New Testament references as wholly unsatisfactory, because it laid a stress upon allusive phrases or the use of current designations which it could never be proved was meant to be laid upon them. His own view of Deuteronomy was that it was an historical record, and was so presented. He did not think that a view which could be shaken. But he did not hold it impossible that another view might be correct. Still less did he consider it permissible to say, that another view could not be held without collision with the standards of the Church. He challenged Sir Henry Moncreiff's assertion that the Confession of Faith declared the book of Deuteronomy to be a thoroughly inspired historical record. The Confession of Faith made no such declaration, and it showed the weakness

of the resolution that it had been necessary to import into it this unfounded statement. Again he challenged the deliverance proposed by Sir Henry on the ground that it pronounced upon views on inspiration alleged to be held by Professor Smith which were not in the case and not before the House for judgment; and pronounced in the manner which was unwarranted by anything in Professor Smith's writings and pleadings.

In the course of the debate which followed, Dr. Begg again argued that the issue was very simple. Professor Smith's theory of Deuteronomy seemed to him quite inconsistent with any just idea of the nature of God as a God of truth, or of Christ as the faithful and true witness. If they were to affirm either that Christ did not know the true facts about Deuteronomy, or that in speaking as He did He was merely conforming Himself to the current ideas of the day, they would find themselves inevitably landed in Socinianism. He knew that the hearts of the best people in Scotland were trembling for the Ark of God in connection with their present meeting, and that many of them were solemnly asking themselves the question: "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Noteworthy among the other speakers was the well-known Dr. Horatius Bonar, who holds so distinguished a place among the hymn-writers of the nineteenth century. Dr. Bonar declared that it was impossible to look upon the new theory of Deuteronomy in any other way than as directly or indirectly subversive of any view of inspiration, even the loosest and lowest that had ever been devised. He denied that there was any necessity to reconstruct the Pentateuch, and took occasion to condemn the new-fangled zeal for the discovery of errors in the Bible which from a study of the Scriptures in the original he could assure the House were trivial and easily surmountable. In the course of an interesting autobiographical reminiscence he appealed to the Moderator

(his brother Dr. Andrew Bonar), to the clerks and others of the "old gentlemen" who, Smith had hoped, "would not persuade the Church," and asked them whether all these questions had not been raised, and discussed, and satisfactorily disposed of fifty years ago in a society of their college days which met at half-past six o'clock every Saturday morning for the very purpose. The chronicler records that the speech of the venerable hymnologist was long as well as strong, and that signs of impatience began to manifest themselves. Little time indeed was left for the reply which had been entrusted to Dr. Adam, Dr. Rainy's lieutenant, who accordingly contented himself with reminding the Assembly that the question of the abstract validity or even propriety of Smith's views on Deuteronomy did not arise, the issue being simply whether they contradicted the Confession of Faith. When the House was about to be cleared for a division Dr. Rainy protested in writing against judgment being taken on Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion on the ground that it implied charges on which the accused had not been heard. He was, however, induced to reserve this remonstrance with a view to dissenting at a later stage should the motion be carried. The result of the division, which was taken amid great excitement, was close, but adverse to Smith. Sir Henry had 301 votes in his favour and Dr. Rainy 278, Smith's alleged view of Deuteronomy thus being declared heretical by a majority of 23.

Dr. Rainy dissented from this judgment on the ground that it was unjust to the Defendant in that it condemned him for opinions which in fact he did not hold and which he had had no opportunity of disavowing.¹ This dissent was

¹ The full text of Principal Rainy's reasons of dissent is as follows:—

1. Because the judgment is incompetent as a judicial sentence in respect that it proceeds on the sense ascribed to a declaration of Professor Smith, in his defence, on which he had no notice to plead, either from the bar or the House, on which he did not plead, and on which it does not appear that he has been dealt with, for explanation or otherwise, in any court; and in respect that the judgment was argued

supported by many prominent members of the Assembly, and among others by the legal adviser of the Church who, as we have seen, had had an important share in the framing of the libel. Sir Henry was so far moved by the respectability of the dissentients that he vouchsafed them an answer to their reasons of dissent, the sum and substance of which might be thus summarised: Professor Smith states that Moses did not write Deuteronomy. This is equivalent to saying that it is a fraud and a fabrication. It is useless to argue that any other construction can be put upon his theories.

If, as we have said, subsequent events show that Dr. Rainy had hardly been convinced by his own speech, they also showed that in like manner Sir Henry did not remain permanently satisfied with the validity of his

for from the same materials, and that Professor Smith was not heard thereon.

2. Because Professor Smith, in the extracts charged under this particular of charge first, does not deny the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, and in particular, of the book of Deuteronomy, but maintains the same.

3. Because the theory that Deuteronomy presents in a peculiar literary form, but under the guidance of inspiration, the legislation of an age later than that of Moses, whatever objections may apply to it and whatever dangers may be apprehended in connection with it, does not in itself conflict directly with any views of inspiration, even the most strict.

4. Because in order to establish consequences as arising from the said theory tending to show that it is opposed to the Confession in its results, it is necessary to make assumptions, which are not borne out by the Confession on the one hand, or which are repudiated by Professor Smith on the other; and both modes of procedure are illegitimate.

5. Because the statement of Professor Smith already referred to in the first reason, whatever the effect of it may be, could, in any view, communicate to his theory of Deuteronomy no new responsibility in reference to the Church's doctrine of the Bible, and ought to have been dealt with on its own merits.

6. Because it is of great moment to the successful maintenance and defence of the truth, that when opinions are published which are apprehended to have in them any elements of danger, the mode of dealing with them should be such as does not strain the discipline of the Church nor abridge the liberty of its office-bearers.

7. Because the present state of critical studies, especially with reference to the Pentateuch, renders it necessary that a large discretion

reasons. In the result, as we shall see, he became convinced that it was not so plain as he had imagined to every normal understanding that Professor Smith had contradicted the Confession of Faith, while Dr. Rainy on the other hand finally embraced the opinion that Professor Smith had gone wholly beyond the limits of the largest discretion that could possibly be conceded.

At the evening sitting of Tuesday the Assembly took up *Tertio*, and the expectation that Smith would have something to say in reply to the decision on Deuteronomy which had been obtained from the Assembly by the tactics of Sir Henry Moncreiff was not disappointed.

In opening the case for the appellants, Mr. (now Professor) Bannatyne, following Sir Henry Moncreiff's lead, had been allowed to devote the greater part of his

should be allowed to the office-bearers of the Church in any honest efforts to do justice to indications of criticism, so long as faith in the peculiar origin, office, and authority of Scripture is maintained.

Sir Henry's answers to these reasons were :

(1) It is quite obvious and palpable to ordinary and unbiased understandings that the judgment does not proceed on any sense ascribed to a declaration by Professor Smith on the subject of inspiration. . . . It is also manifest that no argument for the judgment was founded upon any other basis except what is furnished by the extracts in the libel.

(2) The fact that Professor Smith does not deny, but maintains, the inspiration of the book of Deuteronomy cannot overthrow the force of legitimate inferences drawn by the Assembly from his view of that book.

(3) The fact that Professor Smith's theory regarding Deuteronomy does not conflict with any view of inspiration is quite consistent with the conclusion that the logical result of it is to make the inspiration of that book indefensible.

(4) The judgment makes no assumption which is not borne out by the Confession. On the other hand, it assumes nothing which he has repudiated.

(5) This reason for dissent exhibits an inadequate perception of what the judgment and arguments for it were.

(6) It is denied that the judgment involves any straining of discipline. The Assembly regard it as demanded by the necessity of the case. Professor Smith demanded a libel . . . and this libel has been brought before the Assembly.

(7) The Assembly regard this as quite irrelevant. The judgment does not interfere with the large discretion referred to.

speech less to the particular question in hand, namely, whether Professor Smith's statements as to "Chronicles" did, or did not, bear out what had been put in the major of the libel, but to a criticism of Smith's defences at large. When Smith rose, he claimed the same latitude. In view of the fact that the House had that morning ruled by a majority that, as regarded Deuteronomy at least, his case might be decided with reference to a matter which was not in the libel at all, on which he was never heard at the bar, and on which he had never had an opportunity of speaking, it seemed only too probable that such a precedent might be regarded by the Assembly as capable of application in the appeal on *Tertio* also. He therefore devoted the greater part of his speech to an exposition of his own views of inspiration in detailed reply to what had been said by Sir Henry Moncreiff in the morning. At the close, in summing up, he once more stated, with great clearness, the doctrine of revelation and inspiration with which the reader has by this time become so familiar, that God had showed Himself to His people, not only by the inspired Word, but also in a long miraculous history culminating in the incarnation and historical work of Christ, that the record of revelation was so framed as to include everything necessary to enable us to understand the declaration of God's will in its historical context and its historical manifestation, and that the perfect adaptation of the Bible for this purpose was unaffected by such questions as whether, for example, the chronicler had made a slip about ships of Tarshish. If Sir Henry refused to accept this view, he (the speaker) was prepared to prove that the principle on which Sir Henry proposed to condemn him was mediaevalism and not Reformation theology. The principle for maintaining which he was now being assailed was the very principle which made the Bible, as Dr. Begg had put it, a Bible for the ploughboy and the shepherd. Dr. Begg had told them that he trembled for the Ark of God. There was another expression more appropriate,

and that was trembling at the words of God. He trusted he trembled—he trusted he should never cease to tremble, though rejoicing with confidence and love—at every word of God, which he took as the absolute rule of his faith and life. But he was not one of those who trembled for the Ark of God. He knew but of one character in the Bible history given for our instruction who trembled for the Ark of God, and that was Eli—not the most admirable character in the Old Testament—a worldly ecclesiastic. Eli trembled for the Ark of God, and why did he tremble? Because for him the Ark had ceased to be a shrine of the living revealing word of God in the commandments, and had become a fetish—an idol—carried out to battle as if by its power it could assist the Church in its war against the Philistines. He trembled for the Ark of God, and as he trembled he fell and perished. But there was no need to tremble for the Ark, because the Ark was safe, not in virtue of those outside things he had looked at, but because it was the Ark of God's revelation. No man need tremble for that; God's revelation was safe.

Dr. Carnegie Simpson (i. 338) has not exaggerated the effect produced by this powerful speech from the bar. What the *Glasgow Herald* said in the following morning seems worth recording. It was to the effect that more than one elder could be met in the lobby afterwards who rather uncomfortably admitted that if in the morning they had been allowed to hear Smith's views on inspiration *before* voting in place of *after*, they "would have been obliged to vote with Principal Rainy instead of going, as they had done, to the side of Sir Henry," and indeed, that "the decision of the Assembly would certainly have been the other way." Be this as it may, the motion of Dr. Thomas Smith that the appeal on *Tertio* be sustained was overwhelmingly defeated by that of Mr. Isdale,¹

¹ The Rev. John Isdale, Glasgow. Mr. Isdale's seconder was the Rev. R. S. Macaulay of Irvine, son-in-law of Dr. Beith and brother of the Rev. George Macaulay.

that the judgment of the Presbytery be affirmed. The figures were 283 to 140, a striking reaction from the judgment of the morning, attributable almost wholly to the force of Smith's eloquence. One of its immediate effects was that all the remaining appeals under the first general charge were forthwith dropped.

The Assembly had other business to occupy its time besides the Smith case, and it was not until Friday May 31, that the appeal against the decision of the Synod that the second general charge of "tendency" was irrelevant, came up for judgment. The debate on this appeal has little historical interest, for it resolved itself into a discussion on what was hardly more than a question of procedure. The House had scant time at its disposal, and was perhaps more than a little exhausted by the excited controversy of the preceding days. By consent, therefore, the case was left to be finally fought out on another occasion, and the fathers and brethren unanimously agreed on a motion made by Dr. Rainy to the effect that the Assembly decline to find this part of the libel relevant in its present form,

" . . . but find further that this part of the libel ought to be amended. Therefore the Assembly find that the second branch of the abstract major shall run in these terms, namely :—As also the publishing and promulgating of writings concerning the books of Scripture, which, by their ill-considered and unguarded setting forth of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration, and authority of any of the books of Scripture, or of the doctrines of angels and prophecy, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith—and the Assembly find this amended form of the libel relevant."

The Assembly by this decision advanced the "tendency" charge considerably ; for they judicially affirmed its abstract relevancy in a new form, the implications of which we shall consider hereafter. It was left to the

lower courts to decide whether it could be brought home to the accused on any or all of the eight particulars. A Committee on which Smith's supporters were represented was appointed to adjust the libel, which had suffered very seriously in the course of the struggle, so as to bring it into harmony with the finding of the Supreme Court. This was soon done, and the Committee were able to report before the Assembly rose. But before they had finished their work another development had taken place. The appellants on the third general charge had been cited and had failed to appear, so that Smith's acquittal by the Presbytery on the charge of "neutrality" became the finding of the Church.

Thus in the amended libel, the history of which will form the subject of the next chapter, all the eight particulars under the first general charge except *Secundo* had disappeared, while *Secundo* itself survived in a highly questionable shape. The third general charge had disappeared altogether, and the second general charge was now officially warranted as in itself competent and proper, though it had undergone important changes, while the familiar eight particulars, in themselves unaltered, were placed in a somewhat different light and now fell to be discussed again in detail under a new major.

Smith himself was, on the whole, satisfied with this result.

"Theoretically, no doubt," he wrote to his sister from Glasgow, "we have still another year's fighting before us, but practically everything is set right except the unfortunate vote on Tuesday. . . . It is felt that practically I have pulled through. I am a little tired myself, but very well on the whole. Every one here is very kind, and opinion has developed this week in a most extraordinary way."

CHAPTER VII

THE AMENDED LIBEL (1878-1879)

THE case as it dragged on continued to attract considerable attention in theological circles both at home and abroad, and the dramatic interest of the proceedings of Assembly during May 1878 was such as to call for special comment. In the great and prolonged trial of his patience to which it was Smith's ill fortune to be subjected, he was constantly sustained and comforted by expressions of sympathy from distinguished colleagues, both British and foreign. The finding of Assembly which so soon followed the printing and distribution of the Additional Answer led about this time to several interesting *testimonia*. Dr. Perowne, then Smith's colleague on the Revision Committee, and afterwards Bishop of Worcester, wrote from Cambridge expressing his extreme regret that the decision of the Assembly had been adverse.

"I have been reading the second part of your Defence that you kindly gave me, and am quite at a loss to understand how your opinions can be branded as heretical. You accept heartily the Divine authority of the Scriptures, and deal only with the critical questions affecting the composition of certain parts. This is a field which ought to be left entirely open to scholars, and I have no doubt that this will be acknowledged eventually; and, however bitterly you may be made to suffer now, you will have the satisfaction of seeing more rational views prevail, and justice will I hope be done you, though, alas! it may be very tardily."

Professor Nestle, whose name is now so well known in New Testament scholarship, wrote expressing the sympathy of the theologians of Tübingen, saying :

“ With a singular, almost sad feeling I have noticed the fact, that it was about the same time of the year, pretty nearly the same day (May 21), two hundred years ago, that Richard Simon was expelled from his Order and his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* burnt with fire, and why? Because: ‘ Moïse ne peut être l’auteur de tous les livres qui lui sont attribués. . . . ’ Do we make progress in the course of centuries or not? Let us hope so, despite the sad experience which you have had. Let us go on working quietly and faithfully in the cause of science; it is at the same time the cause of true religion.”

Smith was by this time looking forward to a lull in the contest, and seems to have already made up his mind to take advantage if possible of his enforced leisure from teaching work to advance his studies of Oriental languages by a journey to the East. He had not intermitted his correspondence with Lagarde, and had no doubt consulted him about plans of travel. In reply to some communication about this and about the progress of the case Lagarde wrote :

“. . . I am glad you have good hope for yourself. You are a splendid debater, and never passed the limits of honest and earnest exposition: I read your papers with the greatest interest, and trust your case will be a benefit to your country.

“ If you shall be able to go to the East, do not go in the great time of visitors unless you have an interest to have been at Jerusalem, etc. Damascus would be the best place to see real Eastern life. But if you want to do good to science, go to Tunis and Cairwan. I am sure you will find at Cairwan a great many Hebrew manuscripts if you look at the Geniza;¹ you know it once was a famous place for Jewish learning. And there you

¹ “ The store-room or depository in a synagogue; a cemetery in which worn-out and heretical or disgraced Hebrew books or papers are placed.” It was in an Egyptian Geniza that Schechter discovered his first fragment of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus in 1896.

will be out of the way of the sight-seers. Northern Africa is worth seeing, and manuscripts, coins, and antiquities may perhaps repay your outlay and turn out profitable to science; you will find really nothing of this kind in Syria. . . . Take care of your health."

Smith carried out the suggestion that he should visit North Africa, but not until a later and happier period of his life. Meanwhile other activities claimed his attention for a season.

The Presbytery of Aberdeen, which had been directed to retry *Secundo* under the first general charge, and to investigate all the eight particulars under the second general charge of "tendency" as amended by the Assembly, held a meeting on June 13, 1878, at which it was ordered that certain necessary printing should be done, the proceedings being forthwith adjourned until September 3. In the interval Smith was not inactive. He made one of his frequent journeys to London, the most interesting event of which was a meeting with Mr. Gladstone at a dinner given by Mr. Bryce. Smith was impressed not so much by "anything Gladstone said, as by his simplicity of manner and the frankness with which he spoke out his mind about Beaconsfield, and indeed on all subjects. . . ." ¹

From London, where the Revisers had now reached Zechariah and Malachi, he proceeded to Corsock near Dalbeattie, in the country of Old Mortality. Here he spent a week with his friend Professor Lindsay, who was at that time composing an account ² of the critical movement in the Free Church of Scotland, which was intended to show that it was possible to be equally loyal to criticism and to dogma, and containing another appeal to the tradition of Calvin and Melanchthon in justification of the methods of the higher criticism. Smith was then

¹ Mr. Gladstone greatly appreciated Smith's abilities, and placed his appreciation on record in a letter, in which he expressed the view that Smith's removal would be a great loss to the Church.

² See *Contemporary Review*, August 1878.

himself considering a proposal made to him by Messrs. Macmillan that he should edit a commentary on the Old Testament for English readers, in which he would have had an opportunity of setting out his critical views in a detailed but popular form. This scheme was not carried out; but there was much hopeful activity among the critics, and Smith was able to announce to his father that in Edinburgh "every one is in good spirits about things. Whyte and Dods are perfectly happy." The "traditionalists," however, were not idle, and we find slightly less exuberant expressions of confidence in letters to Mr. Charles Smith in India written at this time. The following extract gives an interesting glimpse of Church politics as viewed by Smith and his allies.

"Father seems rather excited about Sir H. Moncreiff, who is trying to justify his action at the Assembly in a series of articles in that miserable paper, *The London Weekly Review*. I don't think they will do any harm, or that any notice should be taken of them. Indeed, I believe the current opinion will be that they show Sir H. to be doting a little. At the same time it is clear that the opposition has not realised its own collapse, and we will require to be careful for some time yet. Fortunately Sir Henry is especially wroth at Rainy, and this will confirm Rainy in sticking to us. The Presbytery takes up the matter on September 3, and I think our rôle will be to let the adversary move, and then resist any motion on the ground that the major has not been found relevant."

It soon appeared that the opposition was indeed incapable of "realising its own collapse," and at the end of his visit to Professor Lindsay, Smith, who was setting out on a tour in the Highlands, wrote to his father: ". . . I am feeling much fresher of my week at Corsock, and I expect to be exceedingly strong for further contests before September. It is indeed clear that we shall have more fighting. Moncreiff is still very determined, and I suppose he has a backing. . . ."

After a month of glorious weather in Skye and the

West Highlands in the company of various friends, Smith returned to Aberdeen for the adjourned Presbytery proceedings. The meeting of September 3 "did not get beyond formal matters," but the proceedings were nevertheless of a highly controversial and even acrimonious character. The discussion arose out of the confused and in parts inaccurate wording of the Minutes of Assembly, which were the official instruments in the case. A somewhat protracted wrangle ensued, in the course of which there were noisy and rather indecorous interventions by members of the public who had come to hear the debate. It is difficult to gather the exact import of the scene from the contemporary newspaper report, but to Smith and his friends at any rate it appeared that the course taken by certain members of the Presbytery concealed a manœuvre directed against his interests. This appears in the following vigorously worded letter to his father :

"The row to-day was ineffable and, I will add, wholly inexplicable. I could not give you any idea of it, nor, I am sure, can the papers do so. The main point seems to be this : Mitchell, Brown, and company wish to get the libel as amended dealt with in slump, and therefore proposed that we should conduct our case on the basis of an informal unofficial document printed by authority of the Commission. This we reject, and resolve to be guided wholly by the Minutes. Then the enemy, who really had not read the papers, got up a cock-and-bull story that Spence¹ had not printed the Minutes correctly. There was a royal squabble, practically no progress, but the clearest proof that all the other side are as hot as ever. I feel much vexed at this, as I had hoped to see some improvement in temper and some increase in moderation."

Whatever were the intentions or desires of the managers of the prosecution, they were no more successful than formerly in imposing their policy on the House, and a motion made by Professor Salmond that the Presbytery, passing for the time from the

¹ The Rev. Alexander Spence, the clerk of Presbytery.

Deuteronomy question, should take up the eight particulars under the second general charge was passed unanimously. At this point the Defendant took the opportunity to enter a formal protest in writing against the action of the Assembly in adding a substantially new general charge to the libel without affording him any proper opportunity of protesting against this proceeding. This, Smith contended, was *ultra vires*, and, while he proposed to plead to the charge as brought before the Presbytery, he expressly reserved his right to "challenge and reduce" the finding arrived at by the Assembly. A few of the more extreme of Dr. Brown's followers demurred to the protest being placed on record, but on the question being pressed to a division they found themselves in a very small minority.

At the following sitting Smith developed this argument in certain objections which he obtained leave to state against the relevancy of the libel as a whole, except in so far as it had already been expressly found relevant by the superior court. He pointed out that the charge of awakening doubt, especially in the minds of students, by rash critical speculations was one which could and should be tested by evidence of facts, and not decided *a priori*. In an impressive passage of his speech he expressed his confidence in a favourable issue of the trial, if it were conducted in this way, and he also defined very clearly his attitude towards the Christian sensibilities which he was accused of wounding.

"I hope I shall never be indifferent to the serious responsibility that lies upon a man in the position of a professor for any act which can shake the faith of students; but my chief support during the many painful scenes in this case has been this, that I have reason to believe that, in the minds of students and in the minds of other men exposed to the many doubts and difficulties that students feel and encounter, the tendency of my writings has not been to shake faith, but in some cases at least—I speak with all humility—to confirm it, and I should

have been glad to meet the case on that issue. I have said once and again, and I repeat it now, that I by no means feel myself able to take up the position of one free of all blame in this matter. I have said before, and I repeat it now, that had I been aware of the misunderstanding that was to be raised, and the extent to which persons whose faith I respect were by these articles brought into a very painful position, doubting whether a fellow-member of the Church, and one of their office-bearers, was not undermining the faith, I should have been also very anxious to clear my position, and to put all I have said in a more distinct and perfect manner. . . . I did not recognise how much the feelings of that class of men might be hurt by my articles, because for various reasons I was more accustomed to . . . write for another class of people whose faith might be shaken, and I with confidence lay this issue before that class of people that my writings have been found not to have a dangerous effect."

The intention of Dr. Rainy and the Assembly, he contended, was to bring a charge which could be proved or disproved by evidence, but the amended libel as sent down to the Presbytery presented the charge as one to be established by proving that certain writings contain certain opinions, and he submitted that the Presbytery should throw it out on grounds of law, reserving if necessary the right to frame an entirely new libel which would set the accusation on a proper basis.

The liberal party in the Presbytery were, as usual, unprepared for a drastic solution, and temporised—proposing to record Smith's general objection and to consider it later, but in the meantime to proceed with the eight particulars. This accordingly was done, and the *via dolorosa* from *Primo* to *Octavo* was again traversed.

On *Primo* the prosecution distinguished themselves even less than on the two previous occasions (see above, p. 249 and p. 273). Smith's views on the Aaronic priesthood were by this time well known, and all that Dr. Brown could now find to say was that the statement of them which Professor Smith laid before the Church courts

did not tally with that which was to be found in the article "Bible," and the lecture delivered to the students at the close of the session 1875-76.¹ After a dignified but vigorous protest from Smith against the imputation of dishonesty which Principal Brown would neither substantiate nor withdraw, a division was taken, and the Presbytery found for the Defendant.

As for *Secundo*, the "tendency" of Smith's views on Deuteronomy naturally attracted little interest, the Presbytery by a majority of 20 resolving to pass from the subject at its present stage, and reserving its energies for a future discussion of the matter under the old general charge of contradicting the standards of the Church.

Tertio and *Quarto* which, as will be remembered, respectively alleged the ignoring the Divine authority and disparaging the authenticity of the Scriptures, were then disposed of, after a brief discussion, and their irrelevancy declared by substantial majorities.

The consideration of *Quinto* was undertaken at somewhat greater length, and it was found necessary to devote to it the whole of the sitting of September 24. The discussion, which was exceptionally interesting and sometimes breezy, was hampered by the previous finding of the Presbytery, confirmed on appeal by the Assembly, that Professor Smith's view of Canticles could not be stigmatised as inconsistent with the standards of the Church. But as much as possible was made by the prosecution of the contention that, if not allegorical, Canticles was "devoid of spiritual significance."

"The spiritual theory," said Mr. David Mitchell in an eloquent peroration, "added unction to many a sermon, and sweetness to many a Communion table, and its passages were frequently employed for impersonating the holy breathings which were to be found in the letters of the sainted Rutherford and in the sermons of the

¹ "On the Progress of Old Testament Studies"; see *Lectures and Essays*.

godly M'Cheyne, which were read and valued throughout Christendom."

This florid passage is important as preserving in conveniently small compass the evangelical view of the Song of Solomon, which in its day has been turned to curious homiletical uses. It had a considerable influence on the House, as the fall in the majority for the defence subsequently showed, but the prosecution found it necessary to conduct their general argument on principles more ostensibly scientific. Professor Smith, it was stated, had not given sufficient prominence to the arguments in favour of the allegorical view, and he ought to have known from Lane's *Modern Egyptians* that such songs were quite common in the East and were understood in a spiritual sense. In his reply Smith was able not only to point out that in his articles he had quoted Lane's views (and others of at least equal importance), but also to make the damaging retort that there is no true analogy between the Old Testament and the pantheistic mysticism of Islam.

" . . . These songs of the dervishes," he continued, " taken in a figurative sense, as they are taken by philosophers, all belong to a school of purely pantheistic mysticism of Persian origin, grafted on the doctrines of Mohammedanism. I put it to the Presbytery whether, if it comes to be a question as to the way of expressing your opinions, it is a very safe thing to say that the Song of Solomon is probably an allegory because the pantheism of the East is accustomed to use similar allegories? "

His reply to the argument from the value of the allegorical reading as edifying to the faithful was equally effective.

" The only point really, in Mr. David Mitchell's argument," he observed, " was the point on which he spoke from personal experience. He told us how useful the allegorical character of Canticles had been to his personal edification. That no doubt is psychologically

interesting, as showing that a rich and very peculiar type of Christian character may be nourished on this exegesis. But then it must be remembered that all bodies in the Christian Church have always produced excellent Christian characters: that very noble Christian characters were produced in the Roman Catholic Church, and nourished on the false interpretations and the distortions of doctrines within that Church; and why? because a man, provided he gets pure and true Christian sustenance to his soul, will be benefited even although his exegesis may not be correct. Now Mr. David Mitchell, and those who coincide with his views, found a form of language in which they see Christian truth because they knew Christian truth before they went there; but the question is—Would a man having Canticles put into his hand without permission to put something into it out of the New Testament, come to the conclusion that it was an allegory, or that it was to be interpreted literally? ”

In the end the relevancy of *Quinto* was dismissed by 25 to 22.

The end of the Presbytery proceedings under the new “tendency” charge was reached on September 26, when *Sexto*, *Septimo*, and *Octavo* were discussed at a special sitting. The reader of the debate on the first of these charges, which imputed “the contradicting or ignoring the testimony given in the Old Testament, and also that of our Lord and His apostles in the New Testament, to the authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures,” cannot fail to be impressed by the high quality of the pleading, the effect of which must have been educative for all but the slowest apprehensions. The most startling and effective part of this charge was that which turned on the New Testament “proofs” of the traditional views of the Pentateuch and other parts of the Old Testament, and which, in the pointed words of Dr. Brown, represented Smith as having said that Christ “was probably right” in ascribing the 110th Psalm to David. We have seen at a much earlier stage of this narrative that Principal Rainy had from the first seen the danger of this line of argument, and had repudiated it in an important speech

in the Assembly. It was left for Professor Salmond to carry the war into the enemy's country. After criticising the defective form of the particular charge, and especially the unwarrantable vagueness of the word "ignore," Professor Salmond retorted Dr. Brown's point by observing that Smith accepted as conclusive and final every testimony on the subject taken from Christ and the apostles, *provided it was made clear that Christ and the apostles really meant to attest that authorship.*

"When it was remembered that in his articles Professor Smith was dealing with the literary evidence as distinct from the theological, there was nothing whatever in Professor Smith's exposition to prevent his readers from assigning to it a Davidic authorship. But if there was anything ill-considered and unguarded in the use made of New Testament testimony in the present discussion, it was not on Professor Smith's side but on the side of those who would rashly commit our Lord and His apostles to affirmations to which it was not clear that they intended to commit themselves."

In the course of the subsequent discussion there occurred an incident which an eye-witness has recorded in words sufficiently graphic to deserve quotation. The Rev. John Stephen, an aged and much respected member of the court, had stated that if he could be satisfied as to Smith's views of the 51st Psalm and the latter portion of the prophecies of Isaiah he "would give him the benefit of the doubt."

"What took place when the Professor rose to speak," continues the narrator,¹ "can never be forgotten by some of us.

"In responding to the evidently honest appeal which had been made he, in the kindest and most artless manner possible, walked right along to where Mr. Stephen was sitting, and as the young Professor stood by the old man's knee he proceeded to explain to him, as if in confidence, and with manifest delight, the various reasons and circumstances which had led him to hold the view

¹ The Rev. James Johnstone, then Free Church minister of Belhelvie.

about the authorship of the 51st Psalm, etc., to which his aged friend had referred.

“ He seemed to realise it as a sacred and very pleasant duty to do his best to meet the difficulties felt by Mr. Stephen. The explanation or exposition was a marvellous success. As the Professor, without hesitation and with the greatest ease and alacrity, proceeded to give the desired explanation, one did not know which to admire most,—the rapid flow of thought fitly expressed, the earnestness of purpose, the intellectual resource, the firm grasp of the subject and the spiritual perception in dealing with the Word of God, or the fine tone and kindly manner in which the whole was addressed to the venerable minister. We remember how stirring and impressive the exposition became when he went on to say, ‘ For my own part I think that the psalm can be better understood as the prayer of a prophet labouring under a sense of sin and shortcoming in the discharge of his prophetic work. Under this aspect I have always regarded the 51st Psalm as one peculiarly edifying, and considered it as being specially a ministers’ psalm, a psalm which they could not read without looking back on their work and feeling a stronger sense of the momentous importance of their duty.’

“ The exposition was in every way a masterpiece. Robertson Smith was at his best, . . . and, indeed, it was a rare privilege to have heard it, and to have witnessed in full exercise the blending of so many of the characteristics of our great scholar.”

The majority of the court shared this view of the matter, and acquitted Smith on *Sexto* by 25 to 17. The discussion of *Septimo*, which alleged the denial of the predictive element in prophecy, and of *Octavo*, the already discredited count dealing with angels, was diversified only by the unseemly interruptions of the public, with whom the managers of the prosecution were never popular, and the majorities against the relevancy of these charges were respectively twenty and eighteen.

The Presbytery had now dismissed all the eight particulars under the new second general charge exactly as they had dismissed them under the first general charge

in the preceding February and March. In other respects the historical parallel was curiously complete. Against each of the decisions of the Presbytery dissents and complaints were as before taken to the Synod, and once again the liberals approached the Court with proposals to proceed by way of "brotherly conference" with the Defendant.

The first stage of the appeals was soon over. The Synod met on October 8, and, after a very brief discussion, decided to refer the whole of the second general charge to the ensuing Assembly. On the day following the meeting Smith wrote to his brother :

"The Synod passed over yesterday very quietly. The parties were agreed that it was useless to attempt a re-discussion of the eight points appealed. Dr. Brown, indeed, seems to have had an opposite opinion, which, however, was overruled by his friends. I have no doubt that they saw the temper of the Synod and foresaw a defeat. Of course, as we now think that we have a majority in the Synod, and as the thing now lies in our favour, we had no object in a fresh discussion which would only have kept the Synod from voting in next Assembly."

The proposals for a Conference, a significant but ineffective interlude, were discussed on October 17. They were now introduced by Professor Salmond, and were more tentative in form than those which were previously brought before the Presbytery. It cannot be doubted that Professor Salmond and his friends still hoped in the end to persuade their brethren to accept conference, perhaps tempered by reproof, as a suitable way out of the imbroglio; and indeed the idea of some such settlement was constantly hinted in the course of the debates on the eight particulars. Dr. Salmond himself introduced the motion which recited that the Presbytery, subject to dissents and complaints, had now pronounced judgment of acquittal on the points to which the text of the libel limited them, but provided that the Court should

“reserve, for separate consideration, other matters relating to the strain, tendency, and general character of these writings, which cannot be dealt with under the form and to the effect of a libel, but to which nevertheless exception may be taken.” His speech, which was couched in studiously conciliatory terms, set forth the uneasiness which he had at first experienced on reading the article “Bible,” an uneasiness, however, which had disappeared after he had considered at leisure the true significance of that article. Others, however, he continued, might still be uneasy,

“ . . . and it may turn out to be the fact—I don’t prejudge the question—that, apart from this whole question of the relation of these writings to the Confession, this Court may come to be of opinion that a practical mistake has been committed in giving these writings so severely scientific a form (for I will use no stronger term at present on the subject), a form making so many presuppositions of intelligence on these very questions in the minds of readers, as naturally to awaken misunderstanding with respect to the general strain and tendency and character of those writings.”

Against the alarmist statements which had been made about the effect of Smith’s writings should be set his own explanations, which were of such importance that it was “highly desirable to get them all together put upon the record of our conduct of the case.” With this chief object in view he put the matter before the Court “simply in the form of a resolution at present.”

The prosecution received this tactfully worded eirenicon with suspicion and hostility. They saw, and did not scruple to say, that it was an attempt to palm off an exchange of views on the theological question as a satisfactory substitute for Dr. Rainy’s version of the “tendency” charge on which they still hoped to triumph in the Assembly, and they put up Mr. Mitchell to move that the proposal was incompetent and inexpedient. The proceedings as usual were accompanied by disorderly scenes

in which a section of the audience, represented largely by students, made demonstrations in Smith's favour, and, as might have been expected, they led to no satisfactory result. Smith himself received the motion coldly; "he had no interest whatever in Professor Salmond's motion," but it appeared to be "an innocent resolution in so far as it records that it is in the power of the Presbytery, when it has been found that something cannot be dealt with by libel, to say, 'Nevertheless we have all the power we ever had to deal with it, and otherwise than by libel.'" The motion was carried; but, dissent and appeal being taken, the matter dropped and made no further appearance at that or any subsequent point in the case.

The Court now came to the thorny question of the Assembly's finding on Deuteronomy, which, it may be repeated, was to the effect that "the statements quoted in the minor proposition as those of Professor Smith regarding the book of Deuteronomy amount to what is expressed in the said particular, and are opposed in their legitimate results to the supposition of the book being a thoroughly inspired historical record according to the teaching of the Westminster Confession." It is not surprising that the discussion of this perplexed deliverance led to the utmost confusion, and that, of all the debates in the Presbytery, that in which the House tried to arrive at a clear idea of the effect of the Assembly's directions on the Deuteronomy charge was one of the most protracted and most acrimonious. The sitting took place on October 22, and two hours were spent at the outset in a technical wrangle on the question whether any motion could be entertained which implied that the relevancy of *Secundo* was still an open question. The consequences of the clumsy drafting of Sir Henry's version of the charge were now painfully apparent. The prosecution held that the Assembly's finding declared the relevancy of the charge and the heretical character of the opinion,

and that nothing remained but to proceed to "probation," and thereafter to sentence and punishment of the offender. The Defence maintained in effect that the finding was unintelligible, but that, however construed, it was not a judgment of relevancy; and they proposed to refer the question back to the supreme court. It was declared by a majority of the Presbytery that this proposal was competent, whereupon most of the minority protested against what they considered to be a contumacious finding, and left the House. The discussion which followed ended in a decision to refer the charge *simpliciter* to the Assembly, after a long and important speech from Smith, in the course of which he observed that if the decision had been that his view of Deuteronomy was heresy, the case so far as he was concerned was at an end. On this point he was not inclined to submit to any Church censure, however severe or however lenient. If his views were at variance with the Church Standards, his connection with the Church was at an end. He did not believe that they were so, and he severely animadverted on the course pursued by Sir Henry Moncreiff, which he did not hesitate to characterise as a course of monstrous injustice towards one in the position in which he was placed.

The discussion thus ended for the time in keeping the question open for several months, as the first meeting of the Synod, at which appeals could be heard, could not take place until April 1879. Much could be urged by the minority in favour of their view that Smith had already been condemned when Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion was carried in May 1878, but the impropriety of Sir Henry's tactics on that occasion, and the obscurity of the resulting judgment, had now been placed in a much clearer light by the debate in the Presbytery, and most people will agree with the contemporary opinion of the press¹ that "the next General Assembly would now be

¹ *Aberdeen Free Press*, October 23, 1878.

in a far better position to do what equity and right demanded than if no such discussion had taken place."

Meanwhile Smith had made up his mind to go to Egypt, and had asked and obtained leave of absence for a few months "in order that he might spend his winter at a distance from Aberdeen in a manner that might be of some service to the Church when he resumed his duties."

On November 6 he writes from London: "I start tonight for Venice and Alexandria. . . . The case is now fairly suspended till the Assembly, and I think that everyone is heartily tired of it." He was in high spirits, as always when he set out on a journey, and had taken the precaution to arm himself with a revolver, and to procure in addition to the ordinary passport a circular letter from the Foreign Office to the British Consuls in Syria and Egypt. From Munich, where he was visiting his old friend Professor Klein, he wrote to his father: "in spite of my run of thirty hours from London I feel wonderfully fresh, and already seem to have got out of the atmosphere of Church Courts." He seemed indeed to have succeeded in shaking off all thought of the controversy, and during his absence from England there are few references to past events or the impending future conflicts.

His impressions of the Italian towns (Verona, Venice, etc.), which he now visited for the first time, are recorded as usual at some length for the benefit of his family. As he was merely a passing traveller, and the Italian tour was outside the main purpose of his expedition, the record is of no biographical interest until he reached Alexandria on November 22, just in time to hear the news of the outbreak of the Afghan War.

His first impressions of the East have a certain interest:

"The omnibus to the hotel, and the hotel itself, are just as in Europe. One must go to the door to recognise that one is really in the East. There one comes at once on a wholly new life. Donkey boys and servants in long

white or blue night-gowns, women with veils, dragomans, Eastern gentlemen in handsome rich coloured gowns, camels heavily laden with sacks. These, and all the other things one knows before-hand to expect, are mixed up in the most amusing confusion with Europeans in holiday dress, Italian pedlars, Jewish money-changers, and so forth. The place is a meeting point of East and West. Both come together, but except in public offices, banks, hotels, and the like, there is no attempt by the one to assimilate itself to the other.

“I am sure from what I have already seen that my journey must prove most enjoyable. I hope it may also be profitable; but I am not sure that the place will be as good for work as for play.”

Less than a week later he was installed “with his books about him” at Cairo in the house of Dr. Sandilands Grant, whose acquaintance he made through his friends the Campbells of Tullichewan. Dr. Lansing, the head of the American Mission, lent Smith his amanuensis as Arabic tutor, and he began immediately to learn the spoken tongue, taking lessons for three hours daily.

“I am trying,” he writes, “to learn the pronunciation, but I find it slow work at first as my ear is rather slow. Dr. Grant is an Aberdonian. He knows the country thoroughly, and is an enthusiastic archæologist, so that it is a great boon to me to have so much of his company as I shall enjoy. The Americans are also very nice and very kind, so that I already feel myself at home. I went to-day to look up another acquaintance, Dr. Spitta, the librarian at the public library here.”

In Dr. Grant’s company he began his sight-seeing, and soon became “the owner of several curious bits of enamel, etc.” picked up in the ruins of the temple at Tel-el-Jahüdieh. “I am to be exceedingly comfortable here, it is plain and very quiet,” he reports a day or two later; “the only drawback is the mosquitoes, which are unusually troublesome because of the high inundation. When the water, which still covers great spaces near Cairo, goes back, I suppose we shall get rid of them.”

The months of December and January passed very pleasantly and swiftly with the occupation of studying Arabic and making archæological expeditions in the neighbourhood. Smith made many friends, both English and foreign, and his letters as usual contain appreciative references to new acquaintances. He was of course very keenly interested in the life of the people, and the growing prosperity of the country, then in its beginnings under the British ascendancy. He writes modestly of his progress as an Arabist to his brother :

“I have hitherto been sticking very steadily to my work, and I think that I have made some progress, though the language is so difficult that I sometimes feel as if I were making no way at all. A special difficulty lies in the great differences between the spoken and the written tongue. One must work at both. I began with a Christian teacher from the missionaries. But I have to-day begun a new venture, viz.—to read with a Sheikh who knows no English but is a thoroughly good Arabic scholar. He rejoices in the name of Abd-el-Azryn el-Ansary. . . .”

Another letter, however, indicates that he was already beginning to find his way about for himself among the Arabs, and the following extract gives an instance of his aptitude both for making friends and turning them to account.

“I sometimes get amusing practice by going out with Dr. Grant. When he enters a house I talk to the coachman and sais, that is the groom, who in the narrow crowded streets of Cairo is always required to run before the carriage. Generally the bystanders strike in, and I have been received with special favour because I have learned to repeat some suras of the Qoran.

“Another way to practise talking is to take a long donkey ride. But some of the donkey boys are quite useless. They talk entirely in a peculiar shouting voice and very fast. But if one gets an intelligent boy one can make him speak slowly and explain words one does not know in Arabic. Yesterday I had a long ride over

the Nile bridge, and as I was talking, or trying to talk, to my boy, another rider came up whose donkey man knew mine. So, from the boys fraternising, I and the other rider began to get friendly, and finally he explained to me that he was riding out to the railway station of Bulak ed-Dakrur to relieve a comrade in the telegraph office who would, if I pleased, give me his company into town. I accepted this proposal, and at the station he very politely asked me to join him in a glass of cognac, for which he insisted on paying. This is not at all what one is taught to expect in the East, where we are told that everything is done with an eye to bakhshish—I certainly have not found it so. No doubt the beggars are annoying and numerous, and gratuities are often asked by donkey boys, etc. But I have again and again found both poorer and richer people ready to do any little friendly service, and show the same or greater gratuitous politeness than one finds at home. Certainly I don't think that two telegraph clerks at home would have been so civil to a stranger, borne with my miserable broken talk, and done their best to give me a useful Arabic lesson."

He was also finding his way about the bazaars, where he made many purchases for himself and his friends with shrewdness and success. One of his letters to his mother gives a vivacious rendering of the now familiar humours of shopping in the East. He saw a good deal of European society at Cairo, and among other interesting people he met at Suez, where he had gone to meet his friend and travelling companion Mr. Adair Campbell of Tullichewan, was the celebrated General Grant, ex-President of the United States. Besides his linguistic exercises, and his social and political observations, he was of course also making himself familiar with the museums and libraries of Cairo. An interesting early record of studies which became afterwards of great importance, is to be found in a letter to his sister, through whom he sent to Mr. M'Lennan notes of traces of matriarchy in early Egyptian society, and of totemism among the Bedawin of Sinai.

His daily occupations and his plans of travel are

summed up in the following extract from a letter dated February 6, 1879 :

“ It was a very good notion to end your letter with a series of questions, and it will save me a great deal of trouble if I just begin to answer them one by one.

“ Firstly, you ask if I associate with any European except Grant and Spitta. . . . These are certainly the two I see most of. But I also am not very seldom at the Hôtel du Nil. . . . Among other nice people I should mention Von Kremer the Orientalist, Mr. Mitchell, formerly tutor in the Khedive’s family, and, as the latest arrival, Davidson, a Fellow¹ of Balliol.

“ There is also a good fellow, Beaman, in the consulate, who is working at Arabic and may possibly go up the Nile with us. The arrangements for that purpose have been vexing my soul for some time back. I thought to go with donkey and a tent, but for various reasons have at the last hour decided that it will be better to take a small dahabiyah from Assiut, which we can get very cheap. I have bought stores and engaged a native servant who does not speak English.

“ We start on Monday for a month. I hope with favourable wind to reach the first cataract. It will be splendid practice in Arabic, and enables me to dispense with a contractor (that is, necessarily, a dragoman) who would have been inevitable had we taken a tent. And now for your other questions.

“ Oh! the American missionaries, yes, they are very nice, and I see a good deal of them. I have preached for them four or five times, and on other Sundays go to their English Service, and generally also to an Arabic one, which is very interesting. Otherwise Sunday is a quiet day. I often spend a little time with Spitta, and *once* went out on Sunday to dine with Von Kremer; otherwise it is very like a Scotch Sabbath in our circles. As to the climate, it is now very like our July, except that it has rained but twice or thrice. We have a little damp, however, and occasional mists of an almost Scotch thickness. Then people *do* take colds, as you appear to have suspected, the natives quite as badly as the Europeans, to say the least. But I don’t think the Europeans resist cold as well here as at home; and as

¹ The present Master.

most of them are not fully occupied they become—especially the ladies—limp and valetudinarian.

“As to food, I have nothing serviceable to relate. We have even had porridge lately, as oatmeal was sent from Scotland as a Christmas present to the Doctor. I have had but one real native dinner—eaten with the fingers. It was a very good dinner, too.

“We go to Palestine about the middle of March—steamer to Jaffa. I don't think our purse will bear a journey to Moab or the Hauran, but I trust that we shall manage Jerusalem, Hebron, and the route northwards to Damascus and Baalbek. I have not been thinking much about 'the case,' but I suspect that things are still in a pickle and that next Assembly may not see the end of it.”

The result of the experiment referred to was very successful, and Smith found his proficiency in Arabic quite sufficient for the purpose of commanding the expedition. The party in the dahabiyah got on very well together and thoroughly enjoyed the tour, and the crew were a perpetual source of amusement.

“This mode of travelling is very delightful,” he writes. “The boat indeed is not furnished in the luxurious style of the most costly Cairo dahabiyahs, and Mr. Wasif has given us a very limited canteen. The captain, Smain (Ishmael), is a very pleasant quiet fellow. His brother Ali is our sufragi or table boy. He is full of intelligence and good nature, and amuses us greatly in his dealings with Campbell, who holds a good deal of intercourse with him by signs, and teaches him some English words. Then we have the . . . singer of the company, a black man but not a negro. His nickname is 'the white.' I am sorry to say that he takes hashish when he can get it. But he is full of fun and a great favourite with the crew. Another merry young fellow, who sometimes takes Ali's place as table boy, is Ibrahim, nicknamed Ibrahim Basha. Then we have the steersman Murad, a solid steady fellow, a little boy of all work—plate-washer, etc.—called Shalibi, a man Neradi, and another whose name I have not yet got. Besides all these we have our cook Ibrahim—a good cook, but a perfect goose in every other way.

“One might suppose it tiresome to be windbound as

we were for about two days. In reality it is great fun, as one has the boat to row about in, the fields and palm groves to wander through, and the men to talk to and pick up Arabic words and Egyptian ideas from. We get on pretty well with our talking. I know enough now to express my meaning in almost every emergency. Beaman, too, can get along with more difficulty, and of course we learn daily.

“There was a great deal of shooting done last two days by every one but myself. The chief game consisted in turtle-doves. Yesterday Campbell shot a duck, and we had a long row in vain after geese. There are plenty of other birds—hoopoes, larks, sandpipers, kingfishers, cranes, hawks, owls, wild pigeons, etc. One very curious bird is the spurred plover. It has a spur on the wings with which it is said by our men to kill crows.”

His observations of the peasantry, though necessarily superficial, are often interesting :

“They are not quite easy to converse with, being shy at first and having for the most part a queer thick way of talking. But I begin now to understand their ways, and to get on with the fellahin. We have not seen very much of the famine, which is worst in inland places. The crops now look splendid, and, as the beans will be in in a fortnight, the trouble will be over for the present.

“I find the peasants think more of the question of the new government. Some of them have the idea that the Khedive is now quite abolished, and they evidently have very Utopian notions as to the remission of taxes, etc. They are certainly dreadfully overtaxed at present—land tax, poll tax, salt tax, tax on cattle, tax on date palms, tax on everything, and octroi besides in every market town.

“But oppression is the custom of the country, and every one who is not oppressed is ready to be an oppressor. I was much amused yesterday with my little donkey boy, ten years old, at Denderah. Quite a crowd of big boys were following, clamouring for alms: ‘Go,’ he cried, flourishing a miniature walking-stick, ‘lest I beat you; yea, by God, it is in my mind to beat you.’ Of course he felt that he had my authority to back him up.”

It had been intended that the party should go up

the river as far as Assouan, but contrary winds and calms delayed the dahabiyah so much that they had to turn north again at Edfou. They reached Cairo on March 13, and Smith proudly announced in a letter to a friend that he "now felt able to act as dragoman to any party whatever."

He had expected to have a few days to prepare for a tour in Syria, which, as we have seen, had for some time been part of his plan, but he had to set out almost immediately on his return from the Nile, and a week later we find him riding from Jaffa over the plain of Sharon to Jerusalem, with Mr. Campbell and another friend.

"I got on very well with my riding," he writes on his arrival at Jerusalem, "much better than I expected. Our horses can't trot, but they canter and gallop beautifully, and alternate these paces with an easy walk. We came up with a man Markos, a hotel keeper, and have gone to stay with him, as he seems a pleasant fellow. The hotel, though in a wretched dirty lane, is very clean and comfortable, and we seem likely to be well entertained for 10s. a day. We all sleep together in a nice room under a dome at the top of the house, and step out on a terrace with a view of Olivet and the Harames-Serif."

After a busy week in Jerusalem the party went for a camping tour of several days, visiting first Hebron and Bethlehem, whence they rode to Marsaba. Smith and his friends took readily to camp life and "found it very comfortable." He was, as before, in charge of the party, and soon made great progress with the Syrian Arabic. From Marsaba on March 26 he wrote enthusiastically to Keig of "the magnificent wild route—a great part perfectly desert but for a few clusters of the black Bedouin tents—the tents of Kedar." "To-night," he continues, "we have a Bedouin guard whose lance is erected beside his bivouac, just as Saul's spear was." On the following day they visited the Dead Sea, an excursion he much enjoyed.

“The descent from Marsaba to the Dead Sea is superb, over mountain tops where you look beyond a great waste of hills down on the intense blue of the sea, with the fainter blue of the high mountains of Moab in the background. Then you plunge into a wild glen, the Wady ed Darb, and at length come down on a waste salty plain with a brake of half-parched prickly shrubs, through which your path winds till you come out on a pebbly shore without a sign of life, but all strewn with whitening trunks of trees which have been washed up by the sea. On the shore we found a small Jordan fish dead and withered up. Nothing can live in the Dead Sea. We had a bath in the water. You can't sink, and on coming out the skin feels quite oily. But it is wonderful pure clear water for all that. I took a small gulp by mistake, which was atrocious. And the water makes the eyes smart a little, but I didn't find that it irritated the skin as some people report.”

From the Dead Sea they rode by way of Jericho to Jerusalem, where they arrived on March 28, after a thoroughly successful expedition. “If I bring nothing else back from Palestine,” Smith wrote, “I trust I shall bring a great stock of health. This way of journeying is perfect from an animal point of view, quite apart from the Biblical interest.”

Little time was lost in arranging for a much more extensive expedition. The caravan, consisting of four men and a cook, three horses, six baggage mules and a donkey, was soon got together again and started northwards from the Holy City. After five days' riding, in the course of which they visited many of the most interesting sites in Old Testament history, they passed by good paths soft with rain across the great plain from Engannin by Jezreel, “and finally struck up a steep path to the lovely little valley high on the edge of the Galilean hills on which Nazareth nestles—the sweetest place we have yet seen in Palestine, so sweet that one cannot fail to realise it as a fit and lovely place for the childhood of Jesus.”

The route from Nazareth chosen by the travellers was by Mount Tabor, "a lovely ride," and so to Tiberias and round the Sea of Galilee past the rival claimants for the honour of representing Capernaum. Then away up the mountains to "Safed, the 'city on the hill which cannot be hid' as tradition very fitly has dubbed it." A visit to Tyre and Sidon is very briefly recorded, and the next event of importance was an ascent of Mount Hermon which took place on April 13, and is vivaciously recorded in Smith's journal. The party started under the guidance of one Jakub, a Christian, "with a military bearing, and a figure of Christ tattooed upon his wrist."

"The road up the hill winds very gradually through a sparse vegetation including an eatable herb called mishshy—with leaves rather like the sea-daisy and a slight apple flavour. As we ascended, the slopes became waste and stony, a red soil amid fragments of grey limestone which gives the hill its purple glow at evening. We reached patches of snow very low down, and here our guide Ja'kub began to give in. He lagged desperately and had to be stimulated with chaff which he did not take in very good part. He had, however, a bad leg from a fall from a mule some months ago. We could not keep the usual road up a wady full of snow. The snow lay in one great sheet from the top of the mountain down the side and course of the valley for a depth of perhaps 3000 feet. We had to keep up a rocky buttress slope to the left. No difficult climbing, but some rough walking, and occasionally ankle or even knee-deep through the snow. At length we gained the top of the corrie, where to the left the hill was more precipitous, sinking in great crags towards the Hauran. But we had no view; for the day, dull at first, had grown thick with lowering clouds, and it was in a drizzling rain that we struck up the snow slope above the corrie head which still separated us from the top. The top plateau had little snow on its level part. We ascended the north top and also Qaşr 'Antar, a little to the south, where a little group of peaked rocks rises from the plateau. All round these are traces of well-built walls, and to the south, just under the crags, are the ruins of a temple in classical style. We could not find the

inscription, part of the stones being under snow. The day cleared slightly, so that we could look down on the nearest part of the plain and the roots of the mountain through which one tremendous ravine (I think the Nahr Jennani) descended to the plain. But the distance never cleared. . . . Our guide plucked up courage going down, and headed us for a bit, declaring he was not tired, but that the fast ascent was *mush ṭayib* [‘not good’]. Then he lagged again, pulling and eating *mishshy*, but in the plain put on a spurt and tried to pass us by a short cut. Now this would never do, as on the top, in spite of whisky, he had collapsed and left us as soon as he reached the plateau to go up the tops alone. We were not to let him get in with false colours, so C. was deputed to walk ahead, I accompanying him as closely as I could on the stony road with the sole of one boot hanging off, and H. behind to issue bulletins on the state of the patient. He made several spurts, and then made a desperate effort to stop us by shouting *Khallâz mush ṭayib*. On C. went ($4\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour good) and H. behind treading on Jacob’s heels, and advertising us by a whistle whenever he put on a spurt. Soon we began to meet peasants and townspeople, who at once took in the situation, and poor J. fell more and more behind in his efforts to apologise. He was too far back for much to be audible, but I heard one very emphatic sentence: ‘Thus have they been marching; thus, by God.’ In the village he fairly took to a run and came in a bad fourth amidst the jeers of the populace. We had an enthusiastic reception. Ours was the first ascent of the season, and I think J. never intended to go up the whole way and never had been up in such snow. Paid him 6 B ($5\frac{1}{2}$ first) with which he was much pleased. We had several visitors, curious to see the aneroid, etc.—one a respectable-looking sheep merchant, owner of 500 or 600 sheep, with an agent in Damascus.

“I ought to mention that we saw a double wine-press partly cut, partly built, near the limits of culture. There was a double *ג* and the *ג* above was quite shallow and open to the *ἵπολήγιον*. The juice is used to make dibs.”

From the camp at the foot of Hermon they crossed a grand pass in the Antilibanus and descended to Damascus

on April 15. Smith's leave was now running out, and after an interesting visit to Baalbek the party rode down out of the desert to Beyrout, where he received a telegram announcing his election at the top of the poll to the Aberdeen School Board. This was an entirely spontaneous compliment paid him by his fellow-citizens, and intended as a mark of public sympathy and confidence. It does not appear that he had any ambition to become prominent in the business of local government, and his name was brought forward without his knowledge at a time when he was beyond the reach of posts and telegraphs. The expenses of the election were defrayed by a subscription of his friends, and his majority, which was no less than 7607 over the second candidate elected, was swollen by the maladroitness of his enemies.¹ Principal Brown had stated expressly that votes ought not to be wasted on Professor Smith. "There is no room for doubt," observes the contemporary chronicle, "that, in place of serving the end intended, the venerable Principal's remarks directly caused the sort of revulsion that sent more Free Church electors off to plump for Professor Smith than would otherwise have adopted that emphatic style of vote."

From Alexandria he came straight to London in time to attend a meeting of the Revision Committee, and full of health and spirits—"so strong," he wrote, "that, if my case were decided by a physical contest, I could give a good account of my adversaries." After a few days spent in London with Mr. Bryce, he hurried North to prepare for the resumption of the struggle. As we have seen, there are few references to the case during the Eastern tour, a period of rest and study which he very wisely kept as free as possible from theological cares. Events, however, had moved to some extent in his absence, and an occasional letter from Scotland reminded him of his position as the leader of a party in the Church. The

¹ *Aberdeen Free Press*, April 14, 1879.

most interesting and important of these communications was a letter from Dr. Candlish which reached him at Cairo early in the year. Dr. Candlish wrote :

“ . . . my earnest prayer is that you and all of us may be strengthened and guided in the coming months, which I feel will be critical for me as well as for you. For I don't see how I could retain my position if last Assembly's judgment be sustained as a finding of relevancy in a libel. I should be constrained at least to avow my conviction that many of the Deuteronomic laws are later than Moses. I have not said so hitherto, because I have only lately been thoroughly convinced, and because my opinion is of no value on such a point ; but I could not conceal it if it seemed to be made a divergence from the Church's standards. But I trust our Church will continue to stand on the old Reformation ground. We need light and grace, and we know where to look for them and all blessings.”

In the midst of much obscure manœuvring which, to the lay mind at least, is both tedious and unedifying, this simple and clear pronouncement is as pleasant as it was exceptional. The issue—whether Smith's writings on the subject of Deuteronomy were or were not compatible with the Confession of Faith—was in itself comparatively simple. It had been needlessly complicated by the deliverance of the previous year's Assembly, for which Sir Henry Moncreiff had been responsible, and which for prolixity and obscurity might have been fitly compared to the celebrated rescript of Tiberius in the case of Sejanus. Sir Henry, as we have seen, had been opposed by the leader of the Assembly in a speech which in vehemence and power was surpassed by none of his addresses to the Supreme Court of the Church. In that speech Dr. Rainy's career as a professional theologian reached its grand climacteric. But its immediate effect had been that his advice was not taken, and that he momentarily lost his habitual ascendancy in the Assembly.

We have now to record how he regained the confidence of his followers, and how by gradual and skilfully contrived

approximations he rejoined the main body. While Smith was absent in the East, the adversary was not idle, but the activities in the camp over which Dr. Brown and Dr. Begg presided were of little importance compared with the dealings of Dr. Rainy with the leaders of the liberal party. In the early part of 1879 we already find him in correspondence with Professor Salmond, the terms of which, to use the words of his biographer and apologist, "show with what rigid fairness Principal Rainy interpreted a decision which he had vehemently opposed." At first he had been inclined to doubt whether Sir Henry's motion had affirmed more than "a qualified relevancy" of the Deuteronomy charge. Now, however, he had come to the conclusion that relevancy was affirmed *simpliciter*, and a decision which he had denounced as "incompetent" and "illegitimate" was to be held binding on all loyal members of the Free Church. This view is expressed with greater clearness in a letter to Dr. Whyte written towards the end of March, in the course of which Dr. Rainy, referring to the passing of Sir Henry's motion, observes :

"Though I opposed that judgment with great earnestness, I must further say that I do not see my way to take part, in any form, in upsetting a judicial decision which I had the opportunity of opposing in last Assembly, by a new effort in this one. I think that in itself and as a precedent that course would be bad. Without laying down the duty of other men, I am, as to this point, clear about my own."

The doctrine of *chose jugée* was a good starting-point for further counsels of "high moral expediency" which might resolve the difficulties likely to be raised by the acceptance of this highly clarified version of Sir Henry Moncreiff's very complex motion. Dr. Candlish's position was no secret, and a series of secessions seemed by no means improbable if Smith should be condemned. The number of progressives was respectable : their anxiety

was acute, and the moment for diplomacy was at hand. Accordingly we find, about a month later, that the Principal had almost got so far as to open negotiations with the other side. In this matter he was "emphatically not the leader of the Free Church"; he had merely to observe a wise discretion while others carried out a policy of which he disapproved. Meanwhile, however, he made a remarkable suggestion, which was destined to prove exceedingly fruitful.

"I have long been satisfied in my own mind, from all the manifestations in this case, that *if you are to avert the libel being carried out to the end, it must be by being prepared to withdraw Smith from the Chair*. Whether that would do it if wisely and considerately arranged, I cannot say. It might. But that the libel will be fought out to the end and opposition voted down, in the face of all consequences, rather than continue Smith in the Chair, seems to me certain."

There is no record of the reception given to this suggestion by Smith's friends, and there is nothing in Smith's own papers to show that the idea of giving up the struggle had yet occurred to his mind. After the Assembly the question, as we shall see, presented itself to him in a more definite form, and the history of this phase of the case is not the least interesting and instructive. In April and May his one idea was still to contest the issue to the end. For the moment Dr. Rainy too held in reserve the policy of compromise and all that it implied. His approximation to Sir Henry Moncreiff was not yet complete.

The Assembly sat in Edinburgh from Thursday, May 22, to Tuesday, June 3, and devoted but one day—Tuesday, May 27—to the Smith case. In the first place, there were, as usual, appeals to be disposed of. The minority in the Presbytery had appealed to the Synod, as they were defeated, on each count of the amended libel from *Primo* to *Octavo*; the Synod, in turn, had referred the appeals *simpliciter* to the Assembly. Again, the Presbytery had referred the Deuteronomy question,

that obstinate survival of the old libel, to the Synod, but the Synod had dismissed the reference, and against this again the minority had appealed. Thus there were at least nine appeals ; and when " parties " were called, quite a crowd of dissentients and complainants appeared at the bar.

The arguments began with a lively discussion of the order in which the case should be taken. Sir Henry was, of course, anxious that the House should as soon as possible declare that his unintelligible motion of the previous year was a motion of relevancy. Smith and his friends, on the other hand, declared that the interests of the defence would be compromised if there was any departure from the order which the Presbytery had adopted. The question was, in fact, one of tactics. It was by this time apparent that Deuteronomy was the surest foundation on which to build a condemnation for heresy. On this the adversary wished to concentrate his strength without frittering away time and oratory on the eight points under the unsubstantial charge of " tendency." These points, in the event of Smith being acquitted on Deuteronomy, would supply eight further chances of damnation, " one sure if another failed." After a debate, in the course of which Dr. Rainy protested against the proposed alteration of the order of topics, but did not push his protest to a division, it was decided to take the appeals on the subject of the reference of the Deuteronomy question. The Defence retorted by abandoning their appeal to the Assembly, and, " instead of having prepared the way for the discussion of the reference, as he had intended, Sir Henry found the way so effectually cleared that he was introduced to the presence of blank space." The case now assumed this peculiar phase in regard to the first general charge, that the Assembly, having found that charge relevant in regard to *Secundo* (date, authorship, and character of Deuteronomy), had sent it down to the Presbytery ; the Presbytery, finding themselves

in difficulty, referred the case to the Assembly; and the Synod, to whom their decision was appealed, refused to transmit the reference, which accordingly was now nowhere.

There was nothing for the prosecution but to proceed with the references of the dissents and complaints under the "tendency" charge, and this was done after Smith had been permitted to read a protest against the legality of the action of the Assembly of 1878 in adding a substantially new charge to the libel under the form of an amendment to the second branch of the abstract major, and directing the Presbytery to accept this charge as relevant. The protest declared that, if he pleaded to this charge, his action was not to be held "to compromise or abridge his right to use all lawful means within the courts of the Church to challenge and reduce the aforesaid finding of the Assembly of 1878."

This being done, the House addressed itself to the appeals on the second general charge, only to be again surprised by the fatuity of the prosecution. *Primo* (the particular relating to the Aaronic priesthood) had been found irrelevant under the second alternative charge, by the Presbytery; Dr. Brown, Mr. Selbie, and others had dissented and complained to the Synod; the Synod had agreed to refer this with the other dissents and complaints *simpliciter* to the Assembly; and the complainants were now invited to argue their case. Whereupon Mr. Selbie, speaking from the bar on behalf of the managers of the prosecution, to a court which had not till this moment, in its judicial capacity, heard a single word upon this difficult subject, stated that he and his associates had made up their minds not to trouble the Assembly with any speech on the subject. They were more and more satisfied that they were right, and they had plenty to say, but it would conduce to the convenience of the Assembly, and be of advantage to the case, not to occupy any time in saying it. Dr. Brown

added that there were eight particulars, and as the rules of the House allowed four speeches on each, there was the intolerable prospect of thirty-two long addresses. Professor Salmond and Mr. Iverach, who appeared for the other side, said that as nothing had been said in support of the dissent and complaint, they of course had nothing to say in reply. Mr. Selbie, by this time probably aware of the absurd mistake which he had made, now proposed to address the House, but it was pointed out that the standing orders forbade the introduction into a reply of any matter that had not been referred to in the opening speech, and Professor Smith rose to claim judgment for the Presbytery on the ground that the case against him had not been supported.

The parties were then removed from the bar, and Dr. Rainy, remarking that the course which had been taken had been entirely unexpected by him, and, he presumed, by other members of the House, moved that the complaint be dismissed. He did so on the simple ground that he held that the course taken was not just to the House. He was sure it had been intended to help the House and to save time, and had been adopted under the idea that so much had been said elsewhere that speaking from the bar was not necessary. But he held that a court like the Assembly, sitting as a court of appeal on so great a question, required to have the case put before it in another manner. If this was true in general, it was especially true where there was a charge against an accused party. This motion was seconded by Principal Douglas, and from all parts of the House it was made clear that the foolish conduct of Dr. Brown and his friends had seriously offended the Assembly. Even Sir Henry somewhat tartly intimated his acquiescence, and it seemed as if Dr. Rainy's motion had been carried, but after some irregular discussion, a motion was made and seconded that the dissent and complaint be sustained.

And now came a third surprise; the prosecution had

been completely out-manœuvred, and resolved to evacuate its positions on the "tendency" charge in order to concentrate on the grave issue of Deuteronomy. It was proposed by Dr. Adam, and with little difficulty carried unanimously, that all the appeals under the second form of charge should be set aside *en bloc*. The words of the finding are to the effect that both motions are withdrawn: "wherefore the Assembly, considering the circumstances in which they find themselves placed and the great importance that any decision to which they come should be thoroughly discussed and well weighed, and finding that the dissents and complaints under the second form of charge cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in the present Assembly, and considering that the charge in the first alternative is the much more serious charge, resolve to depart from the second form of charge; but, in doing so, the Assembly declare that they are by no means to be understood as under-rating the grave importance of the second form of charge, as set forth in the major premise."

The Assembly next disposed without much trouble of the appeal against the resolution of the Presbytery, reserving power to deal in a paternal way with Professor Smith otherwise than by libel upon the strain, tendency, and general character of his writings. Neither Smith nor his best friends were concerned to maintain this resolution. It found no favour in any part of the House, and it disappeared for ever, without demonstration of regret from any one but Principal Rainy, who described it, as Smith had done in the Presbytery, as "a very harmless thing," and sighed gently at having to part with so convenient an appliance for the mild chastisement of heretics.

It was now past two o'clock, and the prosecution had exhausted their powder and shot. The unusual step was therefore taken of adjourning the House to enable them to take counsel what was next to be done. After the interval Dr. A. Bonar, who it will be remembered

had presided as Moderator at the Glasgow Assembly in the preceding year, at once moved :

“The General Assembly instruct the Presbytery of Aberdeen to meet, and take immediate steps for having the libel, as regards the second particular of the first alternative charge, served in due form upon Professor Smith ; they also instruct the Presbytery, in the event of their finding the libel sustained, either by the admission of Professor Smith, or by adequate proof, to suspend him from his functions, professorial and ministerial and judicial, till the next meeting of Assembly, reserving final judgment in the case till that meeting of Assembly ; and the Assembly now appoint a Committee to adjust the libel in this view, excluding from it all parts that are not now applicable, and to report at a future diet of this Assembly.”

This motion made the situation critical, both for the party whose interests and indeed whose ecclesiastical existence depended on tolerance, and for those who, like Principal Rainy, were chiefly concerned to prevent the awkward consequences which would follow the triumph of reaction :

περὶ ψυχῆς θεόν Ἐκτορος ἱπποδαμοῦ.

Nothing less was at stake than the continuance in the Church of those who did not believe that Moses wrote Deuteronomy. It was not surprising therefore that the counter-motion came from the leader of the House, who implored his hearers to be content to temporise. Dr. Rainy's motion was :

“Having respect to the novelty and perplexity of this case in certain of its aspects, the serious difference of opinion that prevails throughout the Church regarding it, the gravity of the consequences which the disposal of it may involve, the General Assembly resolve before proceeding further with the libel to appoint a Committee fairly representative of the Church, with powers, if they see cause, to confer with Professor Smith, directing them to consider the case in all its bearings, with the view of ascertaining the best means for arriving at a result

honouring to the truth of God, and fitted to secure, as far as can be, all the weighty interests which are at stake, and to report to next General Assembly."

The position of the mover was difficult in the extreme, and the feelings with which he urged upon his hearers counsels of moderation, or at any rate of delay, must have been painful indeed. Dr. Bonar had delivered a speech, the purport of which was (as a subsequent speaker¹ put it) that, the better a man was, the more hardly the Church should deal with him. His seconder was Mr. Bannerman, at that time Free Church minister of Dalkeith, in whose more artful and polished address the House seems to have detected a flavour of self-advertisement. Mr. Bannerman's qualifications for the office of accuser, as stated by himself, were that "he had studied in more than one German University," that he was familiar with the speculative opinions of Mr. Matthew Arnold, and that he held strong views on the subject of the appointment to professorial chairs of gentlemen who had never been country ministers. He lectured the House, and more particularly Smith, on the necessity of professors having a knowledge of the world and of human nature, "and of theology properly so-called." His observations were taken in very ill part by some of his hearers, and resulted in his being severely snubbed from more than one quarter of the House in the course of the subsequent debate.

Dr. Rainy found himself much embarrassed by the declarations already noticed to the effect that Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion in the General Assembly of the previous year had in effect been a motion of relevancy. As regarded this point, he could only put it to the House that a majority of twenty-three was a somewhat flimsy foundation for a condemnation of views which he hinted might be more widely shared and more popular than some of his hearers imagined. With such divisions among

¹ Dr. Walter C. Smith.

them as to the liberty of members of the Church within the Confession, it was well not to forget that there was always something at the bottom of tendencies such as Professor Smith represented, and that it was desirable to have some in the Church who gave these tendencies a special and exhaustive study. At the same time the Church had "a natural right to influence and impress" teaching in her colleges, and the speaker concluded with a polite reiteration of the view that there were other methods of dealing with a recalcitrant professor than by way of a libel. "For his part," he observed, "he could not regard it as possible for the Professor to give satisfaction unless it is established in the end that the Church is willing to accord him her confidence."

Smith's speech, the only other which requires notice, was not one of his greatest oratorical efforts, but it was a powerful piece of argument. He disposed of the contention that the Assembly could not go back on Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion of relevancy by a skilful parallel between the Presbyterian infallibility implied in this argument and that of the Pope of Rome. He repudiated the accusation that his views on Deuteronomy were part of a system opposed to the doctrines of the Church, and said that, though he was still convinced he was right, and could hold out no hope that he would retract what he had said, he was willing to seek more light, and if Dr. Rainy's proposed Committee were appointed, he was ready to meet them "in a spirit of humility and with the desire to find that the questions which divided them were not so large as they might seem; and he might do something to satisfy the Church on many points with which there was connected at present much misunderstanding."

The division which immediately followed ended in a remarkable result, for the numbers handed to the clerk at midnight showed that Dr. Bonar's motion had been carried by a majority of one (321 to 320¹).

¹ The corrected figure: at the time it was given as 319.

Dr. Rainy intimated his dissent "because the case was reduced to a single charge; and when the relevancy was found by so small a majority and in so special a form, it was the duty of the Assembly, in the interests alike of the peace of the Church, the justice of the cause, and the influence of discipline, and the maintenance of sound doctrine, to take the course suggested in the rejected motion, as most likely to conduce to unite the Church and to exert a happy influence in the whole case." Those, however, who had accepted a majority of twenty-three as good and sufficient in 1878 were content with a majority of one in 1879, and on Friday May 30, the third and last form of the libel emerged from the hands of Sir Henry Moncreiff, and was ratified by the Assembly, who ordered the Presbytery of Aberdeen to meet for its consideration on the first Tuesday of July at noon. The document (which for purposes of comparison is printed in the Appendix) contained the single charge of expressing the opinion that,

" . . . the book of inspired Scripture called Deuteronomy, which is professedly an historical record, does not possess that character, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age, who therein, in the name of God, presented, in dramatic form, instructions and laws as proceeding from the mouth of Moses, though these never were and never could have been uttered by him,—an opinion which contradicts or is opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and Divine authority of the Holy Scripture as set forth in the Scriptures themselves, and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHORT LIBEL (1879-1880)

THE biographer of Principal Rainy observes with justice that so narrow a majority on such a critical question revealed a deep and dangerous division in the Church. He consoles himself and his readers with the reflection that "in the Scottish Church questions, however grave, are carried on to authoritative judgment," and with some complacency contrasts the fanatical but intelligent discussions which are possible in an emancipated Presbyterian polity with the peace "whose basis is impotence" which distinguishes less favoured branches of the Visible Church. The consolation may be accepted for what it is worth, but it may be observed with confidence that in June 1879, Dr. Rainy and such of his colleagues as were capable of appreciating the situation would have welcomed peace on almost any basis without too curious a scrutiny. The first thought of nearly all parties was in fact to effect a compromise whereby the "authoritative judgment" of the Assembly might be evaded. Sir Henry Moncreiff, still "emphatically the leader of the Church in this matter," had already suggested, even before the Assembly met, that the two parties should both negotiate and pray for the discovery of a *via media*, and the vote of May 27 brought matters to such a point of urgency that a private conference of Church leaders was held on June 3 to discuss the situation. Professor Salmond was the representative of the party of

progress at this meeting, which broke up without coming to any conclusion, after hearing a written statement of Sir Henry's views, the point of which was that the condemnation of Smith's theory of Deuteronomy was essential to the preservation of the integrity of the Free Church. Smith announced this result to his father on his return to Aberdeen a day or two later.

"I got home last night, but only to-day have I seen Salmond with sufficient time to get a clear view of what was done yesterday. Sir Harry ultimately declined the conference: so the meeting was informal, and no one was present for us except Salmond. Rainy, after the others left, seemed much moved with the state of matters and uncompromising hostility of Wilson and Moncreiff. He also expressed his sympathy for me very warmly, and I hope that he will now see it to be inevitable to fight the thing out to an issue. . . . I am very well, though still a little fagged. The crisis is very serious, but must be honestly faced. We must not let any injustice go without a protest."

In this spirit he wrote to Mr. M'Lennan some days later:

"I mean to fight them for another year. It is hard to make up one's mind to do so; but, were I to give in, the adversary would score, and many friends—notably James Candlish, who freely publishes the fact that he has now satisfied himself that all the laws in Deuteronomy are not Mosaic—would be left in an evil case. Even if we gain, my position will not be enviable; and *then* I may have to think of a change. But this is not the time to do so."

These words show that at last he was beginning to realise that the termination of his connection with the Free Church would have advantages for himself as well as for his enemies. That he regarded resignation of his position as Professor at Aberdeen as a temptation to be resisted rather than as a misfortune to be endured is also shown by the attitude which he at first assumed towards an important proposal which was made to him at this

junction. The Chair of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow had just become vacant, and Professor Lindsay, mindful of Smith's scientific attainments, suggested that he should apply for the post. There were obvious practical objections, such as his abstinence for some years from scientific studies, and the doubtful propriety of opposing other candidates who had devoted their lives to mathematics; but apart from this Smith demurred to any solution of the ecclesiastical difficulty which would involve abandoning his fight for liberty of critical inquiry, though he clearly showed that he would be glad enough of an honourable discharge from a struggle which involved such a melancholy waste of energy. He wrote to Professor Lindsay :

“ I don't think my resignation at present, on whatever grounds, could fail to hurt our cause. I don't feel at liberty from your note to consult any one on that topic. But my own feeling is so. . . . That is what occurs to me on the subject. No doubt the idea has much about it that is tempting, and I have serious doubts whether I can ever again be comfortable in my present position. But I don't see my way to move at this moment, and if I move I hardly think that the path of duty is to go back to mathematics, but rather to continue Biblical studies from the unembarrassed position of a layman.”

All his energies, therefore, were for the moment concentrated on the new phase of the Presbytery discussions, and on the attempt which was being made by his friends to encourage that court in continuing to resist the reactionary conclusions of the Assembly. As the Assembly had sent down the latest and briefest form of the libel to the lower court with directions that it should be served, the defence was driven back from the merits of the case on a technical claim of right, and on July 1, when the Presbytery met, Smith submitted a plea in law “ guarding a right which might readily be infringed, and putting forward a claim to be heard again upon the whole

relevancy of the libel." The usual attempt to prevent the accused being heard was made by Dr. Brown's party, and was defeated by the usual majority, and the plea became a paper in the case. The main point of it was the obvious one that, as his accusers had restated their charges against him, and in fact had abandoned all these charges but one, which now appeared in a different form, he as the accused party had the right to restate and concentrate his defence. It would be manifestly unfair if the court were to be influenced in pronouncing its judgment on the Deuteronomy charge by considerations affecting other charges now dropped; and his previous defences, having been composed largely with reference to such charges, were no longer appropriate. He pointed out that he had not challenged anything done by the Assembly. He had simply appealed to the principle that what was done by the Assembly must be understood to have been done in a sense consistent with the constitutional regulations of the Church. In consequence of that, the first step to be taken towards serving the libel was that he should be summoned again to answer upon the relevancy. As he had intimated, he did not desire to do that in any way which would hinder procedure. He would try to put before the Presbytery at once his whole defence on the charge. He now laid upon the Presbytery's table, along with the plea, in case they entertained it, a paper which embodied his answer to the libel both as to relevancy and proof.

After another division the defences were also received, and the Presbytery resolved to serve the libel "without prejudice to the plea in law advanced by Professor Smith," a form of words intended to show that the Presbytery disbelieved in the relevancy of the libel, but acted ministerially in obedience to the directions of their ecclesiastical superiors. A copy of the libel, "composed of various cuttings from the Daily Proceedings of the General Assembly patched together by means of wafers,"

was formally authenticated by the signatures of the Moderator and the Clerk, and Professor Smith, waiving the legal *induciae* of ten days, accepted service of the libel, subject to a dissent and appeal which he had taken in order to maintain his constitutional rights. Having placed his judges in possession of his defence on the narrowed issue, a learned and highly technical document which covered the old ground, but also reflected the most recent advances in Old Testament scholarship, Smith departed for London, where the Revision Committee was sitting. He stopped on the way at Edinburgh, and there had an important interview with Dr. Rainy, his account of which has already been published,¹ but which may well be reprinted here :

“ Whyte was not available yesterday,” he wrote to his father, “ so I had to stay to-day. I had two hours’ hard fight with Rainy, and practically broke his whole line of defence.

“ Finally, after an attempt on his part to ride off with a statement that he wanted both to do justice to me and vindicate the authority of the Church, I pinned him by asking whether he thought it would be just or unjust to condemn me on the new libel, and whether he desired my condemnation or acquittal.

“ He admitted (rather reluctantly and a little testily) that he wished in justice to see me acquitted, a strong admission in the presence of Whyte, and one from which he can hardly go back. It is plain that he is very unwilling that I should pass quite clear, and he admitted that he was sorry the minor charges had gone. But as soon as he was brought to the point he got franker and friendlier, and now I think will be forced to help us.”

This somewhat hopeful view of Dr. Rainy’s attitude seems to have been due to the first flush of his triumph in the argumentative encounter, for by the time Smith reached London we find him writing to Professor Lindsay that he has changed his mind about the Glasgow Chair :

¹ *Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. i. p. 358.

“If I had not found that there was a general feeling among friends that by leaving at the first good opportunity I would rather help than hinder them, I’d never have faced such a thing. Even as it is, it is painful to me to seem untrue to my proper studies; but I fear it has come to that. I thought your proposal not conclusive, because I felt you to be so much concerned for my personal comfort and welfare that you might advise me to consult for myself while others would still advise fight.

“I don’t quite see why you are surprised at my disappointment at Rainy. I was disappointed because I saw that he did not seriously wish to see me acquitted. I am sure he didn’t, and that in my interview on Thursday I forced his position. But, being driven in by force, he’ll never be hearty, and I feel sure he’ll not oppose any attempt to restrict my teaching. If this is so, I see it to be hopeless to protract the fight.”

On his return to Aberdeen he decided, as he said, “to take the plunge boldly and become a regular candidate” for the Glasgow chair. The succeeding letters are full of details about testimonials, the probable attitude of individual electors, and all the hopes and anxieties which precede an appointment to an important post of this kind. Smith was again able to rally round him a remarkable body of distinguished friends. His old teachers, Professor Fuller and Professor Thomson of Aberdeen, wrote commending him in the highest terms to the electors; Professor Tait was one of his most conspicuous supporters. From London he received the cordial good wishes of Sir William Huggins and Professor Foster. His eminent German friends, Dr. Klein and Dr. Nöther, testified that in their opinion he was competent to teach the ordinary mathematical subjects with complete efficiency, and that in a very short time he would be qualified to make substantial advances in special departments; old students bore witness to “his very superior excellence as a teacher”; while Mr. Gladstone, the Lord Rector of the University, though he followed the established etiquette by declining to support any

candidate, wrote Smith a polite postcard in which he "rated his qualifications for the vacant office very highly."

Meanwhile the case proceeded, and the Presbytery met again on September 1. This meeting had the effect of delaying matters once more; the progressive party, after a prolonged discussion, and much to the annoyance of their opponents, carried a resolution to "sist proceedings," in view of the defence and the plea in law which had been presented, and, instead of going to probation, to report the case to the Assembly. Shortly after this meeting Smith sums up the situation in one of his periodical letters to his brother in India :

"I think it is about time that I gave you a notion of my present prospects and plans. We had a Presbytery yesterday, of which I enclose the report. You will see that we can get no further. I am not clear that it might not have been wiser for the Presbytery to face its full responsibility, and sustain my plea and find the libel not relevant. But this would probably have been called rebellion, and many of my friends in the Presbytery would not have felt easy in their minds to go so far, fearing to exasperate leaders and perhaps alienate supporters.

"I am not hopeful. Rainy at Assembly time seemed ready to help us. But his usual instincts of cold and selfish ambition are too strong for him. I had a very instructive interview with him in July along with Whyte. We got him fixed down as to the injustice of the present charge. But he is sorry that the minor charges were withdrawn, and I now see that he has *never* really been with us. He could not admit heresy to be in my writings, as he had said the opposite in the College Committee. But beyond that he will not commit himself to help us, and I am quite sure that he will not willingly support any motion to restore me to my chair. When the thing comes up to the Assembly, it is to be feared that he will not support my plea. Perhaps he may move to drop the case, but probably in that event he will be for adding to the finding an admonition limiting my teaching which I could not accept. So on the whole I think the best

chance to avoid serious calamity to the Church is that I should get the Glasgow chair. Then the fight would be only for ministerial status, in which Rainy must help us, and which I think we can carry. "

Dr. Rainy's policy from this time became more and more unsatisfactory from the point of view of Smith and his friends. Dr. Candlish wrote from Glasgow to ascertain his views, and received a reply to the effect that the Principal had determined to act with others with whom it would be premature to consult. He had no doubt by this time definitely made up his mind to act on his belief that Smith was "impossible," and to launch the policy of the middle party, to which we have already referred, and of which there will be much more to say.

About the end of the month Smith was again in London, where he learned that the election to the Glasgow chair had gone against him. The fact that Lord Kelvin (then still Sir William Thomson) had never supported his candidature had to some extent prepared him for this result, which he accepted with great philosophy as indicating that he should "stick to his own work, and go back to the East."

He returned to Aberdeen in time for the meeting of Synod at which, after a very protracted sitting and much acrimonious debate, it was decided to uphold the Presbytery's decision, and refer the Smith case yet again to the General Assembly. Immediately afterwards he set about preparing for his second journey to the East. Before he left, he received a final proof of his *Encyclopædia* article on the "Epistle to the Hebrews," and about this time he brought into all but final form two pieces of work which were destined to be of the greatest importance in his history. One of these was the article on "Hebrew Language and Literature," also for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the effect of which was ultimately to close his theological career. The other was an article for the *Journal of Philology*, entitled "Animal Worship and

Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament," which was to be the starting-point of a new phase in his intellectual and scientific life. In the next chapter we shall have occasion to consider both these publications in detail.

Smith left London for Egypt on November 5, 1879, and spent the next six months abroad, returning to England on May 4, 1880, greatly invigorated in health, and bringing back with him a rich accumulation of observations and experiences that greatly influenced all his subsequent thinking and writing. The chronicle of his movements, which in some respects were not unlike those of the 1878-79 furlough, need not detain us long. He reached Cairo on the 25th, travelling by way of Naples, Palermo, Girgenti, and Catania; and his notes on each of these historic places were recorded in four interesting letters to the *Aberdeen Free Press*. He spent a month in Cairo, again under the hospitable roof of Dr. Sandilands Grant, and diligently read Arabic with the friendly sheikh of the previous winter. At every turn "totem facts" crowded in upon him, "crying aloud to be registered." Though studying as hard as ever, he entered even more than before into the social life of the place, and saw something of many of the European visitors, including Mr. Herbert Spencer, whom we regret to learn he regarded as a very tedious person. Among the diversions was a three days' excursion into the Libyan Desert, involving twenty hours of camel-riding and two nights of the hospitality of a Bedouin tent.

The next two months were spent at Jeddah, half-way down the Red Sea, the *entrepôt* of the trade and pilgrim traffic of the Hejâz, the western province of Arabia. Here he lived in the house of Mr. Wylde, of the eminent firm of Wylde, Beyts & Co., and saw much of the life of that important mercantile centre. He also was in very friendly relations with the officers of the British gunboats on that station, particularly with those of H.M.S. *Philomel*, on board of which he made a cruise,

not without exciting incident, to Suakim. On New Year's Day he wrote to his mother :

“ . . . We left Jeddah on Saturday (Dec. 27) with a favourable breeze, and, running across the Sea, got into very good anchorage in a creek called Mersa Sheikh Baroud. It is a desolate place, with no fixed inhabitants, but the herdsmen come up from Sawâkin, which is thirty miles to the south, with their camels and cattle to pasture. The pasture-ground is a long flat stretch, an old coral shoal running eight miles or so inland from the sea to the great mountains. Of this stretch part is quite barren, but part is covered with coarse grass and patches of prickly shrubs, with interspersed groups of *Mimosa*, *Euphorbia*, *Spina Christi*, and *Tamarisk*. There are lots of hares (of which we shot a good many) and some antelopes ; birds are in great plenty, and some of them are very pretty. Captain Berners brought home a tailor bird's nest with a young bird in it. I didn't see any of these on the trees, which was a disappointment ; but some may turn up again.

“ We saw a good many natives—very dark, with enormous bushes of hair sticking out like the biggest of turbans. They are dressed in a sort of dingy white sheet. They had no houses, but had rigged up one or two rude huts with branches and mats near the wells. The latter are dug deep in the coral rock, and round about are pans of moist clay, into which the water is drawn.

“ Yesterday we left Sheikh Baroud, and had certainly a very unlucky day to close the year. We had a stiff northerly breeze, before which we ran pleasantly enough ; but the channel south to Sawâkin between coral reefs is so narrow that the run was rather an anxious one to our captain, who, once started, could hardly have got back to the anchorage. At Sawâkin it took us more than three hours of very anxious work to find anchorage. The place marked in charts proved not only unfit but most dangerous with the wind we had, and we had a very narrow escape of going on shore. Of course had we done so we should have been in no danger of our life and property, but the rough rocks would have made a sad mess of the ship's bottom. As it was, our mizen mast came into collision with an Egyptian vessel and got a crack. To-day we are engaged in making repairs.

" We have got a first-rate captain and excellent officers altogether. I need hardly say that I am greatly enjoying my experiences here. It is like yachting on a grand scale. I don't think we shall stay here long—the anchorage is too bad. We shall be off again for Massowah to-morrow, I daresay, and get in on Saturday. There will be some interest there, as the Abyssinians may probably be already at the place. Of course we are neutrals, and have nothing to do but to protect British subjects, who, to be sure, have little to fear from the Abyssinians.

" I am not learning much Arabic on this cruise, but I am picking up a great store of health. The weather has been quite cool for some days—much cooler here than at Jeddah, so that one was able to walk about all day at Sheikh Baroud without inconvenience. The cold time of the Red Sea is just beginning, and for a couple of months I fancy we shall have all we can wish for in the way of weather."

But the most interesting episode of his stay in the Hejâz was unquestionably his enterprising eleven days' excursion to Tâif, from which he wrote to his father on the day of his arrival (February 1) :

" . . . We have had a good, comfortable, and most interesting journey. Two nights we bivouacked, and two we passed in houses. Here a good empty house has been put at our disposal,—for you must know that Tâif is a fashionable summer residence, so there are plenty of empty houses. The Shereef, the prince of Mecca, whose escort is with us, wrote especially to recommend me to his agent here.

" I have copied one interesting inscription, which has been seen before, but not I think published, and now I hope to get some others which I have heard of as near Tâif. I am very well. The air of the desert is magnificent, and this place is famed for its health-giving qualities.

" We were quite a company—two armed slaves of the Shereef, with two superior officers and a camel man. I fear it will cost a lot of baksheesh, but I shall realise by writing my adventures to *The Scotsman*." ¹

¹ He wrote ten letters, which appeared in *The Scotsman* (February to June, 1880). He thought they "might probably end in a small volume," but the editing of this he never found leisure to overtake. The letters now appear in *Lectures and Essays*.

Tâif is some ninety miles from the coast, Mecca lying almost midway in the direct line. Mecca, as is well known, is even now inaccessible to any but professed Mohammedans, and in order to reach Tâif, which does not share its unapproachable sanctity, it is necessary for the non-Mohammedan traveller to make a wide detour (determined partly by the mountains) round the Haram or sacred territory. Smith without much trouble obtained the requisite permission from the Emir of Mecca, and travelled with a retinue of five servants, who understood no language but Arabic, with whom he at once established friendly relations, and to whom he was indebted in the course of the journey for much information which has been preserved in his letters and in his books. Following advice, he wore the Arab dress, in which he was afterwards photographed by Mr. Dew Smith ; his description may be quoted :

“ A long white caftan reaching to the heels, and covered by an equally long mishlakh or cloak of fine camel's hair, do not at first sight seem to form a good dress to ride in. But I found by experience that the Eastern dress is far the most comfortable for such a journey, both upon the camel and in camping out at night. The only disadvantage was that it gave my native companions the opportunity to tell a great many lies about me. They were really a little nervous about travelling with a Frank in out-of-the-way places, and while I adopted the Eastern dress mainly to avoid intrusive curiosity, they occasionally made a serious effort to pass me off as a Mohammedan. I know that Abdullah Effendi, as they chose to call me, figured in one village as a doctor whom the Shereef had sent to inquire into the plague which has been raging among the horses in the towns of the Hejâz ; but as I did not appear to approve of this fiction, I was afterwards kept in the dark as to my supposed personality. When I say that my attendants were nervous about travelling with a Frank, I do not, of course, mean that they anticipated any danger to me while under the protection of the Shereef. They took good care never to let me out of their sight, and with the Emir's men at hand I was perfectly



ABDULLAH EFFENDI (1880).

From a Photograph by the late A. Dew Smith, Esq.

safe, even in a place like Zaimé, where Mr. Doughty was exposed to insult and some hazard as a Christian, after crossing the remotest deserts without hindrance or danger."

During this excursion his home-letters were very brief, but he took notes with great diligence of each day's occurrences, of the manners and customs he saw, of the geology and natural history of the country so far as his opportunities allowed, and made observations deemed by experts to be of value, not only on pre-Islamic Arabia, but also on contemporary Mohammedanism, and especially on the working of the slave trade.

While in the neighbourhood of Tâif he visited and transcribed the inscriptions, believed to be of Himyaritic origin, of which he had already written to his father. He forwarded his description of these to his friend, Professor William Wright of Cambridge, who communicated his letter to the *Athenæum* (March 20, 1880); Professor Sayce wrote in the following week that they were interesting, containing as they did a number of names and addresses to the sun-god.¹

March 14 found Smith again at Cairo, where his Arabic studies were resumed for some six weeks, the only considerable interruption being an eleven days' excursion along with Captain (afterwards Sir Richard) Burton to Fayyum and the Nitrian Lakes in search of manuscripts. Incidentally, they came across some unexpected proofs of the existence of an active slave trade, which were made the subject of correspondence with the Foreign Office, and which are referred to by Lady Burton in her life of her husband.

Meanwhile the traveller was kept duly informed of the progress of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland, where the

¹ Among the spoils he had brought from Jeddah was "a valuable and apparently unique MS. by a certain Abu Aly el Qaly," now in the Cambridge University Library. "This is a prize, and I have got some other useful things also." In Professor E. G. Browne's "Hand-list of the Mohammedan MSS. in the Cambridge University Library," the MS. in question figures as *Kitābu'n-Wāwāder* (book of anecdotes, facetiæ, etc.) by Abū Isma'īl al-Baghdādī, called al-Qālī.

champions of orthodoxy were showing themselves by no means disposed for an armistice, however brief. Not only were arrangements made on private initiative for the publication of a series of polemical pamphlets by Dr. Andrew Bonar and others on such subjects as "Wellhausen and the Higher Criticism," "What is being said in America," "A Protest for Reverence," in which attention was called to the heretic's hardening impenitence as shown by his latest, and as yet unlabelled, article on "Eve," and his recent review of Wellhausen;¹ public attention was also systematically called to the behaviour of his aiders and abettors, and in particular of Professors Candlish and Davidson.

Here it is necessary that we should look back a little way. Late in 1878 Professor Douglas of Glasgow had joined the army of pamphleteers with a brochure of 113 pages entitled "Why I still believe that Moses wrote Deuteronomy: some reflections after reading Professor Smith's Additional Answer to the Libel." This manifesto naturally had to be noticed in the "Review of Works on Old Testament Exegesis in 1878," which Professor A. B. Davidson contributed to the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* early in 1879. In the part of his article devoted to Professor Douglas's pamphlet, Professor Davidson begins by reminding his readers that Dr. Douglas had never doubted that "the critical opinions" regarding Deuteronomy might be embraced and advocated by one who was as sincerely attached to evangelical truth as he was himself. He proceeds to say that "never having had occasion to teach on Deuteronomy and, in consequence, having made no special study of the book," he had turned to Dr. Douglas as likely to help him to meet the difficulties that beset the traditional view. He had been disappointed. The difficulties, which could not be described as small, had not been met. There were some who

¹ The article "Eve" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. viii. (1878); and a review of Wellhausen's *Geschichte Israels*, vol. i., in *The Academy*, May 17, 1879, reprinted in *Lectures and Essays*.

seemed to think that it is enough to pronounce such words as "prophecy" or "revelation," with or without insinuations that the difficulties are entirely due to "unbelief." "Prophecy" and "revelation" indeed are real factors; but in any given case the question must be asked whether we are justified in declaring that they supply the complete explanation of the facts before us. It is clear, although he does not say so in so many words, that the scholarly reviewer disbelieves in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy; and his conclusion is, in the first place, that the facts in the history of redemption are left entirely untouched even by the most advanced critical theories, and, in the second place, that even the record of these facts as given in the Scriptures is less vitally affected than is often supposed.

Attention had already been drawn to the article at the meeting of the Commission in November; and after due notice a formal motion was made and debated in the Presbytery of Glasgow, in which that Court was asked to take judicial notice of Professor Candlish's pamphlet on the *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti* as unaffected by criticism, of his opening lecture on the same subject, and of the responsibility he had taken upon himself as editor of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* in allowing Professor Davidson's article on Old Testament Exegesis to appear. The motion was defeated at a meeting in February by an overwhelming majority; the agitation prospered no better in the Synod, to which an appeal was taken, and the matter was allowed to drop.

The efforts of Dr. Begg, Dr. Horatius Bonar, Mr. Macaulay, and others met with somewhat greater success in the Edinburgh Presbytery, where a motion to appoint a committee to examine Professor Davidson's article and confer with him as to the statements therein made in respect to Pentateuchal history, law, and prophecy found considerable support. The matter was appealed to the Synod and thence to the Assembly, where a decision

in Professor Davidson's favour was reached. The reasons in logic which led the defenders of orthodoxy to propose judicial inquiry into the published utterances of those who were known to be in more or less complete sympathy with Smith's opinions are easy to see. But the considerations of policy which dictated to Principal Rainy a different line of action are hardly less apparent. We find him accordingly, alike in Presbytery and in Assembly, urging that some latitude in argument must be allowed to those who take part in the discussion of doctrinal points raised by others, and in answer to those who had complained of the Presbytery's lack of zeal, it was explicitly affirmed that "it was the duty of the Presbytery" to avoid, if reasonably in their power, any course of action which might force upon the Assembly the consideration of any additional allegation against the orthodoxy of a professor, while the process against Professor Robertson Smith had not yet been brought to a termination. In other words, it would be time enough for the Assembly and its leader to consider what to do with Professors Candlish and Davidson after they had made up their minds what to do with the author of the article "Bible," the article "Eve," and the review of Wellhausen.

Among the letters which reached Smith at Jeddah was one (received on January 13) from Mr. James Bryce, enclosing a proposal from the President of Harvard that Smith should accept the Chair of "Hebrew and other Oriental Languages" in that University. Smith was at first disposed to regard this as perhaps a providential call by which he, his friends, and the Church might be relieved from a situation that had become in many ways so embarrassing. Full records are extant of the progress of the confidential discussion of this problem. His parents raised no obstacle; Professor Lindsay thought the best course would be to accept the offer; but Professors Candlish and Bruce were decidedly and

emphatically adverse to his doing so until the mind of the Assembly had been ascertained. Ultimately it was found that the Harvard authorities were willing to keep the offer open until June, and there the matter rested.

A few passages from Dr. Candlish's letters will make the situation clear. On April 1 he wrote :

“ As to the Chair in Harvard and the question whether you should, supposing you see your way clear on other grounds to accept it, resign for that purpose before the Assembly, I have consulted our friends here, and their opinions are somewhat divided. Bruce, Reith, and I are strongly of opinion that such a course would not be advisable, and that it would be better for the credit and interest of the Church that the case should be fought out at the Assembly, a motion being made that would retain you in your chair, and pressed to a vote no matter how certain and overwhelming its defeat may be.

“ On the other hand, Lindsay thinks there would be an advantage in your accepting the appointment before the Assembly, and Melville said to me of his own accord, when we were walking with Douglas last Saturday, that he thought it would be well if you got some other appointment before the Assembly, and so were independent of what they might do ; because this would throw more odium on the prosecution if they attempted to go on with the case after that, and make your withdrawal less like a defeat. Lindsay also thinks that the avoidance of a clear issue at the Assembly would be less burdensome to young men who feel that they must have liberty on such questions as are raised. But my feeling is different as to that, and I think that anything like a compromise huddling the thing up, and getting you out of the way, would be more fitted to discourage and disgust independent men than a formal decision strongly protested against and arrived at in the illegal way of this libel. If that were followed up by even a few men quietly informing their Presbytery that they hold your opinions, it seems to me that would be the best way of securing freedom short of your being retained in your chair.

“ We have heard rumours lately that seem not baseless, that Rainy and Adam have made up their minds to let you go, and make some compromise with Sir H. & Co.

to drop the libel. They have not had the slightest communication with us, which I think is very unfair ; but if I have an opportunity I'll ask Adam whether the rumour is true. But if it is, this to my mind only makes it all the more necessary that we should be no parties to such a base and unprincipled compromise, but fight the battle out for what we believe to be the cause of truth and right. . . .”

Dr. Candlish went on to suggest yet another means of providing for Smith's future, and broached a plan (not destined to be carried further so far as he was concerned) that he should accept the charge of a new Free Church congregation in the West End of Aberdeen, of which the present Principal of Aberdeen University was for many years the minister. The project was naturally favoured by those who looked forward with regret to Smith's probable severance from the Free Church ; but it may be said with confidence that it was better in Smith's own interest, and perhaps also in the interest of the peace of the Church, that it did not succeed.

Dr. Candlish wrote again on April 21 :

“ I have hardly any additional news to give you. We had a meeting of a few friends here on Monday week (April 12), and I am glad to say that all were unanimous in the opinion that a stand must be made at the Assembly on a distinct motion that would retain you in the chair, and also agreed with you that as far as can be seen just now the best opportunity of bringing it in would be when you have been heard on your plea in law. There was another gathering at Whyte's in Edinburgh last night (Tuesday, April 20), but unfortunately I was not able to be there. . . . The idea was that if we were sufficiently agreed and fixed in our own minds, there would be a representation to Rainy telling him the course our friends were going to take, and that we were resolved to take it, whatever he and others might do, and whether or not we had any chance of success. It may be possible still to influence him, and anyhow we should find out what he is going to do.

“ I have not heard anything more decided or authentic in regard to the rumour I mentioned in my last. As far as I know it is still only a rumour, and some, such

as Salmond, refuse to believe that Rainy will take such a course. Salmond and some others are inclined to attach, as I think, too great importance to the dropping of the libel as saving the Church from a judicial decision ; but legally, and as binding on men's consciences, the libel is not worth the paper it is written on, and what we have to look mainly to is the practical effect of the case on young ministers, students, and laymen. What we must seek to make them feel is that, even if you must go, there is still liberty in the Church for views such as yours. . . .

"Bruce expresses himself still more strongly than I have done on the advisableness of your not committing yourself to the Harvard offer or resigning before the Assembly."

The time was now approaching for the re-entry of the protagonist himself. Smith left Alexandria on April 25, and travelling by way of San Remo, where he saw Mr. M'Lennan, he reached London on May 4. Two days were devoted to revision work before his return to Scotland. On the 11th he reports to his father an important meeting in Edinburgh, where the long-expected developments of Dr. Rainy's policy had at last taken place :

"We had a great conference to-day : Salmond, Lindsay, Candlish, as well as Edinburgh friends. Rainy was seen by Salmond, and said he had made up his mind and drawn a motion, which, at the moment I write, he is submitting as his judgment on the case to a meeting he has called.

"The motion is : to depart from the libel, but on grounds of expediency to deprive me of my chair. Adam also has come to this conclusion. We don't yet know if Moncreiff accepts Rainy's motion, conserving as it does my ministerial status. My friends, of course, now see the thing to be hopeless, but a good deal of pressure is being put on me to resign, then get Rainy to support dropping the libel *simpliciter* with a view to my being chosen minister of some church and remaining in office. I don't quite see what this scheme gains, and I don't see my way yet to fall in with it. . . ."

Two days later he adds :

“We have concluded that I must write an ‘Open Letter’ to Rainy, to be circulated before the debate. So I have been detained here, but must come north to-morrow.”

The Open Letter thus resolved on was written, it may be presumed, in the quietude of the manse at Keig; it was finished on May 18, and reached Dr. Rainy’s hands on the 21st. A brief summary of its contents will be sufficient here. The writer begins with the statement that, although he had had no direct notice of the fact, he has learned “in a way which leaves no doubt as to the correctness of the information,” that a new project has suggested itself to Principal Rainy’s mind, and is being ventilated in his name—the proposal, namely, that the Assembly should summarily terminate the judicial process by dropping the libel, but at the same time should deprive him of his chair, not by judicial sentence, but by an act of administrative authority. He cannot assume that the Principal has made up his mind or formally committed himself to this proposal; but at any rate it is being currently discussed. Smith therefore takes the liberty of addressing an Open Letter to Dr. Rainy—open, as intended not only for the recipient but for all who might have this suggestion before their minds.

The Letter goes on to deal with the proposal to drop the libel. It is argued with great cogency that, inasmuch as the libel had been framed on the demand of the accused—a demand which he had a perfect right to make—it was the duty of the Court to carry it through to a judgment. “My contention still is,” observes the writer, “that I have a good answer to the libel. And that, as every one knows, is your own position.” The libel, he holds, ought in justice not to be dropped but dismissed.

The second part of the proposal—which, it is pointed out, has no logical relation to the first—is treated at greater length. Confessing himself unable to conjecture what the arguments in support of it, or what the

form of motion proposing it, are to be, Smith proposes to inquire in his own way into the meaning of such an act of deprivation. The answer that most naturally suggests itself seems to be that it is penal in its nature. But if so, what is the offence it proposes to punish? The libel is dead. The whole array of conceivable charges has been dealt with in detail, and no judgment has been given against him.

Deprivation, then, was not to be thought of as a penal act. It must be intended (as was his suspension in 1877) as an act of policy and administration. The postulate by which it was sought to justify this act was that under certain circumstances the rights of individuals may be overridden for the greater good of the Church. In other words, the ordinary rights of one person *may* be shown to be in collision with a higher right. But who does not know that questions of the conflicts of rights are judicial questions, the gravest and most difficult that a judge can be called to decide?

“ I take it for granted that you do not suppose that judicial forms and processes should be altogether abolished in our Church. Even after the experience of the last three years you may be presumed to concede that the notion of justice has a place in the Church as well as in the State, and that individual Church members possess rights which, in the ordinary course, can be asserted and vindicated in judicial form. But when you suggest that an office which I have not forfeited in the eye of justice may be taken from me by an administrative act, you affirm that, under certain circumstances, the rights of individuals may be overridden for the greater good of the Church. I presume that this is a nameless prerogative of ecclesiastical authority; when the State overrides individual rights, the action is called tyranny.”

Perhaps, however, in Principal Rainy's view the government of the Church *is* a despotism? The arguments for Civil despotism would no doubt be irrefragable if one could find an infallible despot. But the proposal

at present is inconsistent with the idea that the Supreme Church Court is limited in its action by any constitution whatever.

The ultimate ground of the deprivation must be that Smith has promulgated certain opinions which many in the Church condemn, dislike, or at least suspect. Yet the fact remains that, beyond certain limits definitely fixed by the standards, all questions are open to free discussion. If it is asserted that professors have special responsibilities, it must also be maintained that it is the business of a professor, more than of any other man in the Church, to seek truth where it is to be found, to weigh evidence by his conscientious judgment, and to refuse to sacrifice the truth of which he is conscientiously persuaded to any popular vote or clamour.

“The right to be in the minority for conscience’ sake belongs to my Christian freedom. Did I resign that freedom when I became professor? No! I then surrendered nothing which it is the right and duty of a Christian to maintain. I only bound myself to assert, maintain, and defend the doctrines of our Church and standards, which now, as firmly as then, I accept on their evidence as the truth of God.”

Another argument for the proposed act of policy was that, if he were left in the chair, there could be no peace in the Church. But if the peace of the Church had been disturbed, he certainly was not to blame. Whatever errors of judgment lay in the manner of publication of some of his views, the publication itself was quiet and orderly.

Dr. Rainy’s reply (on May 21) was courteously worded, but gave no hint that he had been moved by any of the arguments addressed to him. It was as follows:—

“DEAR PROFESSOR SMITH—Returning home to-night, I found your note and your ‘Open Letter.’ I have not yet had time to read it, but on the first page I observe the expression of your feeling that before making up my mind to the course of terminating your occupancy of your

Chair otherwise than by sentence following on a proved libel, I might be expected to consult with you and lay my reasons before you. I desire without delay to say one word to you on that subject.

"I may have been wrong, but I have acted on the feeling that I ought to abstain from representations to you which might seem to wear the character of an attempt to press upon you, and to influence your course of conduct with a view in that way to solve the Church's difficulties or my own. And, on the other hand, it seemed to me that whatever objections in your interest it might be my duty to consider ought not to be made matter of private discussion with you, but ought to be sought and found in some other way.

"It was my duty certainly to consider what could be said from your point of view. And as soon as I felt myself in a position, with Dr. Adam, to make known my conception of the line to be taken to friends whom I thought likely to agree with me, I made it known at the same time to friends of yours through whom I knew it would reach you. And so far as effective representation of objections is concerned, I believe I have experienced it more impressively, at repeated meetings, from attached and devoted friends of yours, than I could have done in any conversation or correspondence with yourself. I may add that whatever is proposed, as it has been subject to private argument and remonstrance, so it will be subject to the influence of formal pleading in the Assembly.

"But, whatever you may think of this, my object in writing is to say that at all events it was far from my intention to disregard what is due to you on my part.

"I refrain from saying anything about the painful feelings connected with these matters, because I believe you would rather, as I in your place would rather, be spared anything on that subject.—I am, dear Professor Smith, yours very truly,

ROBERT RAINY.

"Since writing the above I have read your letter through, and I hope you will not think I take an undue liberty in acknowledging the perfect courtesy and great forbearance of tone which marks your argument."

The rumours of the compact finally sealed between Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr. Rainy, and the scathing indictment contained in the Open Letter, had caused

much scandal, and the bitterness of feeling which prevailed was reflected in the proceedings which took place on the first day (Tuesday, May 25) devoted to the Smith case by the memorable Assembly of 1880. This day was entirely occupied with the consideration of the appeals taken by the minority of the Aberdeen Presbytery against the decision to refer Smith's Answer to the Amended Libel and his plea in law to the Supreme Court of the Church. The question immediately at issue was not one of much intrinsic importance, and, as the contemporary chronicler observes, the unofficial agreements previously arrived at by the leaders of the Church cast an air of unreality over the discussion. The play, however, was played out with a certain air of conviction. Smith and the more prominent of his friends were received with demonstrations of popular favour; Mr. Mitchell and others on the opposite side were loudly hissed. The House was crowded, and the debate was conducted with vigour, and even with acrimony. Both parties to the case were heard as of right, and Smith, after some demur, on the point whether he also had technically the rights of an appellant, consented to speak by leave of the House. His speech, which was distinguished by all his usual acumen, showed traces of impatience with his enemies, and even a certain degree of bitterness which in the circumstances is not incomprehensible. Its chief feature was a not unjustified attack on the position of Sir Henry Moncreiff, who, in his recently published *History of the Case*, had prejudged the questions raised in the plea in law, and, as Smith contended, had thus compromised his impartiality as a judge in the proceedings still pending. In a secular court this contention would have had great force, but ecclesiastical tribunals are governed by laws of their own. Smith seems to have received little sympathy, even from his own side, in attempting to vindicate a principle which seems irrefragable to the lay mind; and we are told that his speech was

considered to be a mistake in tactics, and that it suggested unfavourable comparisons with his great Glasgow speech two years before.

Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion, in which for the first time the coalition was publicly acknowledged as an accomplished fact, consisted of two parts. The first was that the Assembly sustain the dissents and find that the libel is now ripe for probation. Had this been all, the normal course of events would have been that the case would have gone back to the Presbytery. This, however, would have meant perhaps a year's delay, and opened up further possibilities of controversy and even of the acquittal of the accused. Sir Henry's motion accordingly went on—"but that in place of instructing the Presbytery to proceed to probation, the Assembly resolve to consider on Thursday next what course it would be best for the Assembly to pursue for the purpose of bringing the case to a conclusion without delay, and that Professor Smith be cited to appear at the bar on that day." A counter motion that the Assembly receive the report of the Presbytery—thus imposing upon the Assembly the task of dealing with Professor Smith's Answer and Plea—was defeated by an overwhelming majority, and the ground was thus prepared for the more summary treatment of the case on which the coalition had determined.

The intervening day was spent by all parties in meetings at which the last dispositions were made for the final battle, and on Thursday, May 27, the Free Church crowded to the Assembly in its thousands to witness what was confidently expected to be the closing scene in the Robertson Smith case. Feeling ran even higher than on the previous day.

"There were applicants for admission to the ladies' gallery so early as half-past six o'clock in the morning," writes a special correspondent, "and two hours before the meeting of Assembly the audience galleries were well filled. Members began to take their places in the House

between eight and nine o'clock, and long before ten every available seat, every vacant space that could be found on the floor of the House, was taken up. The students' gallery was especially demonstrative, cheering and hissing those who had taken part in the case. Professor Smith entered at ten o'clock, and was received with wild cheering from his enthusiastic sympathisers. A more unusual demonstration was that which greeted Principal Rainy, who, probably for the first time in his experience, was hissed as he took his place. The demonstration startled and surprised everybody, and after an answering cheer a remarkable hush fell upon the House, and the Moderator's modest procession entered amid profound silence. In the opening service the Moderator offered a fervent prayer for the guidance of the House in the circumstances of the case. After the minutes had been adopted the Moderator gravely addressed the House, expressing his hope that no demonstration so unseemly in a court of Christ as hissing would be heard that day, and that both the audience and the members of the House would as far as possible restrain their feelings."

Smith, in obedience to the Assembly's citation, took his place at the bar, presumably as an accused person to answer a charge. But Sir Henry had already given notice of a substantive motion which seemed hardly consistent with that view. After recalling the Report of the College Committee in 1877 and the discussions and decisions of the Assemblies of 1877, 1878, and 1879, as having failed to allay the feelings of anxiety and alarm that had been raised in the Church, his motion proceeded :

"The General Assembly feel constrained to come to the conclusion that Professor Smith no longer retains that measure of confidence on the part of the Church which is necessary to the edifying and useful performance of his professorial work, therefore with great regret the Assembly find and declare that he must now cease to hold the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature at Aberdeen. And with this finding the Assembly declare that the case takes end."

The question having been raised as to whether Smith should be called upon to plead at once, or not until

after the motions on the notice paper (now four in number) had been tabled and supported, the decision of the House was found to be in the former sense, Dr. Rainy in particular declaring that he for one would not be put in the position of reasoning the case as a judge, and then afterwards hearing what Professor Smith had to say about it. In these circumstances Smith declined to plead, pointing out that though he had received notice of a proposal to deprive him of his Chair, he had not received notice of the arguments by which the proposal was to be supported. He then left the House, Professor Lindsay remarking that in the circumstances of the case, and especially after Dr. Rainy's declaration, Professor Smith's silence would be more eloquent than anything he could say.

Sir Henry then proceeded with his motion. He admitted that it was peculiar ; but then the circumstances were also peculiar. The idea of such a motion had not originated with him, but he had taken it up because he had been made aware of two things :—first, that some who had hitherto rather seemed to lean to Professor Smith's side of the case were now disposed towards some such adjustment as this ; and, secondly, that those who had consistently supported the decision of previous Assemblies were now desirous that the case should be brought to a close in the present year. He had the less hesitation in making this proposal because even had the case gone to probation, and the charge been found proven, he would not have proposed any further sentence than to exclude Professor Smith from his chair. The charge against Professor Smith, in his view, was not that he denied directly, or even constructively, any fundamental doctrine of the Church ; it was that he had maintained publicly an opinion respecting a book, or portion of a book, of Scripture which in the judgment of the Church could not be logically reconciled with the doctrine of the standards. The alarm and anxiety were so great and so increasingly prevalent that Professor Smith could not look for the

confidence of the Church in the conduct of his chair. Nothing that Professor Smith had ever pleaded had allayed that alarm. The point was further laboured by Sir Henry's seconder (Dr. Adam), who repudiated with emphasis the statement that this alarm and anxiety had been the result of clamour.

Dr. Laidlaw¹ then moved that

“Though the views published by Professor Smith regarding the origination of the Pentateuchal Scriptures and institutions are not the views of the Free Church, yet, seeing they do not contradict the Confessional doctrine of revelation and inspiration in such a way as to necessitate censorial discipline beyond what may have been involved in his having been already temporarily suspended from the work of his chair, the Assembly pass from the libel and repon Professor Smith, humbly looking for the blessing of God on his resumed labours. Further, having regard to the circumstance that the publication of these views by a Free Church professor was fitted to occasion, and has occasioned, much anxiety and alarm among the people of God in our Church and land, the Assembly urgently admonish Professor Smith to be extremely careful in his public utterances upon questions such as those which have been exercising the mind of the community in connection with this case, and commend all professors and ministers to observe the like carefulness in their treatment of these subjects.”

While condemning the views, he desired, he said, to save the Professor to the Church in a chair where he would be pre-eminently useful. Deprivation would not stamp out his views, whereas if he were reponed with some such declaration as that proposed, they would have a better chance of seeing these questions of criticism relegated to the subordinate place—the dull uneminence—which really belongs to them. This was seconded by Professor Macgregor.

¹ Then minister of an important charge in Aberdeen. He afterwards became Professor of Systematic Theology in the New College.

Dr. Rainy and his allies had now the mortifying experience of listening to a lecture from their old opponent, Dr. Begg, on the impropriety (to say the least) of the course which they were pursuing. The language he held almost recalled the phrasing of the Open Letter, and it was received with loud demonstrations of approval by the students' gallery. He moved that the Assembly proceed with the probation of the libel. He described the course proposed by Sir Henry Moncreiff as unprecedented, and injurious to the interests alike of professors and ministers, whose rights to a fair trial it suspended in a way that might make Presbyterianism an instrument of intolerable tyranny. He also objected to the abrupt and summary ending of the case, inasmuch as it did not protect the rights of the people, leaving as it did the question undecided whether Professor Smith was to be entitled as a member of the Church to promulgate the views for which he had been deprived as a professor.

The effect of this pronouncement on the final issue of the debate was remarkable, but Dr. Begg's intervention was not the most picturesque incident in a memorable evening. The next speaker was the venerable Dr. Beith, whose first appearance in the case had been on the side of reaction, and whose conversion to the more liberal view (noted in an earlier chapter) was one of the few events in the controversy which the historian can regard with unqualified approval. Dr. Beith was old enough to have taken part in the division which resulted in the deposition of Mr. Campbell of Row in 1831, and it was a comfortable recollection of his that he had not voted for the removal of that protomartyr of the Broad Church party. His age, and the great respect in which he was held, easily procured the leave of the House for his son (Mr. Gilbert Beith, M.P.) to read the statement which he had prepared in support of his motion, which was to the following effect :

“The General Assembly, considering that the course

of the case has confirmed the Report of the College Committee that they had not found any ground sufficient to justify a process for heresy against Professor Robertson Smith, inasmuch as seven of the eight counts in the original libel have been found irrelevant, while with regard to the remaining count the explanations offered by Professor Smith at various stages, and in particular his answer to the amended libel, afford satisfactory evidence that, in this aspect of the case also, there is not sufficient ground to support a process for heresy, do resolve to withdraw the libel against him. Further, the Assembly, finding that Professor Smith is blameworthy for the unguarded and incomplete statements of his articles, which have occasioned much anxiety in the Church and given offence to many brethren zealous for the honour of the Word of God, instruct the Moderator to admonish Professor Smith with due solemnity as to the past, in the confident expectation that the defects referred to will be guarded against and avoided in time to come. And, finally, the Assembly declares that, in declining to decide on these critical views by way of discipline, the Church expresses no opinion in favour of their truth or probability, but leaves the ultimate decision to future inquiry in the spirit of patience, humility, and brotherly charity, admonishing professors to remember that they are not set for the propagating of their own opinions, but for the maintenance of the doctrine and truth committed to the Church."

In his statement Dr. Beith respectfully reminded fathers and brethren that no question of doctrine was before them. As to doctrine—the whole circle of confessional Scriptural doctrine—Professor Smith was as clear, unchallengeable, and zealous as any of the able and trustworthy ministers of their beloved Zion. "The question," he continued amid applause, "was one of criticism—of delicate and difficult though not vital criticism—into the merits of which he himself did not pretend to be able to enter, as he believed only very few of the old ministers were." This admission divided the House between approval and laughter, but Dr. Beith gravely reminded his hearers that their duty to the glorious Head of the

Church required that heed be taken not to interfere unduly with efforts made to elucidate truth—truth to be ascertained by careful examination and earnest prayer for divine guidance. “Authoritative decisions,” continued the speaker in prophetic words, “which are dictated by motives of expediency, however good the object may be, can ultimately avail nothing; they are always, moreover, perilous in view of the future, both as to the Church’s peace and the honour and glory of our great Head and Master. In the case of Professor Smith, any extreme sentence would ere long appear indefensible, and therefore be not for the truth but against the truth.”

The debate which followed occupied the whole afternoon, and was renewed, after an adjournment, at seven o’clock in the evening. Almost all the prominent members of Assembly, and many who had no prominence, addressed the House, which listened in turn to speeches in every key from shrill denunciation to humorous remonstrance. The discussion, as was expected, was strenuous and sometimes bitter, and there were repeated outbursts of pent-up excitement. Professor Lindsay twitted Sir Henry with the strange discrepancy between the preamble and conclusion of his motion. The Earl of Kintore, Mr. Ferguson of Kinmundy, Mr. Colquhoun of Luss, and the well-known and respected Dr. Benjamin Bell of Edinburgh, showed once more that Smith had on his side the mass of intelligent lay opinion. The Procurator of the Church (Sheriff Campbell) defended the legality of the official motion, but Sheriff Cowan contended that the right, reasonable, and constitutional course of procedure was to carry the libel to probation as proposed by Dr. Begg. He and other speakers pointed out (and were not contradicted) that if the Assembly passed Sir Henry’s motion the Church would put herself “in a position of antagonism to the just laws of the land . . . if Professor Smith chose to go to the court of session, which he would not do (applause), with the case, notwithstanding the Assembly’s

offering him money, the court would review the proceedings of the Assembly and grant the Professor damages." Some of the orthodox party themselves wavered. Professor Blaikie said that three days ago he had not been able to see any way of reponing Professor Smith, but when he heard the motions of Dr. Laidlaw and Dr. Beith, proposed and supported by those who knew Professor Smith's views better than he did, he saw a ray of light on the matter. If Professor Smith was prepared to concur in either of these motions, he suggested that he should be heard, and that a way to a decision would thereby be cleared up. This led to a second attempt being made to obtain a hearing for Smith before the division was taken; but the proposal produced a long and excited wrangle, and was opposed both by Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr. Rainy. It was not adopted.

Two speeches call for some special notice. The first was that of the Reverend Hugh Mackintosh, a highly orthodox young minister, a former student of Smith's and one of the signatories of a Memorial by students in Smith's favour which had been circulated among the members of Assembly. In supporting Dr. Beith's motion he bore enthusiastic testimony to the inspiring and elevating nature of the Professor's influence upon his students, his unvarying fidelity to the doctrines of grace, and the freedom of his teaching from all unsettling tendencies. Personally he had no difficulty in reconciling Professor Smith's views with the strictest view of plenary inspiration. As for the argument from loss of confidence, if they went on this principle it would give an encouragement to turbulent people to bring about want of confidence, and if these people were only long enough and loud enough they would succeed. But if this sort of thing went on, there would soon be a want of confidence in their Church's justice, in Presbyterian order, and ecclesiastical righteousness.

The other speech was that of Dr. Rainy. The leader

of the Assembly laboured visibly. He admitted, as he well might, that his heart was heavy, but declared that his course was clear. He showed that he felt the taunts of Dr. Begg and the remonstrances of Smith's friends, and acknowledged somewhat ruefully his share of the responsibility for the course that was being taken. He had always been against a libel, and particularly against finding the existing libel relevant; but to go back on the previous findings of Assembly would be to pursue an obstructive course. Neither the motion of Dr. Laidlaw nor that of Dr. Beith would, he contended, extricate them from the difficulty. Either solution *would most probably be the beginning of a new case*. They must look at the practical difficulties in which the libel had landed the Church. Though technically the decisions of the Assembly hitherto proved nothing against Professor Smith, he asked whether morally and really there was not in these successive decisions a great proof of want of confidence in him.

It was now past eleven o'clock, and amid a scene of great excitement the Assembly proceeded to vote. The account of the chronicler¹ is to the effect that it was seen at once in the first vote, between the motions of Dr. Begg and Dr. Beith, that a number of the Moncreiff-Rainy party meant to vote for Dr. Beith's motion, in the hope evidently of swamping Dr. Begg's; and the doors were watched with keen interest as members made their way towards them. On the tellers reporting a majority of 31 (287-256) for Dr. Beith, there was great cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs by the students and other occupants of the galleries. After Dr. Laidlaw's motion had been negatived by 244 to 51, the final vote between the motions of Sir H. Moncreiff and Dr. Beith was taken at ten minutes after midnight. Before dividing, Sir Henry said he had been asked whether members who had voted once already were entitled to vote again.

¹ *The Scotsman*, May 28, 1880.

Of course the answer was that they must judge for themselves. They were entitled to vote. During the progress of the division the greatest uncertainty for some time prevailed as to how the vote would go. A compact body of members at once rose when the division was called and made their way towards the doors on the left of the Moderator, which were set apart for the followers of Dr. Beith ; but, when the floor of the House had cleared a little, a considerable section of the party who usually followed Dr. Begg rose and walked across the House to vote for Sir Henry Moncreiff. Dr. Begg, Dr. Kennedy (Dingwall), and a few others abstained from voting. The Rainy-Moncreiff party were a little longer than the other in passing the tellers, and this gave rise to the impression that their motion had been carried. So convinced of this, apparently, were the public, that when Principal Rainy, who was one of the tellers, came to report he was roundly hissed. Gathered in front of the rail of the clerk's table, the tellers gave in their statements, and the result was awaited with breathless interest. The suspense was terminated in a very unexpected way by Professor Lindsay slightly waving his hat. This, along with the joyous expression of his countenance, was rightly interpreted to mean that Smith's cause, despite all the powerful influences ranged against him, had triumphed. The whole assemblage sprang to their feet, cheering vociferously. In the midst of the din those near the table heard the voice of the clerk announcing the numbers ; Dr. Beith's motion had been carried by a majority of 7 (299-292).

Sir Henry, as soon as silence had been obtained, announced the numbers, and intimated his dissent from the judgment of the Assembly. The same course was followed by Dr. Begg, and also by Principal Rainy. It was a barren satisfaction. The coalition had been defeated, and it remained only to carry out the finding of the Assembly. After a pause, therefore, Sir Henry

Moncreiff directed that Professor Smith should be called to the bar, and the official account¹ continues :

“The officer thereupon left the House, and in a few minutes returned with Professor Smith, whom he conducted to the bar. As soon as the Professor made his appearance at the door immediately to the right of the Moderator, the whole audience again rose to their feet, and raised a ringing cheer which all the attempts of the Moderator, Principal Rainy, and the clerks were unable to suppress. The ladies seemed the most incorrigible, for they kept waving their handkerchiefs, even after the cheering had begun to subside.”

After silence had been restored, so far as was possible in the excited state of the House, Sir Henry intimated to the Moderator² that Professor Smith was now called to the bar to hear judgment, whereupon Smith stood up while the finding of the House was read, and the Moderator addressing him, said :

“Professor Smith, it is my painful duty, in accordance with the terms of the resolution to which the Assembly has come, to admonish you ‘with due solemnity as to the past, in the confident expectation that the defects referred to will be guarded against and avoided in time to come.’ The foundation of this lies in the fact that you are said to be ‘blameworthy in the unguarded and incomplete statements’ of articles which you have written. Observe, that whilst there has been a very nearly balanced vote upon the present occasion, it was solely in regard to what was fitting and proper to be done in the circumstances. Amongst all those who have voted there was no diversity of opinion in regard to the incompleteness and unguardedness of the statements you have made. The unanimous judgment of the Assembly is that these views have been unguarded and incomplete, and the anxiety created throughout the Church at large has been great indeed. I can scarcely imagine but that you yourself feel very deeply with regard to that, and

¹ Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland held at Edinburgh, May 1880, p. 244-5.

² The Rev. Thomas Main, D.D., minister of St. Mary's Free Church, Edinburgh.

the confident expectation of the Church, therefore, is this, that seeing the solicitude that has been awakened, realising the solemnity of the circumstances in which you have been placed, and the confidence that is reposed in you, that in the time that is to come you will carefully guard against all approach to the same line and the same tone of statement, and that by your future line of action the confidence which the Church has expressed shall be found to have been fulfilled, and, if so, there will be great satisfaction throughout the Church at large. I think that I fulfil my duty in making these statements. I admonish you, therefore, in regard to the line of the past to be guarded against, and as to the course of the future which it is needful and becoming for you to take."

Professor Smith, who was received with cheers followed by cries of "Hush!" and who spoke amid perfect silence on the part of the audience, said :

"Moderator, I hope that I am not out of place when I say that while I thank God for the issue of this evening—an issue which I trust will be for His glory and for the maintenance of His truth—I have never been more sensible than on the present occasion of the blame that rests upon me for statements which have proved so incomplete that, even at the end of three years, the opinion of this House has been so divided upon them. I feel that, in the providence of God, this is a very weighty lesson to one placed, as I am, in the position of a teacher, and I hope that by His grace I shall not fail to learn by it. (Loud cheers.)"

The Moderator gravely rebuked the audience for the unseemly manner in which they had received the becoming acknowledgment which they had had from Professor Smith as to his having been blameworthy in the past, and observed that it would be a solemn and weighty consideration for the Church, against the time that was to come, to guard against the possibility of the recurrence of the scene they had had that evening. The benediction was thereafter pronounced by the Moderator, and the Assembly adjourned at about one o'clock.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND CASE (JUNE—OCTOBER 1880)

THE decision of the Assembly was one of those which may be grandiloquently described as having "satisfied the public conscience." It was received with a chorus of approval by the morning papers of May 28, 1880.

To all Dr. Rainy's opponents, to many of his friends, and perhaps even to himself, it must have seemed that his position as an Assembly leader was gravely compromised. The humiliation of the middle party was complete. They had sold their birthright and had been cheated out of the mess of pottage. They were condemned for being disingenuous, and mocked at for being unfortunate. Dr. Begg was held up to them as a model of consistency and honesty; they were told that "nobody who loved justice and admired straightforward dealing would have much sympathy with Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr. Rainy in the profound mortification which they must feel." The majority of the Assembly—narrow as it was—was congratulated on having shown "that the Church's policy and procedure are not to be regulated by either a bigoted and intolerant ecclesiasticism, straining judicial forms to carry out its ends, or by a time-serving expediency perpetually watching 'the minds of men' to know which way the wind blows." In many of the attacks Dr. Rainy was singled out for special animadversion. It was felt that the proposed sacrifice of the libel was a less serious offence than the attempted betrayal

of the man. The shortcomings of Sir Henry Moncreiff were condoned as due in great measure to an honest incapacity to comprehend the issue, a defect which was shared by many of the "old ministers" to whom Dr. Beith had so feelingly alluded on the previous evening. The "compromise" to which Sir Henry had been induced to consent was known to be the work of another and a stronger brain, and it was "the crooked deviser" of his motion who was held up to the contempt if not to the execration of honest men.

A defence of Principal Rainy's conduct in this unhappy transaction has lately been put before the public by an eminent and a friendly hand, in which all that he did and suffered for the advantage (as he conceived it) of his Church, all the perplexities with which he was beset, and all the difficulties he encountered are feelingly described: The present writers cannot fully admit the pleas which are advanced by Dr. Simpson, still less can they acquiesce in the inevitable attempt which has been made to put a large share of the blame for the troubles caused by the Smith case on Smith himself. But after thirty years they have no wish to revive the contemporary bitterness with which Dr. Rainy was assailed, and they recognise the peculiar delicacy of his unique position.

The Presbyterian system of Church courts, which Dr. Simpson has commended as much superior to an Episcopal constitution under the ultimate control of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, has at least one serious drawback. The supreme authority of the Church is a democratic chamber approximating in size to the House of Commons, and composed of human beings of high intellectual and spiritual qualifications, but of like passions with the rest of mankind. Such a body is in any case unfitted for the conduct of judicial proceedings, but eminently so when the questions at issue are not questions of ordinary morality but difficult points of scholarship and theology, requiring for a right decision the equipment

of a scholar and the trained and unbiassed intelligence of a judge. The task of leading such an Assembly must always require political sagacity and worldly wisdom—qualities the habitual exercise of which is, perhaps unreasonably, dissociated in the popular mind from the highest manifestations of the Christian character. The Church leader will often find himself in positions in which, so to speak, he cannot save his own soul without imperilling interests to all appearance at least equally sacred. If he is to perform with success the duties of his position, he must often employ means characteristic of the dexterity of the old parliamentary hand rather than in harmony with the somewhat vague standard of ethical simplicity which the public is pleased to require of a clergyman. So it was with Principal Rainy; and while the compromise in the momentous issues in the Smith case, which he now attempted and finally carried out, may be justly condemned as neither courageous nor high-minded, let it not be forgotten that compromise, foreign as it is both to religion and to science, is of the very essence of all politics.

Sir Henry Moncreiff's position, as we have said, did not call for any special criticism. There were a few acrid references to the wreckage of his reputation as an ecclesiastical lawyer, but on the whole there was a general disposition to let him alone; and when on the day following Smith's acquittal he moved in the Assembly for a return of the views on the subject of Inspiration held by the professors throughout the Church, his motion was quietly negatived and no more was heard of the proposal.

Smith meanwhile was the hero of the hour, and the twenty-one days which were destined to elapse between the ending of the first and the opening of the second Robertson Smith case were crowded with demonstrations of admiration, rejoicing, and relief. The morning of the 28th brought, of course, a shower of telegrams all on one note of joyful congratulation on what the senders regarded

as a splendid victory for "the principles of truth, justice, and liberty." After the telegrams came innumerable letters to Smith himself, and to his father, expressing the same thought more fully.

"You have fought a noble battle," wrote an old friend. "Had you been defeated in it you would still have won, in the very conflict and the rousing of men's minds that it involved, a great triumph; but now that you have not only done all this, but vindicated successfully for yourself and all other students in your Church the right of free research, and have also the happiness of thinking what a scandal your victory has saved your Church, you may well be a proud and happy man."

These and other ideas suggested by the great event, recur in endlessly varied phrase from all sorts and conditions of correspondents, some personally quite unknown to Smith. Professor Blackie sent a characteristic letter, and celebrated the happy issue of the struggle in a sonnet. Professor Baynes of St. Andrews, editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "thanked God on behalf of the Church and on behalf of the momentous interests of liberal thought and critical science in these islands," though he expressed disappointment that the victory put an end to the plan of permanently attaching Smith to the staff of the *Encyclopædia*.

Professor Wellhausen sent laconic but affectionate greetings from Leyden, where he happened to be on a visit. Professor Ritschl hastened to say "how fully he shared Smith's feelings about the result of so much toil and anxiety, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity." Lagarde's letter had its usual touch of piquancy:

"It is a great pleasure for me to learn that you keep your place. From the German point of view a great many things connected with your trial are unconceivable. I read every word concerning this business that came within my reach, and find that you behaved most wonderfully. . . . Let me hope that the whole affair will not be lost for your Church.

"I have to thank you for your letters from Arabia, which will be carefully preserved, pasted upon paper. There is a good deal of very useful information in them.

"Lotze is probably going to Berlin. Ritschl's last book is horrid, in the worst style of his theology, and now he declares himself a Lutheran!"

Professor Nöldeke, who is now the *doyen* of European Orientalists, wrote tersely from Strassburg :

"It is with peculiar satisfaction that I observe that even in Scotland a hearing is given to views such as yours, the important bearing of which upon the traditional view of the Old Testament is obvious. After all, the world will not stand still, however pleasant a state of repose might be to many!"

Principal Fairbairn, then of Bradford, welcomed the decision as "an honour to the Free Church and one of the best things it has ever done for religion in Scotland and the cause of Presbytery throughout the world." Dr. Aldis Wright, Secretary of the Old Testament Revision Committee, and editor of the *Journal of Philology*, said :

"The announcement in *The Times* of this morning of the triumphant termination of your case has given all your friends here the most unfeigned satisfaction. It is the only good thing which has come out of the long and harassing persecution you have had to endure. I have all along trusted that the cause of free investigation would win, as it always has done, in the struggle with theological dogmatism. Your opponents' bad generalship secured their defeat. Such a compromise as that proposed by Sir Henry Moncreiff and Principal Rainy could never have imposed upon any Assembly in the world. It was a compound of weakness and treachery, and met with the fate it deserved."

Professor Cheyne, the reader will not be surprised to find, was even more uncompromising. He wrote :

"I was most pleased, but my joy was dashed by the humiliation which you have had to suffer. It is no doubt true that the Church has a right to tenderness from

believing Biblical critics, but the demands of the Assembly are excessive. To be quite just, the veterans of the Assembly ought to have gone down on their knees, and asked pardon for their sins of omission. If the older generation had done its part, how much easier would be the lot of those who desire to do their duty both to science and religion ! ”

The longest and the most important letter which Smith received on this occasion was, however, from one with whom he was not theologically allied. Professor Kuenen, as we have seen, had already intervened in the case to protect Smith against a mendacious allegation of his opponents. On June 7, 1880, he sums up in his grave and impressive way the situation created by the Assembly's decision. The reflections he makes are so just and so important that they must be given at length.

“The coalition between Sir Henry Moncreiff and Principal Rainy made me fear the worst for you. Doubly pleasant therefore was the issue in your favour. In every respect it was pleasant. First, from the standpoint of morality, Sir Henry and Dr. Rainy are without doubt ‘honourable men,’ nevertheless their proposal was not an honourable one—an attempt to evade a decision on the principle involved and by give-and-take to secure a great and seemingly unanimous majority. The miscarriage of such a scheme is a triumph of right. In the second place, I am glad for the sake of the Free Church. Her creed is not mine. But I have deep respect for her faithfulness to conscience and for her zeal. For that very reason I should have been deeply grieved had she by expelling you and those of your way of thinking deprived herself of her best forces in the great struggle—in which we are all at one—against the errors and miseries of our time, against materialism and pessimism. Lastly, I am heartily glad on your own account. I place this last, because I well know that it has the last place in your estimation. The thought that you were to be ejected from the sphere of activity in which you had laboured with so great fruitfulness, seemed to me well-nigh unendurable. With all my heart, I wish you all prosperity and good success in the resumption of your work, now that this danger has been

averted. Of the cordiality of your students on your return to them, no doubt is possible.

“ There is one feature in which, as I view it, I can find no satisfaction,—I mean, the admonition from the Chair. I cannot see that you deserved it, and thus have difficulty in seeing how you could accept it. Yet, I think I understand why you decided to do so. For you the Church is something more than it is for us. You were able, therefore, to impute it to yourself as a fault that you had caused anxiety and distress to many well-meaning persons within its borders, and were thus able to accept rebuke for this at the mouth of her constituted representative. And so, in point of fact, you retreated in order to advance, and it is a healthy advance that she makes through you. However this may be, the younger generation under your leadership and that of your like-minded colleagues will understand these things better than they are at present understood, and so help the Church forward in a progress which she has not yet attained.”

Hopes for the durability and success of the settlement arrived at were expressed on all hands ; but there were some who did not fail to observe that there were elements of instability in the situation. Even the Press in the first flush of triumph allowed itself some uncomfortable reflections on the smallness of the majority ; and an analysis of the voting at once showed that Smith's victory was in fact due to a miscalculation of Dr. Begg, who was precluded from himself supporting Dr. Rainy, but who intended that his followers should do so in sufficient numbers to secure that the policy of extrusion should prevail. More than one shrewd observer mingled warning with congratulation. Dr. Benjamin Bell wrote in the manner of the older generation :

“ In looking back on the recent time of trial and anxiety to yourself and all of your friends, I cannot help seeing many indications of the Lord's gracious and superintending care ; and these seemed to thicken as the end approached. The happy termination must be traced to Him alone. With this conclusion I know that you thoroughly acquiesce. Now as to the future. Being all

solemnised, and I hope in some degree humbled, by a sense of God's nearness to us in what has taken place, it surely becomes one and all of us to exhibit no symptoms of human self-complacency or of jubilation over our opponents, and to walk very softly, doing as individuals, and as a party in the Church, all that we can in His strength for the advancement of His kingdom both at home and abroad. Many eyes will be upon us, if I mistake not, trying to discover some of the dangerous results so freely prophesied for some time back."

Even more remarkable was a letter from Sir William Huggins, who expressed his view of the situation under a striking figure.

"I suppose now you are again *fairly* free to carry forward your own views and teaching. I suppose the enemy would not hesitate to bring a fresh accusation of heresy, if you should say or write anything which they think they can show to be inconsistent with the Confession. I cannot help looking upon you still as a giant in fetters, or like Lazarus with the grave-clothes about him."

Lady Huggins, continuing on the same sheet, observes prophetically, "I hope you will have some rest now; but somehow I think you will have more fighting to do by and by." Events were already bringing about the fulfilment of this prediction.

The eventful Assembly of 1880 rose on Tuesday, June 1, and on the same day Smith's article, entitled "Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament,"¹ of which we began to hear rumours in the autumn of 1879, was at last published in the *Journal of Philology*. In the calendar of Smith's life the appearance of this publication is of great importance, for it may be taken as marking the close of the period when his literary and scholarly activities had a pervadingly ecclesiastical interest and a positively theological character, and the beginning of the fruitful period during which his researches were pursued in the wider

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*.

fields of anthropology and comparative religion. The starting-point of the article was the totemistic hypothesis of his friend Mr. J. F. M'Lennan, first published ten years previously in the *Fortnightly Review*, to the effect that from the earliest times, in very many cases, and in the most widely separated races, animals had been worshipped by tribes of men who were named after them, and believed to be of their breed.

In the light of this hypothesis the article discusses the probability that among the Semites, as in other parts of the ancient world, and notably in Egypt, animal worship and animal tribes were associated in the way which Mr. M'Lennan's theory would lead one to expect. This probability had first been suggested to Smith several years previously by the examination of data afforded by the Old Testament. The Old Testament facts had seemed to point to Arabia as the part of the Semitic field most likely to throw further light on the matter. In Aberdeen, unfortunately, he had not sufficient access to the indispensable Arabic texts, but even the scanty material at his disposal there had yielded so many relevant facts, and thrown so much light on the data contained in the Bible, that he thought himself justified in publishing his provisional argument, and so inviting the co-operation of scholars in further research. The research has been carried on by many scholars since June 1880; the advances made by Smith's own studies are to be seen in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885, 2nd ed., 1903), and can be traced everywhere in his *Religion of the Semites*.

The article was very favourably received by the learned world, and was regarded as throwing "a new and surprising light on Semitic religion and on several parts of the Old Testament." The interest in the idea suggested rapidly grew, and the author soon became aware, through the letters he received from the leading scholars of Europe, that he had already achieved a new

reputation,—a reputation which, as we now know, was destined to outshine that of a successful teacher of Hebrew in a theological seminary. On June 17 he writes from Aberdeen to his sister, expressing the hope that the “totem paper” has reached Mr. M'Lennan's hands, and adds: “it has been very well received by the leading Arabic and Old Testament men to whom I have sent it, and I have got in letters several interesting new pieces of evidence.” It will be necessary in due course to notice the effect produced by the article on his theological brethren; it is now time to turn to another publication, in itself of far less importance, but destined to greater prominence in his history by reason of its incidental effects.

The eleventh volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which appeared on June 8, 1880, contained Smith's article on “Hebrew Language and Literature,” an unambitious and highly condensed summary of facts, such as might naturally be looked for in such a book. The etymology of the word “Hebrew,” the connotation of the expression “Hebrew language,” the relations of Hebrew to the Semitic group of languages in general, the area and history of Hebrew as a spoken language, are briefly discussed. The literary development of Hebrew is considered at greater length. It is pointed out that the earliest products of Hebrew authorship seem to have been lyrics and laws, which would circulate in the first instance from mouth to mouth. Something is said as to the earliest written collections of lyrics, and it is stated that the earliest date of written law-books is uncertain. As regards history, the story of the early fortunes of the nation often presents characteristics which point to oral tradition as the original source. And so forth. Finally, a somewhat detailed narrative relating to the cultivation of Hebrew as a dead language is given. Naturally the article covered to some extent the same ground as the article “Bible.” But it was five

years later, and quite five years more mature. The writer had learned a good deal in the interval, and had reached greater clearness on many historical points. Moreover, from the nature of the case, it was even less possible here to give prominence to the supra-naturalistic point of view. As a matter of fact, the article dealt exclusively with the human side of the subject. It wholly ignored the old notion of Hebrew being a language *sui generis*, and indeed the primitive language spoken by "man" (Adam) in Paradise; without a word of explanation or apology it assumed that any hypothesis of a divine authorship for some, or most, of the extant remains of Hebrew literature did not foreclose the freest discussion of the literary or linguistic phenomena it presented.

The article had been completed before he left for Egypt in the previous autumn, and had it not been for the accidental delay of the eleventh volume of the *Encyclopædia*, due to another contributor,¹ it would probably have been actually published before Dr. Beith's motion was debated in the Assembly. In his speech in the course of that debate Dr. Rainy, as we have seen, had expressed the view that the settlement ultimately reached by the House was no durable settlement at all, but was likely to prove only a new beginning of the case. How correctly he had gauged the disposition of the orthodox party was now shown by the re-entry into the conflict of a combatant whom the reader has probably forgotten.

The Rev. Mr. Macaulay, who was so prominent in the early days of the first case, and who had no doubt been patiently watching for opportunities of further distinction, saw his chance of stirring up the old controversy, and launched an attack on "Hebrew Language and Literature" with amazing energy and promptitude. On Tuesday June 8, at the earliest, on Tuesday June 15, at the latest,² the *Encyclopædia* volume came into the

¹ Sir William Thomson (Lord Kelvin), author of the article "Heat."

² The brief autobiographical note in Mr. Macaulay's speech is here somewhat obscure.

hands of this doughty champion, and, within two hours, his vigilant zeal—aided by the experience gained in his previous exploits in the same field—had enabled him to frame an exhaustive “ memorial and petition ” to the College Committee, which he laid before the Edinburgh Presbytery and the public on June 15. The memorial was in the form of a threefold complaint,—*first*, against Professor Smith’s critical method, which as applied to Holy Scripture is illegitimate and inapplicable, since it ignores the fact that the holy writings were given by inspiration of God ; *secondly*, against his “ theory ” of the course of the development of the Old Testament literature,—a theory which is without ground in fact, and, where entertained, makes belief in the consistency, continuity, and integrity of the written Word of God impossible ; *thirdly*, against all the conclusions arrived at on this method and theory, as being not only false, but also dangerous and destructive in their tendencies, and contrary to and inconsistent with the Confession of Faith. In particular, as regards the Pentateuch, it is falsely said (*a*) that it may fairly be made a question whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone ; (*b*) that Deuteronomy consists of the ancient ordinances of Israel re-written in the prophetic spirit ; and (*c*) that the Levitical code, first drafted by Ezekiel, was nearly the last development of Israel’s literature. Thus, by placing last what should be first, and first what should be last, by dislocation and inversion, the whole of the divinely given revelation is thrown into confusion. Further, it is falsely said that Eber (the progenitor of the Hebrews) in Genesis is not an actual personage, but an ethnological, geographical abstraction, that the author of Chronicles worked from older documents which he did not fully understand, that Canticles as a lyric drama has suffered much from interpolation, and presumably was not written down till a comparatively late date

and from imperfect recollection. Similar injurious statements are made about Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, Ecclesiastes, and Jonah ; while Isaiah is sawn asunder.

Such being the memorial, the petition was that the Commission take prompt and effective action to prevent the Rev. Professor Smith from teaching the erroneous and destructive views complained of in one of the theological colleges of our Church, and to secure that the testimony of the Church to the truth, authority, and inspiration of the Word of God may be fully and without compromise maintained.

The memorial is, in fact, an excellent preliminary sketch or programme for a new libel in which our old acquaintances *Secundo*, *Tertio*, *Quarto*, *Quinto*, and *Sexto* are easily recognisable. When compared with the old libel which the Assembly had by a majority dropped less than three weeks before, it presented prominently two new features which presumably its author regarded as improvements. In the first place, it raised quite frankly and explicitly the question which had been only obscurely, elusively, and evasively brought forward in the previous trial. Does the Church's doctrine of inspiration in the case of the canonical books render illegitimate and inapplicable the critical method which is admittedly legitimate and applicable in the case of books that are not canonical? In the second place, it raised in its simplest and broadest form the further question of a theory of development as applied to the Mosaic legislation, challenging as false and pernicious the view that certain parts might be classified as Sinaitic and early, others as Deuteronomic of much later date, and yet others (the so-called Levitical) as later still and indeed post-exilic.

Here again, however, it will not be out of place to remark that the friends of orthodoxy laid themselves open to a charge of great negligence and culpable laxity when they allowed Professor Smith to go to his Chair at

the time of his election in 1870. For, as we have seen, he entered upon his professoriate as avowedly one of those who practised the higher criticism on the canonical books, and who did not hesitate, for example, even then to suggest that probably, perhaps almost certainly, a large portion of the book assigned by tradition to the prophet Isaiah really belonged not to the Assyrian, but to the Chaldean period.

The Presbytery met on June 30, but on the motion of Sir Henry Moncreiff it was agreed after a somewhat keen debate to postpone consideration of the motion for another fortnight. It was timidly and tentatively suggested that the Aberdeen Presbytery or the College Committee might, in courtesy at least, be allowed time to consider whether there was any ground for action; but the prevalent feeling was that no duty of self-restraint lay upon any one who was dissatisfied with the action of last Assembly. The discussion disclosed that Drs. Rainy and Begg had both of them read the new article, and had "made up their minds about it" (in what sense they did not say). It also transpired that a private meeting on the subject, attended by Dr. Rainy among others, had been held; what he then said was not stated, but we already know that he had put on record his dissatisfaction with the Assembly's decision as not adequately meeting the "exigencies" of the case, and no doubt he also gave expression to the feelings of "legitimate disappointment and vexation" and "sheer sinking of heart" which he recalled in the Assembly of 1881. Mr. Macaulay was ultimately allowed to substitute for the long motion of which he had given notice a much shorter and more generalised form, in which the most important change was in the destination of the petition. It was no longer proposed that it should be addressed to the too timid and forceless College Committee, but that it should go to the Commission itself, a body which contained Dr. Begg and all the energies he represented. Meanwhile,

however, Mr. Macaulay's original motion had been published in all the newspapers, with the effect of raising what the prosecution afterwards called a "disturbance" demanding the strongest repressive measures,—not against those who had raised it, but against him who had been the object of it. The avowed purpose of the adjournment was to enable the members of the Presbytery in the interval to master the contents of the article, which was characterised by one speaker as "very abstruse," and "in some respects difficult," but which, it was pointed out, was fortunately easily accessible in the public libraries.

Smith meanwhile had returned to his interrupted occupations, and was beginning to reorganise his life as a Professor of the Free Church. One of his first cares, as soon as the decision of the Assembly was known, had been to telegraph and write to President Eliot, to inform him that he was no longer in a position to contemplate acceptance of the Harvard appointment to which reference was made in last chapter. Dr. Eliot sent a courteous reply, announcing that in default of Smith the Governing Body had appointed an American heretic,¹ whose views on Isaiah had offended the Baptist communion to which he had belonged. "I have not seen any intelligible account of the proceedings of the General Assembly," continued the President, "the vote seemed too close to be decisive, but you evidently count it a battle won once for all. The Free Church is much to be congratulated on the result."²

June 29 found Smith again in London, busily engaged with Old Testament Revision. In passing through Edinburgh he had "seen many friends," and found that they were "not nervous about Macaulay"; in a post-

¹ Prof. C. H. Toy, who has since become so well known on both sides of the Atlantic for much excellent work in the field of Old Testament literature.

² From the following letter from the then Lord Advocate to Professor Tait it will be seen that more than one sphere of usefulness elsewhere

script to the same letter (dated June 30) to his father he adds: "I met an American Professor yesterday from Johns Hopkins University. They also were looking out for the issue of the Assembly, thinking to bring me out there."

The newspaper accounts of the Edinburgh Presbytery proceedings, which no doubt reached him in London on July 2, together with other communications, seem to have aroused his anxiety for the first time. On that date he wrote to Mr. J. S. Black complaining of the Edinburgh proceedings, and admitting that the impression conveyed to him by the news from Scotland was that there was a really considerable amount of annoyance at his views, and that many people were beginning to feel that it might compromise them to have to fight for him again.

"I am not sure," he continued, "that I may not find it necessary to retire still—a disappointing result. I can't have a chance to communicate with my Presbytery before July 13, and indeed I don't wish one. It does not consist with my conscience to take any fresh pledges. Altogether I am both puzzled and distressed. Till now I have had really no difficulty in choosing a path of duty. But in present circumstances one does not know whether to go on or to go back."

A few days later he wrote to Professor Lindsay:

"I really don't see that there is any room for discussion of plans before the Commission. I take up the position that the whole thing is absolutely irregular.

might have been open to Professor Smith, had the Assembly's decision been adverse:

"LORD ADVOCATE'S CHAMBERS,
"HOME OFFICE, WHITEHALL, S.W.
May 29, 1880.

"DEAR PROFESSOR TAIT—I very much regret that so good a man as Robertson Smith should be disinclined to offer himself as a candidate for the Logic Chair at Aberdeen. I do not think it would be consistent with my official duty to ask him to reconsider his determination, as that might imply a *promise* which I cannot give until I know who are to be the candidates; but I know that in you he will have a judicious and friendly adviser.—Believe me, Yours truly,

"JOHN M'LAREN."

“I have communicated to Bell and others such facts as seemed to me fit to be known, and I have quite made up my mind to do or say no more,—at least in the way of explanation. If the Edinburgh Presbytery does or says anything very irregular, I may have to remark on that. I don't see the least necessity for wasting our time and strength on George Macaulay. If Rainy or other leaders take an active part in breaking the law of the Church, that may change the aspect of things.”

The Edinburgh Presbytery met as arranged on July 13, to discuss Mr. Macaulay's proposal to report the new heresy to the Commission of Assembly. His speech contained a characteristic insinuation that the article “Hebrew Language and Literature” was not only in itself vicious, but was plagiarised from Professor Reuss of Strassburg. Neither the speech nor the accusation calls for any further notice. It was then moved that Smith should be allowed sufficient time to submit himself to the admonition of the Assembly. The remainder of the discussion is interesting historically, but it was ominous of evil for Smith and his friends. Sir Henry Moncreiff, who made the amazing admission that he neither had read nor for the time intended to read the article at all, moved that without committing themselves as to the character of the impugned writings, the Presbytery should memorialise the Commission to adopt such steps as they judge fit to meet the disturbance and to vindicate scriptural principle. Dr. Begg did not scruple to say that the opportunity of reopening the case and reversing the decision of the Assembly was a “marvellous interposition of providence,” and Dr. Rainy made a short speech, which showed that he had taken occasion to revise his high constitutional views on the infallibility of the findings of the venerable the General Assembly.

He evaded any indication of what he thought should be done. He did not see that any action could be taken then; on the other hand, he was not prepared to say that the decision of last Assembly necessarily precluded the

Church from taking up the article. If the Church decided to reopen the case, he held himself entirely free to take what line he thought proper. In these circumstances he decided not to vote. The result was that Sir Henry's motion (founded, as we have seen, on avowedly complete ignorance of the issue) became the finding of the Presbytery, Mr. Macaulay having withdrawn his proposal in Sir Henry's favour.

It was characteristic of Smith that he saw in these manifestations nothing that was seriously alarming. He wrote reassuringly to his family, and somewhat stiffly to Professor Lindsay to the effect that, while not professing to have penetrated the precise plan of his adversaries, he believed that they were either aiming at some summary procedure, or hoping to concuss him by the threat of this, not yet having seen their way to a libel. Premising that it is open to the Commission either to inquire into or to drop the matter, he does not think it possible that they can propose to prosecute without further inquiry.

He goes on (naïvely enough, as we now can see) to say :

“ If the Commission resolve to inquire, they will, of course, proceed next to read my article. Now I suppose that in that case they will ask me for explanations. But you may as well know, and I give you authority if it seems proper to tell the Commission, that, as passages in my explanations were last time founded on in the libel, they need not expect me to make any answer to them until they themselves send me a precise formulation of what they suppose to be the heresies in my new article. I shall be very wary in dealing with the Commission this time, as I have no doubt that Rainy is waiting for my halting.”

Smith's optimism was not shared by his friends, one of whom ¹ wrote to Professor Lindsay at this very time in distinctly lugubrious terms of the prospects of the new struggle, estimating that they could hardly hope

¹ Dr. Orrock Johnston of Westbourne Free Church, Glasgow.

for a hundred votes if the matter was pressed to a division in Assembly, and reluctantly avowing that he now felt that Smith's resignation alone could save the situation.

Smith resolved to lose no time in publishing a statement which might strengthen the hands of his friends. This statement took the form of a letter to Dr. Spence, the Clerk of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which with his approval was at once made public. In substance the letter is a criticism of the irregular conduct of the Edinburgh Presbytery in "having made itself the mouthpiece of a *fama* against me without inquiring into its ground, and without communicating the matter either to me or to my Presbytery." He thinks it due to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, the court to which he is directly responsible in matters of discipline, to make a clear statement of his present position. After stating the main facts as to the publication of the new article "on a subject of legitimate study, which cannot be treated without reference to the discoveries of modern criticism," he proceeds to say that it had never been a question with him whether, in order to remain in the Church, he should sacrifice his convictions as to the truth of the opinions with regard to which he had been put upon his trial. . . .

"Since I wrote the article, the Assembly has given a final decision on the question whether the critical views for which I was libelled are inconsistent with office in the Free Church. . . . This decision enabled myself, and those who hold like views, to remain at our posts with a clear conscience, and to return to the work of the Church with fresh vigour. . . . For my own part I recognised in that issue a solemn invitation to throw myself into such departments of Church work and scholarly research as could not excite fresh controversy."

He had taken immediate steps before the Assembly closed to rearrange his literary engagements in accordance with this plan, and trusted that his present statement had made it plain that he accepted the decision of last

Assembly with all loyalty, and had given it immediate effect by so arranging his studies and plans of literary work as to give the Church a respite from critical controversy so far as he was concerned.¹

This was the explanation which Dr. Carnegie Simpson complains that Smith made "a little tardily" in response to the agitation which originated in the clamour of Mr. Macaulay and had been patronised by the ostentatious ignorance of Sir Henry Moncreiff. The reader must be left to judge of its adequacy; not even Mr. Macaulay ventured to express a doubt of its good faith.

In preparation for possible eventualities at the August sitting of the Commission of Assembly various drafts of a motion in his favour were submitted to Smith by his friends. He insisted that a firm line should be taken, and that nothing should be said or admitted which implied that he did not enjoy the same freedom as other members of the Church.

"It is not enough," he wrote to Professor Lindsay, "to ask the Commission merely to give me time. It ought to be settled that the Commission won't take up the article. Of course, if I commit any offence in the future I must answer for it; but I won't have things left hanging over me.

"Observe, if I consult only my own comfort, I resign to-morrow. Is it fair to ask me to stay for the sake of freedom, and not allow me to remain otherwise than as a person suspect?"

"*Nur keine Kompromisse!*" a phrase which occurs

¹ As early as June 24, 1880, the *Aberdeen Daily Free Press* mentioned, as of interest to its readers, that Professor Smith had "brought back from the East several interesting Arabic MSS. for the purpose of translation, the most important being, it is understood, El-Wahidy's 'Causes of the Descent of the Koran,' a MS. dated about A.D. 1230-31 and of unusual accuracy and perfection." . . . "The editing and translation of this MS., specially undertaken by Professor Smith, along with other work of the same character which he has on hand, must fully engage his leisure time for a considerable period." Messrs. Black were also quoted as writing that the article "Hebrew Language and Literature" was received by them on October 17, 1879, and the proof finally revised in the first week of the following month.

in a post-card, written in German to an intimate friend at this time, was to be the watchword of his defence.

Before the date of the meeting of the Commission the activity of the least worthy of his enemies entered upon a new and scandalous phase. The scene was the Presbytery of Edinburgh, an ordinary meeting of which was held on July 28. At the beginning of the proceedings Mr. Macaulay startled his brethren by solemnly requesting them to meet in private conference at one o'clock on a matter of the gravest concern. The public withdrew at the appointed hour, and after an hour and a quarter returned to find that Mr. Macaulay had been communicating to the meeting the fruits of his first studies of totemism. He had intended, he said, to submit a very important motion for the Presbytery's approval, but on reflection had decided to send a statement to the Press instead. The statement as it appeared in the newspapers next day contained the motion, which ran as follows :

“ The Presbytery having had their attention called to an article by Professor Robertson Smith in the *Journal of Philology*¹ (vol. ix. No. 17) resolve to petition the Commission of Assembly appointed to meet in August to issue an edict peremptorily prohibiting Professor Smith from the exercise of his functions as minister and professor in this Church till the meeting of the General Assembly in 1881. The Presbytery also agree to request the Commission to instruct the College Committee and the Presbytery of Aberdeen each to take in this grave emergency whatever action is competent, so that the doctrinal confession and testimony of the Church concerning the truth, authority, and inspiration of the Word of God may be asserted, maintained, and vindicated against the unscriptural and pernicious views set forth in the said article by Professor Robertson Smith.”

Appended to the resolution was the following note :

“ First, concerning marriage and the marriage laws in

¹ The number containing Smith's "Animal Worship" was, as it happened, a particularly brilliant one, among the contributors being Professors Nettleship, Robinson Ellis, Postgate, and Verrall.

Israel, the views expressed are so gross and so fitted to pollute the moral sentiments of the community that they cannot be considered except within the closed doors of any court of this Church. Secondly, concerning animal worship in Israel, the views expressed by the Professor are not only contrary to the facts recorded and the statements made in Holy Scripture, but they are gross and sensual—fitted to pollute and debase public sentiment. Third, concerning the worship of God in Israel, and the law of that worship in the temple, and generally in the times of the Old Testament, the statements of the Professor are not only contrary to all evidence, but they are also fitted to destroy all reverence for God and for His Holy Word.”

It is evident that Mr. Macaulay did not succeed in persuading the Presbytery to adopt his motion ;¹ and it may be conjectured that the voice of prudence and common sense was not wholly unheard at the private conference. Nevertheless, Mr. Macaulay could congratulate himself on having augmented very appreciably the “ disturbance ” which he had learned from Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr. Rainy would be taken by them as an important element in the case. It is most painful to have to record that neither at the time nor afterwards² was any protest or objection made by either of these gentlemen against this particular method of intensifying the Church’s “ anxiety and alarm.” The flow of memorials from the northern Presbyteries, which had already set in, was greatly stimulated, and gave fresh vigour to the agitation against the heretic.

The more responsible members of Sir Henry Moncreiff’s party seem about this time to have realised that they could not hope to get rid of Smith by a *coup de main* at the August Commission. Accordingly, overtures were

¹ The article in the *Journal of Philology* was, however, as we shall see, examined by the Committee of Commission in October, and unfavourably reported on as suggesting that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts.

² Dr. Rainy was absent from Scotland at the time of this meeting of Presbytery.

made through Dr. Wilson, Sir Henry's colleague as Clerk of Assembly, to Professor Candlish suggesting that both sides should agree on a Committee to examine Smith's article and report in March. Dr. Candlish was at first inclined to regard this as a hopeful sign, as the appointment of a Committee would, at any rate, postpone the danger of suspension. Smith, however, took the view that the proposal of a Committee was rather the admission of a *prima facie* case for inquiry than a step friendly to himself, and held that the Commission should find that there was nothing to justify their intervention. Shortly before the meeting of the Commission there was an unimportant meeting of the Aberdeen Presbytery at which Smith's public letter to Dr. Spence was discussed. He wrote in cheerful terms to his father of a report (apparently quite groundless) that "Rainy now thinks the thing ought to be stopped at the Commission—having seen more of the true temper of the Church since he left Edinburgh"; and again, on the following day, "Binnie has a pamphlet against me in the press. Capital letter yesterday from Professor Guidi of Rome about my totems."

When the Commission met on August 11, memorials from twelve Presbyteries were laid before it, all calling for "suitable" action with reference to the incriminated writings. Four motions were submitted, but of these one, to the effect that, in respect of the decision of last General Assembly, the Commission were not entitled to reopen the case, failed to find a seconder; and another, capable of being construed as favouring a policy of friendly inaction, was withdrawn. Professor Smith's friends ultimately concentrated their support on a motion to the effect

"That while deeply regretting the renewed agitation . . . the Commission, considering that the case of Professor Smith had already been dealt with by the Assembly, and that such matters as that which has emerged since

that time are ordinarily dealt with by the College Committee and the Presbytery of Aberdeen, resolve *in hoc statu* to take no action in the matter."

This was, however, defeated by 210 to 139, and the resolution adopted was as follows:

"The Commission, having respect to the letter of Professor Robertson Smith, transmitted by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and to the representation made to them by so many Presbyteries as to the writings of Professor Smith, to which attention has been called since last General Assembly, and considering the widespread uneasiness and alarm as to the character of these writings, resolve to appoint a Committee maturely to examine them and the letter of Professor Smith, and to consider their bearing upon the accepted belief and teaching of the Church, and to report their opinion and advice to an *in hunc effectum* meeting of Commission to be held on October 27, at which Professor Smith should be cited to appear for his own interest."

The appointment of the Committee led to a somewhat unseemly controversy. As proposed by Dr. Wilson, it contained no representatives of the party which supported Smith and his views. When a protest against this was made by Professor Lindsay, it was explained that Dr. Wilson could not be expected to propose the names of persons opposed to his motion, but that he would not *oppose* the appointment of such persons to serve on the Committee. This did not altogether satisfy Professor Lindsay and his friends, who seem to have expected that a Committee proposed by an official of the House to deal with a grave matter of doctrine and discipline would naturally contain a representation of all parties. It was ultimately agreed that the names of some of Smith's prominent supporters should be added to the Committee; but not one of these gentlemen was a member of the sub-Committee appointed to draft the Report. This and other regrettable features in the Committee's procedure did not pass without vehement protests, and

from this point the conflict on the second case became even more hopelessly embittered than the earlier proceedings which had ended at the Assembly of the preceding May.

To observant and intelligent outsiders the meaning of all this seemed plain enough. Wellhausen and Spitta, for example, both saw that the Aberdeen chair could not be held much longer.¹ Professor Binnie also helped to make this clear in the pamphlet already alluded to, which saw the light a few days after the meeting of Commission. Not content with a statement of the arguments which weighed with himself personally in assigning the authorship of Deuteronomy to Moses, he proceeded to say that disbelief in the Mosaic authorship always went along with disbelief in God, and more or less explicitly ranked his colleague amongst the "infidels." This led to a correspondence with the somewhat unsatisfactory result that Professor Binnie, under severe pressure, acknowledged Professor Smith to be a sincere believer *at present*, but insisted that he could not long remain so unless he abandoned his critical opinions; and further made unmistakably clear his view that the Church ought to get rid of him at once without waiting any further developments.

Early in September Smith writes with unconquered optimism to his father: "I had Candlish here yesterday. He is not in good spirits. Indeed our friends seem in the dumps again at the prospect of a complete coalition between Rainy and Begg. The Aberdeen friends, however, are very fiery." On the 11th, however, his tone was more subdued. "I think I am very likely to be able to offer you my house for the winter. I don't believe

¹ Wellhausen wrote: "Dass die orthodoxen Bullenbeisser Sie gar nicht los lassen, ist recht traurig. Ich glaube, sie wollen es so lange treiben, bis Sie abdanken; wenigstens scheint alles auf diese Taktik hinzudeuten," and Spitta: "Auf die Dauer werden Sie doch nicht in Aberdeen bleiben können. Gegen Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens."

that my friends will muster strong enough at the Commission." Still, he could not endure the thought of abandoning the fight. Lagarde wrote from Göttingen, September 24, condoling with him on the new troubles and hinting at the obvious ways of getting out of them; Mr. Campbell wrote on the same date from Tullichewan: "I often wonder you don't throw up the sponge." Smith still kept up his spirits, though three days later he had to tell his father (September 27, London): "I have a letter from Lindsay—rather disconsolate. He thinks many people are content with the victory which gives themselves all the freedom they need, and don't care whether *I* have to go for the sake of peace or not."

A letter to Professor Lindsay written about September 29 reads like a final effort to rally the shattered forces of progress:

"Your letter is certainly discouraging, but I think that people's courage will rise when they see that much more than a personal matter is involved. What I wish to say is: *Il faut de l'audace*. It will never do to be afraid of the help of the people you call Adullamites. We must for once get these men—all men who care for the Free Church—to come out and take their due part. It is far too late to confine ourselves to the received influential people for aid. . . . We must at any rate use all means. . . ."

Professor Lindsay's discouragement was natural enough. He had better opportunities than Smith had of gauging the effect produced upon the mind of the ordinary man by such personal insinuations as those conveyed in Professor Binnie's pamphlet; he was, moreover, by this time beginning to realise very clearly what the Report of the Commission's Committee was to be, and to concentrate his attention on the forms which the dissents of himself and one or two others were to take. Dr. Walter Smith, too, began to view with serious alarm the probable abstention of many members of Commission who had supported Professor Smith at the Assembly.

About these he wrote to Smith (on October 14) a long letter in which he urgently and affectionately pressed him to write another public letter to stimulate the weaker brethren, in which it should be pointed out how impossible it was to mention the new article in the course of the proceedings at last Assembly, and how grave was the constitutional question raised by the attempt which was being made to persuade the Commission to undo the Assembly's work. "Do think of this—and do it at once. There is no time to lose. It will not alter the malignant stupidity of your unfriends, but it will restore the faint-hearted stupidity of honest fellows who have grown weak-kneed."

Smith's response to the appeal thus made to him in circumstances of such gravity was prompt, frank, temperate, and (it will surely be generally acknowledged), though unsuccessful, well-judged. He wrote an Open Letter to Sir Henry Moncreiff, setting forth the constitutional arguments against the proposed procedure of the Commission, and also a covering circular letter with some personal explanations of the kind indicated by Dr. Walter Smith. The Open Letter, marked as "printed for private circulation," consists of eleven octavo pages and is dated October 21; the covering letter, in lithographed facsimile, was forwarded along with it to all members of Commission. In it he earnestly repudiated the desire or intention to publish anything inconsistent with the Church's scriptural doctrine. He sincerely regretted that articles, which he wrote in the full expectation that they would be published while controversy was still open, actually appeared after a settlement had been reached, and at a time when they could not fail to make it more difficult for a large and highly respected section of the Church to acquiesce in the settlement. In direct response to one of the most urgent of Dr. Walter Smith's appeals, he continued :

"I am aware that some of my friends now think that I should have informed the Assembly that such articles

were on the eve of publication. But no such course was suggested to me at the time. We were all too busy with the urgent duties of the moment to think of the future. Besides, the Assembly closed my mouth by refusing to hear my defence at the only time when I could with propriety have offered personal explanations. After the vote I could only utter the feelings with which I received the deliverance of the Court. To do more could only have caused misunderstandings, even if it had been possible for me to think of other things amidst the emotions of such a moment. But I ask you to believe that the feelings which I then expressed still urge me to do all that in me lies to avoid offence and maintain the peace and unity of the Church."

His argument addressed to Sir Henry in the Open Letter deals entirely with the constitutional issue, and may be very briefly summarised. To make the Commission a court of first instance was, he urged, in effect to deny the jurisdiction of the Presbytery, and therefore to supersede the most fundamental principles of Presbyterian discipline and government. In point of fact the Commission was not a court of the Church at all, but merely a Committee of Assembly with carefully restricted powers. The proper organs for dealing with charges of heresy were two. The presumed heretic's Presbytery had in every case the duty to look into his doctrine; in the case of a Professor there was also the College Committee. Were these two bodies remiss, the Commission might properly remind them of their duty, but could not with propriety usurp their constitutional functions. He then went on to complain, surely with some show of reason, that his citation was unaccompanied by any statement of the accusation which he had to answer; so far as appeared, he was not to know it till he stood before the Commission. The date fixed for the special meeting of Commission was then remarked upon; it had been fixed for a day immediately before the commencement of the College session, on the avowed ground that it might in all probability be necessary to forbid

him to teach. It was assumed to be within the power of the Commission to suspend an office-bearer without trial upon the simple report of a Committee presented upon the same day in which sentence was to be pronounced. After touching on the point that the opinions contained in his new articles were almost in every particular identical with those for which he had already been tried and acquitted, he proceeded to urge that, if it had been desired to bring about his suspension on the fresh charge in a constitutional way, this could have been accomplished by some private prosecutor, who could easily have been found, framing a libel and bringing it before the Presbytery; for "when a libel comes to the Presbytery from outside, it is served immediately without prior discussion of relevancy, and so, long ere now, I might have been suspended."

Sir Henry's reply, had he chosen to make one, could only have been an admission of the highly novel character of the procedure, and an appeal to circumstances to justify the innovation. He could hardly have been expected to explain that the circumstances were simply that, as experience had abundantly shown, neither the College Committee nor the Presbytery of Aberdeen could be trusted to decide in the sense predetermined by himself and his friends, the leaders of the Church and the depositories of her true doctrine. So far as the present writers are aware, Sir Henry made neither this nor any other answer to the Open Letter.

All Smith's plans for a resumption of the active duties of his chair were of course in abeyance during these troubled days, and indeed from this time forward his connection with Aberdeen began rapidly and perceptibly to dissolve. It does not appear, for example, that he had any leisure for the activities of his position as a member of the School Board, a position which in happier circumstances he would no doubt have found thoroughly congenial. About this time, however, he did take part in an educational

discussion unconnected with theology, and the contribution which he made to it has more than a passing interest. His old teacher, Professor Bain, had just retired from the Chair of Logic and English Literature in the University, and was a candidate for the vacant office of Assessor to the Lord Rector,¹ which is filled by the election of members of the General Council of Graduates. Professor Bain was opposed by Smith's friend, Mr. J. F. White, a man who, as we have already seen, was not only widely and deservedly popular, but possessed many qualifications and accomplishments which specially fitted him for the position to which he aspired. The question of what are locally known as "options"—in other words, of the reform of the curriculum in Arts—was then as now agitating the academic world, and Professor Bain was known as an advocate of the abolition of compulsory Greek. This was in itself enough to alienate the support of the more conservative of his colleagues; but behind this administrative divergence, in itself of great consequence, there lay a more profound theoretical question. Dr. Bain, in the course of the speculations which made him famous, had applied his severe analytical methods to the question of education, and had produced² a characteristic system which, if carried out in practice, would have produced much more revolutionary changes in existing arrangements than were implied in allowing students a partial exemption from the study of Greek. "On the supposition," he argued, "that languages are in no sense the main part of education, but only helps or adjuncts under definite circumstances, the inference seems to be that they should not, as at present, occupy a central and leading position, but stand apart as side subjects available to those who require them."

This somewhat startling conclusion, which, like many of

¹ Like the Lord Rector himself, the Assessor has a seat in the University Court. The post carries some distinction.

² See Bain, *Education as a Science*, 1879.

its author's opinions, has not stood the test of time, was vaguely present to the minds of the Council when it assembled under the presidency of the Vice-Chancellor to decide on the claims of the rival candidates. There was an uneasy feeling even among progressive members that Dr. Bain might not be content with the modest programme of academic reform then considered practical politics, but might hurry the University into new and strange experiments. The discussion, however, proceeded for some time on personal, practical, and administrative questions. Dr. Bain was proposed by Mr. Webster, member of Parliament for the City, and Mr. White was brought forward against him in due form. Shortly before the vote was taken Smith intervened, and his speech—thanks, no doubt, to his recent practice in other assemblies—was a highly finished and characteristic performance. He refused to allow the decision of the Council to turn on so narrow an issue as the question of Greek, which he denied to be the radical question in University reform. He paid a tribute to the instruction he had received from his old teacher, but took occasion to observe that his own further studies had led him to conclusions diametrically opposed to those of the philosophical course he had taken at Aberdeen. Dr. Bain's idea of a liberal education, he pointed out, did not provide for a single language, ancient or modern, and implied

“. . . that in the whole sphere of history except the history in which the original documents are written in English—which is very small—in the whole of literature except English literature, the student is to know nothing except at second-hand. . . . It was to be an education based on compendiums . . . on the half-digested pabulum supplied by translators and epitomators. . . . That is, that University education was to be continued to the end in that very elementary style which must be used with children in the first beginnings of their learning. . . .”

There followed a passage, received with great applause

by the House, in which the speaker gave an interesting view of his own conception of a University.

“ Our Universities have passed through many phases since they were first instituted. But from the first day that there was University teaching, from the first day that the notion of higher instruction was formed in the great philosophical schools of Greece, it has been understood that the great object of the higher education was to train the intellectual *élite* and to cultivate the original powers so that they might work with the greatest possible freedom and force. Universities have undoubtedly a function in relation to the practical professions, which in some cases will consist largely of the mere providing of a certain amount of material ready made ; but that is not the main work even in professional teaching. The main object is to inculcate habits of research, to teach how to deal with original materials, to encourage men to look at things at first hand, to develop originality, and to provide the forces—the original forces—which from generation to generation shape the history of our race with that kind of help which will enable them to exercise themselves with freedom and with full sweep ; and I deny that the education of compendiums can ever fulfil this function. (Applause.)”

Smith concluded with some pungent observations, which were also very much to the taste of his hearers, on Bain's well-known “ tendency to disparage all that was imaginative, speculative, and ideal.”

“ I do not say,” he observed, “ and I do not wish to think, that Dr. Bain thinks as little of these higher elements as his book would lead us to suppose he does. I do not believe he is so insensible to the charm of poetry and to the value of imagination and great ideas. But his scheme is so. In this book he prefers Macaulay to Bacon on the ground of his more recent information and more perfect style. (Laughter.) In like manner he prefers prose to poetry as an educative agent, because it contains more matter of fact. The same disparagement of the subtler elements of culture appears in his estimate of æsthetic matters, as when he expresses a fear that instruction in colour and a keen perception of the beauties

of nature would turn the minds of pupils from analytical realities. (Laughter.) An education based upon these principles can never have any other end than this—the manufacture of a superior kind of intellectual artisan, the extinction of imagination, and with it the extinction of all originality and all genius.”

Mr. White’s election, which was carried by a large majority, was no doubt a great personal satisfaction to Smith, though it may well have intensified the intellectual estrangement which had existed almost from the beginning between him and Dr. Bain. We shall see with satisfaction in a later chapter that it did not prevent Bain (who was destined to survive his distinguished pupil and opponent for many years) from cordially acknowledging Smith’s own claims to honour in the University of Aberdeen. This election may be said to have been Smith’s last appearance in the public life of Aberdeen.

Meanwhile the Committee appointed by the Commission in August had been, as instructed, busily engaged in “maturely examining the writings of Professor Smith” published since last Assembly, and in “considering their bearings upon the accepted belief and teaching of the Church.” The small sub-Committee, to which the task of preparing a draft Report had been assigned, appears to have finished its labours by the middle of October. The Report they submitted for the Committee’s acceptance followed, with some closeness both in thought and in expression, Mr. Macaulay’s tract, which had been widely circulated and doubtless was in the hands of all. With a view to its preparation each member, we learn, had been invited to specify the passages to which he individually took exception, and the list of these was afterwards tabulated. By far the most of them were found to occur in a single section of one article—that on “The Literary Development of Hebrew.”¹ It will be

¹ See Appendix E (p. 608), where the section is given, and the passages pronounced to be liable to ecclesiastical censure are marked on the margin.

seen that the "faults" are almost as numerous as those recorded against Walther, Beckmesser being the marker, in the famous scene in the *Meistersinger*. Indeed, once one has mastered the principles of the fault-finding, it becomes evident that the judges have been far too lenient, and that in reality hardly a single sentence in the whole article can escape condemnation. The reporters themselves say as much. "The particulars here adduced," they explain, "are not meant to be exhaustive. They are presented as specimens of the manner in which Professor Smith handles the books of Scripture."

The Committee's Report did not reach its final form until late in the afternoon of Tuesday, October 26. Premising that the questions now raised affect primarily the authority of the Supreme Standard of the Church rather than that of the subordinate Confession of Faith, and declaring that the Committee do not impute to Professor Smith the *intention* of assailing the integrity and authority of Scripture, the Report goes on to say that

"... the statements made by him in many particulars are such as are fitted, and can hardly fail, to produce upon the minds of readers the impression that Scripture does not present a reliable statement of truth, and that God is not the Author of it; and it greatly concerns the character and credit of the Free Church to make it clear, in opposition to any such impression, that she holds firmly, and will maintain, the infallible truth and authority of Scripture as the Word of God."

It proceeds to classify the "many" particulars under four heads: (1) Passages in which the books of Scripture are spoken of in an irreverent manner; (2) Passages in which these books are spoken of in such a way as to render it very difficult for readers to regard God as the Author of them; (3) Passages which naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences; (4) Passages which discredit prophecy in its predictive aspect.

To sum up :

“ The whole tendency of the writings examined by the Committee is fitted to throw the Old Testament history into confusion, and at least to weaken, if not to destroy, the very foundation on which New Testament doctrine is built. Moreover, the general method on which [the author] proceeds conveys the impression that the Bible may be accounted for by the same laws which have determined the growth of any other literature, inasmuch as there is no adequate recognition of the divine element in the production of the Book. The Committee accordingly recommend the Commission to take steps for making it evident that the Free Church cannot sanction the kind of teaching animadverted upon in this Report, which these writings would justify, and for urging the General Assembly to declare to her people and to other Churches that she cannot sanction the idea suggested by it.”

The Report next devoted a couple of paragraphs to Smith's letter to the Clerk of his Presbytery, repudiating as altogether untenable his representation of what was expressed and implied in the judgment of last Assembly. The relevancy of the libel as regarded Deuteronomy had been affirmed by three successive Assemblies, and this finding was irreversible.

It follows from the dates given above that the Committee were unable to circulate copies of their Report to members of Commission until the very day and hour of the meeting at which Smith was cited to “ appear for his interest.” It will hardly be believed, and yet it is the fact, that the Committee appointed to examine his writings on a suspicion of heresy made no communication whatsoever to him before that time, and that the first official notice he had of the charges preferred against him arrived almost at the moment at which he was called upon to defend himself on the floor of the House. The presence of Professor Lindsay at the meetings of the Committee, however, had fortunately provided a source of information, and Smith was kept aware of the proceedings of his

enemies as well as of the counter-movements of his friends. These counter-movements, as was inevitable, consisted entirely of protests against the scandalous unfairness of the procedure, and of dissents from the Report, by Professor Lindsay and others, which the Committee by a majority *decided not to publish*.

At the sitting of the Commission on Wednesday, October 27, some of these irregularities were provisionally adjusted. Smith's protest, and those made by his friends against the validity of the whole proceedings of the Commission, were received, and the suppressed dissents of Smith's party in the Committee were by permission read to a reluctant audience. The most important of these was Professor Lindsay's. Smith had had an opportunity of seeing it on the previous night, and to some extent it anticipated the main points of the defence which he was so soon to be called upon to extemporise. Briefly put, the grounds of objection were, first, that the Committee had failed to take the natural and honest course of either conferring with Smith about the incriminated passages of his writings, or of comparing these with other statements made by him; secondly, because the opinions condemned had already in almost every case been adjudicated on by the Church; and, thirdly, because these opinions did not, when fairly interpreted, justify the charges of irreverence and of disparaging Holy Scripture which had been founded on them. The dissent then took up in detail all the seventeen particular cases one by one, and in each Professor Lindsay associates himself rather with the heretic than with the majority of the Committee. It is difficult indeed to see how the Commission avoided making him *particeps criminis* and taking summary proceedings against him for this vindication of his friend. For the moment, however, the prosecution required all their audacity in order to deal effectively with Smith; and the reader, remembering the character of the Committee's delibera-

tions and Report, will not fail, whatever be his views, to admire the nerve of Dr. Wilson in giving notice of a motion (which ultimately became the judgment of the House) to the effect that the Commission approve "generally" of the Report of the Committee that the recent articles are "fitted to produce upon readers an impression that the Bible does not present a reliable statement of truth, and that God is not the Author of it," and

"considering further, that the Church must sustain serious injury if she can be regarded as giving any sanction to, or as concurring in, the views expressed in these writings, declare that the Commission as representing the Free Church cannot but protest against the Church being implicated in the promulgation of them, and resolve to transmit the Report of their Committee to the General Assembly, and further in view of the whole circumstances of the case instruct Professor Smith to abstain from teaching his classes during the ensuing session, and leave the whole question of his status and position in the Free Church to the determination of the ensuing Assembly. The Commission also instruct the College Committee to make provision for the teaching of these classes during the ensuing session."

The speech which Smith made on this occasion occupied an hour and three-quarters in delivery, and maintained a high level of interest and persuasiveness throughout. Spoken without notes and in a very true sense *ex tempore*, it deserves probably the first place among his debating speeches; on no occasion did he show greater felicity of expression, or easier command of his subject. Contemporary opinion was enthusiastic in its praise; by its "marvellous ability and power it must ever hold a central place in the history of this case"; "his opening appeals to the indulgence of his audience seemed superfluous in view of the splendid result"; and "even the disadvantages, under which he must undoubtedly have laboured, were skilfully turned to good account and made to score points in his favour."

When, however, it is said to have been unprepared and improvised, it must be remembered not only how familiar he was with the whole matter to which it related, but also that Mr. Macaulay's speech, which the Report of the Committee so closely followed, had been before the public since July, and that Professor Lindsay had kept Smith apprised of the course events were taking in the deliberations of the sub-Committee. The topics therefore, and even their arrangement, lay to his hand and within easy reach. At the outset it was obviously natural to urge upon the Commission the protest, which he had already intimated in his Open Letter to the Senior Clerk, against what he held to be the unconstitutional character of the proposed intervention of the Commission at this stage, and also against the obvious injustice of calling upon an accused person to speak and exhaust his case before the questions had been opened up by the main agents in the suit. In this connection he reminded his hearers, with effect, that the Report he was now being called to answer had been put into his hands for the first time that morning as he entered the hall, although, as it happened, he had unofficially seen the dissents on the preceding evening. Before he had been able to read the Report, he had further been called upon to listen to the notice of the motion which Dr. Wilson intended to offer as the judgment of the House upon it. At this point a written copy of the motion having been handed to him, he asked the indulgence of the Commission if he read it in their hearing again, as the only means, without an interruption of the business of the House, of knowing what he was expected to rebut. In the motion thus read clearly the first point to be taken was the proposal that the Commission approve of the Report "generally." Here he was on familiar ground; we have already seen that a *general* treatment of critical opinions supposed to be heretical had been recommended three years before by Dr. Brown, but had been rejected both by the

Presbytery and by the Assembly. Again, when Smith proceeded to speak of the vagueness of the terms of the Report which it was proposed thus generally to approve, he had already learned from Professor Lindsay what to expect; the sub-Committee had steadfastly refused to listen to suggestions as to what Smith meant, stating that its business was only with what he had said; and in accordance with this view (as Smith pointed out) the Report sedulously abstained alike from saying that he intended to present Scripture as other than a reliable statement of truth, and from saying that there was any expression in his writings which was inconsistent with the supposition that Scripture *is* a reliable statement of truth; all it said of the inculcated writings was that they were "fitted to produce upon the minds of readers the impression that God is not the Author of Scripture." Here Smith contended that the Report either went too far or failed to go far enough. "It says too much if my views are not inconsistent with the divinity of Scripture, and it says too little if they are." There was nothing, he proceeded, at all surprising to him in seeing such general statements, accusations, and insinuations put forth against his writings. They had been put forth again and again, they had been put forth against previous writings, for which he had been tried and acquitted. This word "acquitted" was received with loud demonstrations of dissent by his opponents, who made attempts to howl him down so persistently that the Moderator was weak enough to intervene with the remark that "Professor Smith will consult his own interest better if he does not proceed in that line." Smith, however, claimed the protection of the Chair in saying what he desired to say, and he was at last, after some minutes of uproar, allowed to proceed: "I say, on which I was acquitted; for these reasons—because the libel formulated against me was in greater part withdrawn, and the part which was left never went

on to probation, and therefore never went on to judgment; and in the judgment of every court a man is acquitted if he is not condemned.”¹ But the best way of disposing of the general accusations would be to treat them in connection with the particulars on which they were based. These—as we have seen, some seventeen in number—were accordingly taken up one by one, no point being shirked. If one of his journalistic critics next day mingled with his praise some censure of the severity of one or two of the speaker’s references to the majority of the Committee, and to his “veiled sneers” at their comparative want of scholarship, the candid reader now will readily admit that in discussion of what were largely academic problems it was almost impossible to avoid touching the question whether both disputants were equally well informed as to the facts. Whatever exceptions may have been taken in detail, the general verdict on the speech as a whole was at all events that it had been an extraordinary *tour de force*; an impression which, however little they may have desired to receive it, appears to have been shared even by those who had least respect for the spirit of free inquiry. The voice of the devil’s advocate should be heard in reason, and we quote a few sentences from the account of one who watched Smith’s performance with no sympathy or satisfaction, yet not altogether without understanding:²

¹ The reader will recall that one of the reasons of dissent tendered by Dr. Begg and others after the judgment of the 1880 Assembly was that by it “the opinions of Professor Smith were not condemned, and presumably therefore were to be tolerated.” It may also be pointed out that when Smith said that the old libel against him had been in greater part withdrawn, he might have gone further and reminded his audience that as regards, for example, *Octavo*, the judgment of the court had been that his teaching was entirely consistent with the confession.

² The extracts are from a little brochure entitled “The Hielan’ Host and the Assembly of 1881: by Wan of Them.” It was published anonymously, but the writer is now known to have been the Rev. Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall.

“ His voice is thin and sharp. I am right sure he can't sing, for there is no melody in his tones, and no music in his heart at all. But he has good lungs in his chest, and hard brass on his brow, and he will stand and he will speak, till you might think that the feet and tongue of the creature would be clean wearied. There is a great deal in him, but it was put into him, and oh, hasn't he the power to put it forth ! His mind is like a shop with a big cellar behind it, and having good shelves and windows. His memory is the cellar, and it has a great deal of stuff in it, and his mind has shelves for his gear, and his tongue is smart in setting them out. But he doesn't grow his own wool, nor does he spin the thread, nor weave the webs that are in his cellar or on his shelves. All his goods come in paper parcels from Germany, for in that country they can spin and weave without one tuft of wool ; they take their thread, like a spider, out of their own bowels. His friends are fond of saying that he has mastered the German learning. But I am thinking rather that the German learning has mastered him. . . . But oh ! that tongue of his can rattle quick. And he can stick to his point as well as a limpet to a stone, or rather as the wheels to the rails, for he will be going till you would think that he would never halt. And his body doesn't make much fuss about it. A tiny little hand at his side is working like the docked tail of a pony when the midges are bad, but that is all the help the other parts of his body give to his tongue. It gets almost all the work to do, and all it needs to keep it going is a little calfsfoot oil from the heels that are thumping in the gallery. And he is as empty of reverence and as smart as a weasel ; and he has as little common sense as a sucking calf. His gifts are cleverness and memory. And it's for this same that they made an idol of him. Well ! well ! if that's all they have to make them proud of him, they will get a thousand times more of that in the Evil One himself. Oh, but it's a sad pass we have come to, when a little of what the Devil has much of will make a man great in the Church. And there is another point in which the two agree ; and that is, ill-will to the Bible, with a sham of respect for it, for Satan would have us to think that he does not despise it, for he makes use of it as a tempter, just as he did in the great battle in the wilderness.”

Smith was quite unconscious of the dramatic aspects of his speech which appealed so strongly to the writer just quoted. He calmly pursued his argument from point to point, uninterrupted, after a time, by any hostile demonstration, and helped, no doubt, by the consciousness of those friendly heels in the gallery. He ended almost abruptly with a passage which, though it cannot be called a peroration in any technical sense, appears to furnish a perfect example of the kind of criticism he was throughout the whole case called on to meet, and of the manner in which he met it :

“The Committee report, in the last place, that in attributing the rise of written prophecy to the eighth century before Christ, I appear to be at variance with the plain teaching of our Lord, who says, ‘Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.’ Let us accept the whole traditional view. Let us satisfy Dr. Wilson’s heart and say that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch. Very well ; that was at all events the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch has always been called the Law, and neither our Lord nor the Jews, nor any theologian in any age, has ever called it part of the prophetic books. Our Lord always speaks of the Law and the Prophets as two distinct things. I do the same and, doing so, state the undoubted fact that the earliest of the prophetic books were written in the eighth century. I cannot better leave my defence in the hands of the Commission than by pointing out that this Committee has been capable of founding a charge against me, whether from ignorance or from captiousness I am unable to say, which has no other basis than disregard of the fact that the Hebrew Bible is divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa.”

The official reply was made by Dr. Wilson, the Junior Clerk of Commission, who moved the motion of which he had two hours before given notice. He began by declining to discuss the question of the truth of Smith’s views as being “irrelevant” to the issue before the court. What was certain was that the *expression* of such views, true or false, must lead any ordinary mind to the con-

clusions of the Rationalistic school of German criticism. It might or it might not be that Professor Smith had himself been led to adopt these views ; it was at any rate certain that the Church was suffering in reputation owing to the manner in which he had chosen to express himself. Something must be done to " vindicate their character," and the only course seemed to be to report the matter to the ensuing Assembly with a view to judicial action, and; meanwhile, by silencing the disturber of the peace to prevent further mischief from being done. A discussion followed which need not detain us ; the moment was come for Dr. Begg and his friends to rectify the miscalculation which had proved so inconvenient for Principal Rainy in the previous May, and, on the vote being taken, Smith found himself again suspended from the duties of his chair, by a majority of 68.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND CASE, CONTINUED (1880-1881)

To an author less optimistically inclined, so solid a majority prepared to say that, speaking generally, his writings were fitted to produce so bad an impression might well have been somewhat dispiriting. It was not so with Smith. There is no note of depression or misgiving in the cheerful words he wrote to his mother the day after the great fight; the old familiar *motifs* of hope and victory ring out full and clear as ever:

“ . . . In spite of the adverse vote I find that our friends are all in the highest spirits again, and all united. The fact that the adversary did not meet one point in my argument—did not even attempt to do so—has told widely; and those who formerly had lost heart now feel confident of final victory. The adversary in spite of his majority is in very low spirits. It is felt by all that their fine Report has been smashed, and, as they must fight at the next Assembly on the basis of that Report, they are not happy. . . . Lindsay has gained great glory by his share in the whole fight. . . . Altogether, things are looking up. . . . Don't lose heart.”

It must be admitted that in this attitude he was encouraged by many of the best minds in the Church. On the same day Mr. Campbell wrote a note from Glasgow, in the course of which we hear for the first time of the suggestion that Smith should utilise his winter's leisure by delivering for the information of the public a series of popular lectures on Biblical Criticism:

“Persecuted, but not forsaken—cast down, but not in despair. You have not got your own way, but you have made a good fight, and upwards of 200 good men at your back is not so bad at all. Your own speech is most admirable. What the future is to be one cannot say, but I have again to encourage you to fight on. I have been thinking over your idea of the lectures in Edinburgh and Glasgow. I cannot make up my mind about it,—not that in themselves the lectures might not go far to enlighten people’s minds, but they might be open to the objection of being a defiance of the present verdict—though that verdict may be unjust. I shall probably see Lindsay. God bless you. . . .”

In other letters from Glasgow and elsewhere there are the warmest expressions of admiration of the great speech, and we find the beginnings of an agitation—which ultimately reached large dimensions,—as to the constitutional right of the Commission of Assembly *proprio motu* to supersede the action of Presbyteries and set aside the safeguards of personal liberty provided by the Form of Process :

“I was not despondent before,” writes one correspondent ; “I am hopeful now that if we act with diligence and wisdom during the next six months, the mind of the Church may be so educated as to give us at next Assembly pretty much what we desire. Last night I travelled home with one elder who was against us in August, and who went to Edinburgh *meaning* to vote against you again. He voted with us, however. Your speech quite carried his convictions. He is the type of a candid mind, and though all minds—even in the Free Church—are not candid, let us hope there are some.”

Sheriff Nicolson’s sentiments may be gathered from the following characteristic extracts :

“. . . I honestly think you had divine help and inspiration¹ of a manifest kind in that most singular and trying emergency, and I believe, in some sense or

¹ Professor Wellhausen also wrote from Greifswald : “Ihre improvisirte Verantwortung ist eine erstaunliche Leistung. Sie scheinen inspirirt gewesen zu sein.”

other, that was made plain even to the least sympathetic and dullest capacity. . . .

“Go you ahead, therefore, my dear boy, and stick to your guns, and believe that you are doing right, and that if (as we believe) God is with you, and not with these bloated obscurantists—some of them good, well-meaning souls, but the strongest and worst of them simply priests and nothing more—Free Churchmen and yet priests, believers or pretending believers in infallibility, and in purely official religion—divorced equally from morality and reality. . . .”

Meanwhile a regular plan of campaign was set on foot. Every effort was made to secure that overtures in Smith's favour should be sent up to the ensuing Assembly from as many Presbyteries as possible. The lecturing project, in spite of the doubts of some, had also begun to find favour, and a series of public meetings of protest was arranged. The first step was the publication of the speech to the Commission, which by the munificence of Mr. Campbell and others was circulated gratis to every member of the Commission, together with a trenchant summary of the history and the merits of the case. It was also sent to friends and admirers, by whom, as may be supposed, it was very favourably received. President Eliot of Harvard had already heard of the turn which affairs had taken, and wrote to Mr. Bryce to inquire whether Smith would accept a chair of Ecclesiastical History. In transmitting this inquiry, Mr. Bryce observed: “Thanks for your speech, which I read with great pleasure. It seems to me almost the most effective thing you have said on the whole subject.”

The reader will be amused by an extract from a letter on the same subject from Sir Richard Burton:

“Many thanks for the speech. You are in the right way, *perge puer*—and you'll end well. But what the Devil (a Ruskinism, there is no such body) will the Assembly say after the merry jig you have executed upon their pet corns? Dear, dear! So Moses did not

write the books of Moses ! (As if anybody ever believed he did.) If you republish, read (unless you have read) Spinoza, who proves the late date philologically."

Public interest in the case was again powerfully awakened. The newspaper war broke out again, as was to be expected, with redoubled violence; and as a counterblast to the publication of the speech, and to certain resolutions of Presbyteries which had begun to come in, Dr. Wilson somewhat unwisely wrote a letter to the *Daily Review*, defending the proceedings of the Commission, and somewhat unskilfully balancing between the two inconsistent positions that no *punishment* had been inflicted on Smith, and that parts of his writings had been decided *prima facie* to be of such a character as could not be sanctioned by the Church. To this letter Professor Lindsay replied by a severe denunciation of Dr. Wilson's "elaborate special pleading in favour of a prolonged course of injustice which has roused the moral indignation of the country." Dr. Wilson says that no sentence has been pronounced, and that no punishment has been inflicted.

"Well, that is technically correct; for 'sentence' and 'punishment' come after judicial dealing, and when Dr. Wilson makes these statements he practically admits the travesty of justice in which he has borne such a conspicuous part. The Report is a 'libel found relevant' in all but the name, and the command not to teach is a 'punishment' in all but the name, and the gross injustice of the whole matter is that these things have been done and yet cannot be called by their proper names; for if they could be called by their proper names, a judicial process must have previously been gone through."

Sir Henry Moncreiff rushed to the assistance of his colleague, and with some temper described Professor Lindsay's statements as "destitute of foundation and contrary to facts which the writer knew or ought to have known." This gave Professor Lindsay another opportunity, and he published a stinging rejoinder, in the

course of which he pointed out that the choice for himself and his friends was between Smith and Dr. Begg, and declared that, as their forefathers could not endure the traditions of Rome, so they could not see "the Word of God in bondage to the traditions of the Rabbins."

All this greatly pleased Smith, who found himself once more in what must be admitted was to him the congenial atmosphere of battle. He writes to Professor Lindsay on November 15, from Aberdeen: ". . . Best thanks for the smashing discipline you have administered to Wilson. I don't think I ever saw you so angry before; but I don't think that you have exposed yourself to any *riposte*."

There was much indeed about this time which was calculated to produce a mood of over-confidence in Smith and his supporters. The conduct of the Commission had given them the prestige which belongs to the victims of persecution, and had awakened anxiety in many minds. The movement which had goaded Dr. Wilson into print was attaining formidable dimensions. A public meeting of office-bearers of the Free Church in Elgin, where Smith's old friend, Mr. Gray, was minister, passed resolutions criticising the conduct of the Commission in the prosecution of the case as "uniformly unbrotherly and unrighteous"; and the example thus set was followed in many other places.

On November 22, at a public meeting of office-bearers, members, and adherents of the Free Church resident in Aberdeen and the surrounding district, attended by 2000 persons, and presided over by the member for the city, it was agreed to adopt a memorial to the Assembly to the effect that the memorialists viewed with much regret and alarm the proceedings of the Commission, and protested against them as a dangerous departure from the well-defined order of government and discipline in the Free Church, an infringement of the liberties secured by the ecclesiastical constitution, and a precedent subversive

of the rights of office-bearers who may at any time fall under suspicion or be identified with unpopular views. The memorialists, therefore, while humbly expressing their opinion that the case ought to have taken end on the basis of the decision of last Assembly, beg that, if new action seem fit, it shall be taken only in the direction of instituting a regular and deliberate trial of the questions at issue before the ordinary courts of the Church, and in accordance with the provisions of the Form of Process. This memorial was signed by the chairman and 3435 others.

Similar action was taken by a meeting of office-bearers held a little later in Glasgow, and Smith derived great encouragement from these friendly demonstrations as well as from the growing popularity of the proposal that he should deliver a course of lectures on the question of the hour. He had at first shared the doubts expressed by Mr. Campbell and others, as he was justly anxious to avoid even the appearance of contumacy or defiance. "I continue to receive many warnings against lecturing," he had written; "of course, if a bad impression would be produced, that is fatal, however unreasonable the impression may be, and I begin to have serious doubts about the plan. . . ." But the pressing requisitions of his friends in Glasgow, and elsewhere, led him to change his mind, and the renewed activities of his opponents soon removed all doubt of the propriety, and indeed the necessity, of his taking action. The numerous overtures and memorials addressed to the Assembly in his favour by Presbyteries and other bodies were by this time beginning to produce the inevitable reaction. Dr. Begg's party organised a retort, and soon there was a formidable array of counter-resolutions to strengthen the hands of the leaders of the Church. In the first days of December Smith's friends experienced a serious reverse in Glasgow, where the Presbytery refused by a large majority to transmit an overture to the forthcoming Assembly

condemning the action of the Commission. Of this incident Smith wrote :

“ This Glasgow Presbytery affair will do good by taking our friends out of the absurd seventh heaven they have been in, and showing them that they must face a material issue. After that, there is no doubt about the lectures being an instant necessity.”

Smith accordingly gave himself entirely to the preparation of the lectures ; in the last days of the year we find him in Glasgow, making final arrangements. He writes to his sister :

“ . . . Friends cordial. Preached on Sunday to a big congregation in Kelvinside. Yesterday was with some friends arranging about the lectures. Over 700 applications for tickets. This exceeds all expectations, and those whom I thought absurdly sanguine in thinking of 1000 auditors now declare that they are sure of at least 1400 between the two times.”

The general subject of the series was “ The Old Testament in the Jewish Church,” and the first lecture was delivered twice in Glasgow on Monday, January 10, 1881 ; it achieved a great popular success, which much gratified the lecturer. He wrote to Keig :

“ . . . The start yesterday was in every respect most successful. In the afternoon the audience was, I think, about 500, and in the evening certainly not less than 700. The evening meeting was the warmest, as I believe is the rule in Glasgow ; but both were thoroughly attentive and appreciative. A. B. M'Grigor says the afternoon one was the most remarkable he has ever seen in Glasgow from the people that were at it.”

A few days later he delivered a discourse on Arabia¹ in the Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh, and on the next night he repeated the lecture which had been so well received at Glasgow. In spite of the fact that the Free Church opinion of the capital was not expected to be so favourable to the lecturer as that in the West,

¹ Apparently still unpublished.

Smith received another striking demonstration of public confidence and approval. His account is as follows :

“ . . . The lecture came off very well, in spite of a bad afternoon which must have kept back some. As far as I can hear, the impression is a favourable one, and the audience was of capital quality, including Tait, Chrystal, Crum Brown, Dr. John Brown, Dr. Alexander Buchan, a number of advocates, etc., etc. The numbers were near 300, but I believe more than 300 tickets have been sold.”

The courses of lectures in Edinburgh and Glasgow kept Smith busy during the first three months of the year. “ It is pretty hard work,” he writes, “ but very interesting.” The material of his discourses was no doubt extremely familiar to him, but the subjects were intricate and technical, and much labour was necessary in order to get the lectures into an attractive and popular shape. Judging, however, from his letters, Smith was never in better health or spirits than during this time. Early in the year he fulfilled an engagement with the Glasgow University authorities to preach in the College Chapel, and there delivered “ an old sermon ” on the Anointing in Bethany to a crowded and interested congregation chiefly composed of students. In Glasgow, as we have repeatedly seen, he had many admirers.

“ My lectures yesterday (in Glasgow),” he writes in February, “ were as full as ever, perhaps fuller—in spite of the dreadful weather. The interest seems to be increasing. . . . Rainy is said to be getting quite demoralised. He even accepts invitations to dinner and never turns up—which is thought the height of immorality.”

This somewhat flippant reference to the leader (or, as some then thought, the ex-leader) of the Church will remind the reader of Dr. Rainy's absence from the controversial transactions which we have just described. He had been present at the meeting of the Commission of Assembly in August, and had supported the proposal

to appoint a committee of inquiry, apparently against his own better judgment and even his convictions. His experience at the preceding Assembly had thoroughly shaken his nerve, and the problem, as he himself rather artlessly put it, of "getting a sufficient number to agree"¹ to any course whatsoever was a forbidding one. The only point which seemed clear was that neither he nor the Church could face a second case in which Smith's views should again be sifted in due form. The accused was too dangerous a man to be allowed a fair trial, and the only exit from the difficulty was to use force. This dangerous expedient—a favourite resort of "strong governments," civil or ecclesiastical, when they find themselves in a difficulty—had been tried once and had disastrously failed. In the circumstances the best course seemed to be peace. But Principal Rainy was overborne by Mr. Macaulay and Dr. Begg.² "My disinclination to take renewed action on the new article," he afterwards wrote, "was based on the impression that no useful action could be taken without proposing and doing a very strong thing, and that, in our divided state, it was impossible to tell what the effect of that might be." In another³ letter he said :

"Perhaps I should have made more of a stand for my own view of the case in the early part of summer, but I felt a good deal disabled and disqualified for exerting much influence by the result of the Assembly. When the August Commission came, I went as far as I could in backing up the course resolved on, but I doubted then, and doubt yet, whether I was quite entitled by the state of my convictions to do so much. A silent vote would have been more accurately true to the position of my own mind."

Shortly afterwards Dr. Rainy left for America, and we have seen how his colleagues managed the case in his absence. The strength of his position lay in the fact that he was indispensable; and when he returned in

¹ *Life*, i. p. 379.

² *Ibid.* i p. 381.

³ *Ibid.* i. p. 381.

November he must soon have become aware that he must inevitably resume the reins of power. He was "assailed by alarmist representations." Smith and his friends had made a deep impression, and Dr. Wilson and Sir Henry Moncreiff had thrown away the fruits of the *coup d'état* which they had effected in suspending the heretic, by protesting that what they had done was "not a judicial decision," though the Report on which they had acted was to all intents and purposes a detailed indictment, and though the effect of their action was penal in character. To rectify the mistakes which had been made was not easy, but it was not beyond Dr. Rainy's capacity; and the situation with which he had to deal presented two great advantages. In the first place, the course was clear: the Church was now definitely committed to take action, and that action could only take the form of depriving Smith summarily of his chair; even the stern, unbending partisans of Dr. Begg had ceased to press for a new libel and a new series of unedifying litigations in the Church Courts. Secondly, as this was so, Dr. Rainy could reckon on much more united support than formerly, and the possibility of an accident such as happened in the Assembly of 1880 became more remote every day. The very brilliancy of the defence, the very power of Smith's lectures, was day by day consolidating the forces against him, and lessening his chances of final success.

There was still, however, need for great caution: the doctrine of "the sufficient number" had to be very carefully observed, and for nearly a month after his return Dr. Rainy showed every sign of vacillation and indecision. His biographer has given an interesting account of the state of his mind at this time as revealed in a series of letters to his friend and henchman, Dr. Adam of Glasgow, who "was not a man of theological insight or even of the highest type of Church leader, but who was thoroughly clear-headed and most persistent

in pursuing what he aimed at.”¹ Dr. Adam made it his business to discover what Dr. Rainy meant to do at the forthcoming Assembly, and elicited a series of historical avowals from which we have quoted above. As the correspondence progressed, Dr. Rainy, assisted, no doubt, by the persistency of Dr. Adam, became clearer and clearer in his mind, and finally, under pressure, admitted that he saw no better way out of the existing troubles “ than that of carrying Smith’s case through to the conclusion, and that means separating him in time from his chair. I intend to support that course ; but, as I did not see my way to recommend the beginning of the proceedings which look to that issue, and as my grounds for supporting it are in some degree different from yours, I cannot undertake a leading part in carrying it on. . . .”

Looking back on these events it is now clear that Dr. Rainy, having gone so far, was bound to go farther, and that the Smith case was now as good as settled. The leader was still in his tent, but he was arming for battle, and the sufficient number were not likely to play him false a second time.

Dr. Rainy indeed may be said to have regained the full prerogatives of leadership by the beginning of the New Year, in the early days of which we again find him negotiating on the old basis with the party which in his private correspondence he used to call the Smithites. The chief outstanding embarrassment by which he was hampered in resuming his ascendancy was, as we noted, the extremely doubtful legality of the procedure of the October Commission. With this the Smith party were making considerable play, and at a private conference with them the Principal, judging from a long confidential communication to Dr. Adam,² appears to have suggested that this might possibly be dealt with to their satisfaction, provided that they for their part were prepared to concede

¹ *Life of Principal Rainy*, i. p. 381.

² *Ibid.* i. p. 384.

something for the good of the Church. The concession hinted at was of course nothing less than Smith's voluntary resignation; and that, apart from other considerations, would in the circumstances have been treachery to the interests of Professors Davidson and Candlish, who were protected only by the fact that the heresy hunters were fully occupied with the heresiarch himself. It is to this meeting, or to a conference of a similar character, that the following extract from one of Smith's letters refers :

“ Gilbert Beith has had an interview with Rainy, who is not in a good mood. He admitted that he might have to do something, but he had not determined on a course, and would not tell any one what his ultimate plan might be. He would not speak of the Commission's injustice, believing that the only point was what the Assembly was to do. We had no right to complain; for my article had ruined me, and the blunders of the Commission, adroitly used by the Glasgow elders, had put me in a better position than ever. It was plain, Beith said, that he was watching eagerly for any slip on my part in the lectures which would give him the means of turning them against me.”

It will be observed that hitherto Dr. Rainy had shown his hand only to Dr. Adam, and that Smith did not yet know how far the concentration of his adversaries had gone. He even appears to have thought that things were going in his favour, for in March he writes to Keig with some appearance of jubilation: “ The enemy, I hear, don't now think that they can undertake to defend the Commission! Lindsay says that it is possible that the Report may never be printed.”

Meanwhile, the lectures were progressing amid great tension and occasional excitement. The following extract shows how difficult even the details of daily life became to the leading parties in the struggle: “ Yesterday was the Examination Board¹ meeting. I went up and took

¹ The Board responsible for the qualifying examination of regular students in the Halls of the Church at their entrance and exit. Smith,

part in the business, greatly to Rainy's disgust, who ultimately marched out in a temper, slamming the door—not that I had had any passage of arms with him.”

It was clear that some drastic development was imminent, but, as Dr. Rainy still kept his own counsel, and as the situation had been hopelessly embroiled by the events which had happened in the autumn and the fog of controversy in which they were shrouded, no one could guess what that development would be. The air was full of rumours. The Smithites thought, as we have seen, that the prosecution would fail on a point of law. Others put it about that the authorities in Edinburgh were considering whether it might not be well to remit the case to the Aberdeen Presbytery after all, but with the addition to the Court of trustworthy Commissioners of approved anti-Smith orthodoxy; following the example of the Moderates in the middle of the eighteenth century, who sent “riding commissioners” to make a majority when Presbyteries showed unwillingness to carry out the Patronage laws. All these conjectures were fanciful, as we know; they served for the time to supply the newspapers with abundant “copy,” and to keep alive for a short time the forlorn hope of the party of progress.

Smith delivered the last of his lectures on April 1, and, having completed their preparation for the press, he left immediately for Italy in the company of his friends, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Irvine Smith, and took a month's well-earned holiday before the meeting of the Assembly. In his absence *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, the fruit of his strenuous labours during the first months of the year, and the first of his more important works, was issued to the public in book form.

The Preface was dated April 4, and the volume was published in the beginning of May. It almost immedi-

who was a member, had been duly summoned to the meeting, and his attendance emphasised the fact that suspension from his teaching functions did not shut him out from his other administrative duties.

ately attracted ecclesiastical attention. On May 9, the Presbytery of Hamilton overtured the Assembly to the effect that the new publication was "seemingly not in harmony with the Standards," and prayed that Venerable Court to take cognisance of the matter and "vindicate truth." On May 12, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Mr. McEwan¹ also submitted an overture of which he had given notice, stating in guarded and studiously general terms that the book contained much that would have to be considered in connection with the case, and suggesting that the Assembly should deliberate and "do thereanent as in its wisdom may seem best." Mr. McEwan, it appeared, had read the book three times, and he was able to express admiration of "the very considerable talent it displayed," but more particularly of the "great dexterity and ingenuity" with which the author's views were advanced and the difficulties kept in the background. In view of the laudation with which the lectures were being received by the Press, it was desirable that the simple and unwary should be warned that the principles laid down, and the statements made therein, involved most dangerous consequences. Mr. McEwan developed this theme under three heads, the first two being the familiar questions of historicity and canonicity, with which so many pages of the present work are burdened. The third was somewhat novel, and Mr. McEwan deserves credit for his sagacity in apprehending it so clearly. He argued with some force that Professor Smith's doctrine of sacrifice involved a new theory of the essential character of the Old Testament religion, and in his judgment cut away the basis on which the whole doctrine of salvation rests. This is not the place in which to argue out this complicated question: it is enough to say that in view of the recent developments of research into the evolution of religion, the present writers are not prepared to deny that the point raised

¹ Minister of John Knox's Free Church, Canongate, Edinburgh.

by Mr. McEwan was entitled to more serious consideration than most of those debated during the five years of controversy which were then drawing to a close.

It does not appear that Mr. McEwan's discovery made very much impression on the Presbytery. Sir Henry Moncreiff, in seconding the overture, emphasised its neutral character, pointing out the obvious fact that it was as much in Smith's interest as in the interest of his opponents that it should be transmitted. Without committing himself to a doctrinal approval, he paid a high compliment to the ability and learning of Smith's latest performance, though for this very reason he considered it was all the more necessary that it should be carefully scrutinised.

Dr. Horatius Bonar, who next spoke, was less diplomatic. He delivered an attack on "conjectural criticism" in general, and in particular on Smith's "inaccuracies," and "ominous silence" on such subjects as the miracles of the Old Testament, Messianic prophecy, and Christology, atonement by blood, and the genealogies in Matthew and Luke. This speech led to one of Smith's innumerable newspaper controversies, but its interest for readers of the present day is purely archæological. Smith's friends having intimated that they were in favour of the overture, the House submitted to a characteristic effusion from Mr. Macaulay, and the overture was unanimously adopted.

The volume which was thus formally brought before the Assembly was attracting at least equally respectful attention in the learned world at large. It was reviewed by the Press with great promptitude, and its reception was generally very favourable. One of the earliest notices was by Mr. Bryce, then Professor of Civil Law at Oxford, who devoted two articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* to an exposition of Smith's main results. Professor Bryce, who had special claims to speak on the historical and legal aspects of the subject, was much struck by the success

with which Smith had to his mind convincingly established the late date of the Levitical system. "A better piece of historical work, exhibiting a sounder historical method, we do not remember to have ever met with."

Professor Cheyne contributed an interesting review to the *Academy* of May 7, in which he spoke with high approval of

" . . . this last and perhaps most important of Professor Robertson Smith's defences . . . by which the possibility of a free and yet religious handling of the Biblical texts has been established as it had not been established before. . . . To have accomplished the composition, the delivery, and the printing of such a delicate and complicated investigation within so short a time, is a feat which more than anything else shows the fullness of learning, and the fertility of resource of this highly cultured Biblical scholar."

In Professor Cheyne's view the effect of the book was to lay a firm foundation for the study of Biblical criticism (almost altogether new in Great Britain) by giving "a conspectus of primary facts and presuppositions." A personal interest attaches to the reviewer's remark on the writer's moderation in regarding the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah as a single prophecy, a moderation which, in the Free Church, as we have seen; was regarded by the orthodox as a heresy of the first magnitude. It is interesting also to note the tone of qualified regret with which Professor Cheyne speaks of the "theological tinge" of the book, the absence of which from the article "Bible" was, as the reader will not have forgotten, one of the efficient causes of the Smith case. "It would be a pity if any one . . . should be repelled from the study of the work by its ultra-Protestant tendencies, a pity moreover were it to be demanded of every Old Testament scholar that he should be always holding up his theological flag."

The writer of the *Athenæum* review, which appeared

on May 21,¹ also disapproved of the "theological tinge." Remark is made on certain "well-worn" phrases,

" . . . which appear to be thrown in at random, but may nevertheless be designed to be important; we mean such expressions as 'the Bible is God's book,' 'the Bible approves itself the pure and perfect Word of God.' 'The inspired writers were so led by the spirit that they perfectly understood and *perfectly recorded* every word which God spoke to their hearts.' . . . It is possible that these phrases may be explained in accordance with critical results, but they scarcely accord with the prevailing current of thought in the book, though they fit well into that of the Westminster Confession of Faith. . . . In harmony with them we find certain interpretations called 'rationalising' or 'belonging to rationalism' which should not be so stigmatised."

With these reservations the reviewer declares the work to be excellent, and commends it to readers as "a popular exposition of the most recent views advanced on the Continent respecting the Old Testament—views running to an extreme in some cases."

In a very different spirit Wellhausen wrote, in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, a dignified and scholarly vindication of his friend. Smith's position is determined on the one hand by Lagarde, his old professor, and on the other by Graf. Many who would otherwise have been inclined to sympathise with him will find fault because he holds the Priestly Code to be later than Ezekiel. It is not easy to see why the Biblical criticism exercised by the theology which has prevailed since the death of Schleiermacher, should acknowledge, as it does, that the heathen Porphyry was right as regards the book of Daniel, yet take up an attitude of *noli me tangere* on the subject of the authenticity of the Mosaic law. Doubtless the inconsistency is to be accounted for as a survival

¹ Perhaps Dr. Samuel Davidson, himself a veteran Higher Critic of the school of Eichhorn, and author of the article "Adam" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (see above, p. 188).

of the view, which in its principle has been abandoned, that revelation and historical development are incompatible ideas. That they are really capable of reconciliation Smith in his two opening lectures seeks to show with great success. All that remains to be wished is that his argument will pacify his opponents as well as satisfy his friends. It is certainly for the interest of the Free Church of Scotland that it should remain *en rapport* with science and with the intellectual life, and there are few men so able or so willing as Professor Robertson Smith to help it to do so.

While the learned world was engaged in canvassing the merits of Smith's work, his colleagues were equally busy in discussing the best means of terminating his career as a teacher. With the help of Dr. Carnegie Simpson we have been enabled to follow the evolution of the political situation up to that crucial point at which Dr. Rainy promised to support the policy of turning Smith out, while still protesting that he could not take a leading part in carrying that policy into effect. Unfortunately it is just at this exciting moment that Dr. Simpson's guidance fails us, and we have no light on the process by which the Principal's faithful attendants again forced the helm of state into his reluctant hands. But however interesting it would be to know exactly how it was done, the material fact is that it *was* done, and on May 18, we find the coalition re-established on a surer basis, and Dr. Rainy in his natural position at its head.

On that day a highly important private meeting of members of the General Assembly which was to meet on the morrow, was held in the spacious premises of the Young Men's Christian Association in Edinburgh. Dr. Wilson presided over a large and representative attendance of no less than three hundred persons "favourable to the action of the Commission in the case of Professor Robertson Smith." Prominent in the company were Sir Henry

Moncreiff, Dr. Rainy, Dr. Begg, Principal Brown, Professor Binnie, Dr. John Kennedy, Dr. Moody Stuart and Dr. Adam. An official statement of what passed was sent to the Press.

“ The proceedings having been opened with devotional exercises,” the chairman urged upon the meeting the necessity for common action at the coming Assembly. Sir Henry Moncreiff then announced that he was ready to move a resolution in Assembly approving of the action of the Commission in instructing Professor Smith not to resume teaching in Aberdeen last session. This was unanimously agreed to, and then followed the event of the evening, which showed that Dr. Rainy’s mental evolution was complete. He “ submitted the terms of a motion which had been handed to him as the result of previous conferences, and which, with certain alterations made upon it by himself, he indicated his willingness to propose to the General Assembly.” This motion, after a preamble to which we shall return, proceeded to declare “ that it is not for the advantage or interest of the Church that Professor Smith should be continued in charge of the training of her students.” It was framed (as was officially explained) so as to give Smith an opportunity of resigning voluntarily ; failing which, “ Dr. Adam or some other leader of the Church,” was prepared to move a resolution formally removing him from his chair. At this point Dr. Rainy asserted himself for the first time since his eclipse. He “ expressed an opinion to the effect that with the adoption of such a finding, the case should take end in the meantime.” Dr. Begg cordially approved of Smith’s removal, but suggested that there should be a committee to examine *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, “ and if possible to frame a libel for depriving him of his ministerial functions.” This time, however, the meeting was mindful of the doctrine of the sufficient number, and Dr. Begg’s proposal was coldly received, and by agreement adjourned for further consideration. A

further meeting was held on the following Saturday ; the programme was ratified and the cast approved, and it was intimated that Dr. Begg's proposal had been dropped. Dr. Rainy had carried his point ; the man and the libel had both been sacrificed.

The final stage of the five years' conflict had now really arrived, and with unconscious dramatic irony the *Edinburgh Courant* (*causa mali tanti*) summed up the situation in words which had less power upon events than those which under Providence had started the Smith case. After an expression of " the deep respect we cherish at once for his piety and his learning " the reviewer¹ continued :

" We cannot doubt that this stir and controversy over the Old Testament Scriptures will make the Old Testament far more than it has been amongst us, a living book. . . ." To her advanced critics, " Germany owes a new era in Old Testament interpretation and theology. It may be so with us, and to Professor Robertson Smith the country may yet owe much. . . . If Professor Smith be not already too far committed, we urge him with his splendid talents to treat those problems affecting the foundations with caution, lest it should be said of him, in even a more literal sense than of the great sage² who has just gone to his rest, that he led the men of his generation out of Egypt and left them wandering in the desert."

The first part of the programme planned by the allies was carried out with complete success at the evening sitting of the Assembly on Monday May 23. At that sitting Sir Henry Moncreiff met all the numerous protests against the legality of the action taken by the Commission with the uncompromising motion that the General Assembly . . . " find that there is no occasion for interfering with the action of the Commission, but that the Report of its Committee furnishes materials which call for earnest attention. . . ."

¹ Of course of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*.

² Carlyle died February 10, 1881.

A counter-motion disapproving of the Commission's conduct, which was moved by the Rev. Mr. Thomson,¹ and supported by able arguments, did not commend itself to the judgment of the House. At the beginning of the second case Smith's supporters, as we have seen, were doubtful whether they could muster as many as a hundred at the Assembly; at the height of the enthusiasm engendered by the high-handed and unprecedented action of the Commission, they expected to be able to bring at least three men to the vote for every four polled on the other side. It was now shown how much too sanguine the latter expectation had been; for Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion was carried by a majority of more than two to one (439 to 218).

On the following day it was the turn of Principal Rainy, who moved the motion which had been so carefully settled with the various sections of his supporters. It will not, we hope, be forgotten that of all the defences of the conduct of the Commission, the only one which had the slightest plausibility was that in which Sir Henry, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Adam had concurred. That defence was that the Commission had not assumed any judicial position, that it had not made Smith's case "even a virtual case of discipline, nor was its action so much as a virtual condemnation of Professor Smith or his positions." Yet the preamble of Dr. Rainy's motion cynically referred to the "*judgment* of the Commission," and made this "*judgment*" a ground for conclusions which left the Church no alternative but to remove the erring Professor, without further trial or inquiry, from his chair.

The way had no doubt been prepared, by Sir Henry Moncreiff's triumph of the previous evening, for the assertion of any proposition which suited the purpose of

¹ The Rev. George W. Thomson, D.D., then minister of St. George's Free Church, Glasgow, and afterwards of the West Free Church, Aberdeen.

the majority; but the scandal of such a repudiation of the public utterances of recognised leaders of the Church must have given much cause for rejoicing to her enemies. The reasons for dismissing Smith were stated at length in the motion. They were five in number, and were as follows :—

- “ 1. That the construction of last Assembly’s judgment in Professor Smith’s case, on which, in his letter, he claims that the right was conceded to him to promulgate his views in the manner he has done, is unwarrantable; the Assembly therefore repudiate that construction, and adopt the statement on this subject contained in the Report submitted to the Commission in October.
- “ 2. That the article ‘Hebrew Language and Literature’ is fitted to give at least as great offence, and cause as serious anxiety, as that for which he was formerly dealt with.
- “ 3. That it contains statements which are fitted to throw grave doubt on the historical truth and divine inspiration of several books of Scripture.
- “ 4. That both the tone of the article in itself, and the fact that such an article was prepared and published in the circumstances, and after all the previous proceedings in his case, evince on the part of Professor Smith a singular insensibility to his responsibilities as a theological professor, and a singular and culpable lack of sympathy with the reasonable anxieties of the Church as to the bearing of critical speculations on the integrity and authority of Scripture.
- “ 5. That all this has deepened the conviction, already entertained by a large section of the Church, that Professor Smith, whatever his gifts and attainments, which the Assembly have no disposition to undervalue, ought no longer to be entrusted with the training of students for the ministry.”

And the conclusion which deserves also to be preserved in its own historic words, ran that—

“ the General Assembly having the responsible duty to discharge of overseeing the teaching in

the Divinity Halls, while they are sensible of the importance of guarding the due liberty of professors, and encouraging learned and candid research, feel themselves constrained to declare that they no longer consider it safe or advantageous for the Church that Professor Smith should continue to teach in one of her colleges."

Executive action on this conclusion, the hangman's work, would take place, it was announced, on the following Thursday morning.

The speech in which Dr. Rainy commended to the House the motion which had been entrusted to him was hardly worthy of the occasion. The speaker himself must have been painfully conscious of the moral weakness of his position, and it was perhaps owing to this that he displayed even less than his usual power of lucid and cogent language. In 1880 his speech had been laboured, but then he was arguing for the victory and in fact did not prevail. In 1881 the very consciousness that he could not fail seems to have benumbed him. It is said that he had spent the previous night absorbed in anxious thought without retiring to rest. To a man with his knowledge of the world the prospect of the future must in truth have given much cause for sombre reflection, and the reader of the cumbrous paragraphs of his address to the Assembly, seamed and scarred with parenthesis and anacoluthon, must be insensible indeed if he does not realise in some degree the price that some men pay for leadership.

The Principal began with history, and dwelt for the last time on the "legitimate" anxieties awakened in the Church by the "accumulation of tendency" represented by the article "Bible." This part of his speech is haunted by the ghosts of dead libels and echoes of defeated charges of dangerous and unsettling teaching. Was he not the spokesman of those who had learned nothing and forgotten nothing? He proceeded to argue that, apart from the views themselves, the decision and confidence

with which they had been expressed was an aggravating circumstance which compelled the attention of the Church. He summoned up a smile wherewith to dismiss a taunt¹ that he at least had never offended in this particular manner; and after a reference to the absence of the Divine factor in Smith's theory of the Old Testament Scriptures, he entered on another train of retrospect. The Church had been compelled to combat these views; but the constitutional method of doing so, which in her innocence she had adopted, had never seemed to him to be satisfactory. "He himself had always regretted the libel—though he acquiesced in it at the time—as having prejudiced in various ways the right dealing with the case." A libel in such circumstances was an awkward thing. In the first place it was difficult to prove, and secondly, it was apt to involve other members of the Church, as distinguished as the heretic but less dangerous, in the consequences of his heresy. After a reference to the decision of the previous year Dr. Rainy approached the question of the new article. And here we must suppose that the vigil of the previous night had had its share in obscuring his perception of facts, since in the passage that followed he did the accused a very grave injustice. He spoke of the article "Hebrew Language and Literature" as a restatement of Smith's convictions which he had claimed it to be his right and his duty to make, and the whole trend of the argument was to show that the article was a "renewed challenge," and that the alleged faults of matter and manner which it contained were a wanton affront to susceptibilities which the author had been solemnly warned to respect. This, as we know, was nothing short of a most unfair misrepresentation of what actually happened; it was no doubt involuntary, and it was not allowed to pass unnoticed. At the moment Dr. Rainy, of course, believed that he was using a fair argument, but he seems to have felt that in itself it was not a strong

¹ Dr. Bruce's.

one. At any rate he proceeded to support it by another.

“I have one thing more to say with regard to this article. It was a restatement of Professor Smith’s convictions, or included a restatement of them, so far as the purposes of that article seemed to him to require it. But it appears to me, on the evidence of some of the quotations that are supplied in the Report, that in this article, when we look into it, we are forced to see fresh questions arising.”

These new features were an “increased strength and trenchancy of statement in regard to matters which I am willing to treat as minor matters”; for example, “. . . in regard to some of the books of the canon, which may be held to admit of some debate as to the precise view to be taken of them, and the precise way in which questions about them are to be dealt with, . . . but especially the train of reasoning which established the late date of the Levitical legislation.”

“This is the state of things in which we find ourselves at the end of five years. It appears to me that this in itself—this new complication of the convictions stated, and in the manner of stating them—the persistency, the increased intensity—these circumstances really raise the question of continuing to entrust the training of students to Professor Smith. . . . I do hold that teaching like this, if the Church is simply to tolerate and take no action, will inevitably be misunderstood, will give an impulse in a direction of loose and large views about Scripture which the Church ought not to consent to have connected with her name.”

Like the Platonic Legislators in their pursuit of a practical approximation to justice, Dr. Rainy had escaped two great waves only to be threatened by the third and greatest of all. He had proved to the satisfaction, at least of his own side, firstly, that Smith had wilfully violated the peace imposed upon the Church by the accident of the previous year; and secondly, that his teaching, while it could not be dealt with by ordinary

methods, was such that the Church could not safely tolerate it within her borders. It remained to show that it could be suppressed by means legitimately at the disposal of the Court. And here, if we were to pursue the train of Platonic reminiscence, Dr. Rainy's argument might remind us of the mythological foundations on which the legislators, *γενναῖόν τι ἐν ψευδόμενοι*, were advised by Socrates to base the ideal polity. It would not be fair to press this analogy too far; let us return instead, as Dr. Rainy returned, to the idea of "high moral expediency" which he pressed upon the Assembly with greater success than on a former occasion. The speaker contended somewhat formally, and a little perfunctorily, for the doctrine that there is a reserve of power in the Assembly whereby in emergencies it can supersede the working of the Church's constitution.

"But," he added impressively, approaching eloquence for the first time as he drew to a close, "even if it be conceded that a general power of this kind rests with the Church, the question returns, Do you think it fit to use this power in this case? Yes, Moderator, fathers and brethren, think well of that; I do not wish to conceal the gravity of it. It is a very grave burden to my own mind. . . . It is a great sacrifice not to Professor Smith merely. It is a great sacrifice to us. If you doubt your power, do not use it. If you doubt whether there is a case for the exercise of your power, do not use it; but if you believe that the case has arisen, has become such a case—a complication threatening grave and serious issues—that it is no longer fit that even this professor should be maintained in the office which he occupies—and if you believe this is the right way to care for your souls, and to place the Church in the best position, thus deliberately and calmly facing with strength and patience all those questions so plainly in the air, and so inevitably questions that remain to be considered—then, if you think that, you must act, and you must take the responsibility and the unpopularity of your action."

The leading speech for the defence was delivered by Dr. Whyte, who moved that a Committee should be

appointed "to consider maturely the writings of Professor W. R. Smith, published since last Assembly, with power, if they see cause, to prosecute him by libel before the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and in any case to report to next Assembly." The speech in which he commended this moderate and prudent course to the House was remarkable for its wisdom no less than for its fine spirit of courage and kindness. Dr. Whyte was at that time reckoned a "Smithite" by Dr. Rainy and his friends; but, as the motion itself shows, he was not in any sense committed to Smith's views, and he spoke from the standpoint of a man who in defending his friends was defending also the highest interests of the Church. He appealed against "the mistrustful, ungenerous, somewhat panic-stricken motion" of Dr. Rainy, which counted on the timidity, the alarm, the excited traditional sentiment of the House," and "the indecent and unlawful violence" that was proposed. He pleaded that—

"... the devout sentiment and solicitude that is in the Church shall not persecute out of it the faithful and diligent student, or be a barrier in his way in seeking out the whole truth attainable concerning the past ways of God with His Church, and the work of the Spirit of God in the production, preservation, and transmission of the Word of God.

"You cannot arrest the movement of mind in Christendom of which these inculcated writings are an outcome. Had this movement of the theological mind been confined to Professor Smith and a handful of German or Germanised scholars like himself, you might have ignored it or arrested its progress in your Church. But the movement is not of them; they are rather of it. They are its children, and they cannot but be its servants. Fathers and brethren, the world of mind does not stand still; and the theological mind will stand still at its peril. No man who knows, or cares to know, anything of my personal sympathies and intellectual and religious leanings, will accuse me of disloyalty to the Calvinistic, Puritan, and Presbyterian polity, or neglect of the noble body of literature we inherit from our fathers. But I find no

disparity, no difficulty in carrying much of the best of our past with me in going out to meet and hail the new theological methods. Of all bodies of men on the earth, the Church of Christ should be the most catholic-minded, the most hopeful, the most courageous, the most generous, sure that every movement of the human mind is ordered and overruled for her ultimate establishment, extension, and enriching. . . . Professor Smith may have been courageous and venturesome to a fault ; but he is fitted by gifts, learning, sagacity, descent, personal piety, to serve the Church as few men in any generation possibly can ; surely she is not prepared to cast him over her walls to the scorn and rejoicing of the besieging army."

This eloquent and affecting appeal may be said to have fallen on deaf ears. Mr. Guthrie, son of the celebrated Dr. Guthrie, now a Senator of the College of Justice, and at that time commencing his career as Procurator of the Free Church, impartially advised the Assembly, as his predecessor had done in 1880, that what they proposed to do might be visited with damages by the Court of Session. All this seemed but to add fuel to the flames, and in the long debate which followed " the excited traditionary sentiment of the House " asserted itself loudly and repeatedly.

" I find," said one speaker (Mr. M'Tavish of Inverness), " that the Confession declares that it pleased God to commit His word to writing, that He is the ' Author ' of the Scriptures, and if the ' Author,' then, of course, the Composer, and that the ' style ' is an evidence of their divine origin, and therefore it teaches that the style is God's."

In these few lines the view of the majority is admirably summarised. Dr. Begg himself, who intervened later in the debate to rebuke and repudiate all craven fear of the law of the land, could not put it more trenchantly. There is indeed a sameness in the speeches for the prosecution which would deprive them of interest for the reader of the present day, even if it were possible to epitomise them for the purposes of this narrative. It is interesting to

note that at this supreme moment Sir Henry Moncreiff was not found among Smith's most bitter opponents. No doubt he expressed the view that *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* "required to be looked at," and his present impression was that it contained things which would make the groundwork of a libel. "But for himself he confessed that the mode in which the Professor's book is executed disposed him to do something to regain the Professor; but he as yet did not know how that was to be done."

The attitude of the younger men was on this occasion expressed by two of Smith's former students, one of whom, Mr. Forrest of Stevenston, Ayrshire, came forward as a consistent opponent of his teaching, and as one who had been unable to sign the Memorial in favour of his old Professor which had been presented to the Assembly in the previous year, and who regarded the testimony of his class fellows merely as "a remarkable instance of how good men may be blinded by partisan zeal and strong personal attachment to a friend." Mr. Robertson (Stoneykirk), one of the memorialists, on the other hand, testified to the benefit he had derived from Professor Smith's teaching, and the corrective to rationalism which it was fitted to supply.

Smith rose to reply at a quarter to ten. His speech occupied more than an hour in delivery, and was spoken of by the journals next day as an extraordinary oratorical effort, alike in "fluency of utterance, facility and aptness of illustration, sharpness of criticism, promptness of argument; and readiness of retort." Its substance need not detain us long. No general survey of the merits of the case, no comprehensive defence, was possible; for the merits of the case had ceased to make any figure in the speeches of his accusers, and, as he pointed out, the opportunity afforded to him was not the opportunity for a full and regular defence such as the law and constitution of the Church nominally



CARICATURE OF PROFESSOR SMITH DURING THE PROGRESS
OF THE CASE.

give. All he could do was to criticise the proposals of his opponents as they had arisen. He acquiesced in Dr. Whyte's motion, not because it pointed to a new libel—in his view the motion committed the House to no such course—but because the Church, if she chose to deal with the grave questions that had been raised, ought to do so on her responsibility as a Church, and ought not to leave them to be agitated by any chance individual. Dr. Rainy's motion had evaded all consideration of the views which it was proposed with such violence to repudiate. The question, which now came before an orderly court of the Church for the first time, and which, according to Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr. Wilson, had merely been kept open by the Commission for the decision of the Assembly, was now to be passed by with the declaration that it was impossible to go into the merits. As regarded these merits, those from whom Dr. Rainy expected support were hopelessly divided. The speaker who held that the style of the Word of God was God's style, if he succeeded in imposing his doctrines on the colleges of the Church for a single year, would empty them of every student worth admitting to the ministry. Dr. Begg and Dr. Rainy were notoriously and publicly at variance as to the nature and import of the testimony of Christ on the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; yet Dr. Begg and Dr. Rainy proposed to vote together. The coalition which they had formed was only upon legal points, and would have been impossible if the real issue had been faced. According to Dr. Rainy the real issue still called for discussion in happier times; according to the others it was *res judicata*.

Smith next fastened on what was really the main point of Dr. Rainy's speech—the charge that he had misconstrued the liberty accorded to him by the finding of 1880, and had claimed in his letter to the Clerk of the Presbytery of Aberdeen the right to restate views to

which the Church took exception. He declared that he could not find any such claim in the letter, and he challenged his accuser across the floor of the Assembly to point to the passage referred to. The Principal complained, somewhat unreasonably, that he had had no specific notice of the question, but after a somewhat lively passage it was made abundantly clear that he could not maintain the position he had taken up. Smith then proceeded to explain with great care the spirit in which he had accepted the admonition.

“ At the time that this decision was before me, I had several opportunities of useful work in my offer, one of work of a similar character to that in the Free Church, and in these circumstances was it possible that I would have gone back to this Church’s work unless I had felt it was work which I still desired to do, and in which I still hoped to live in unity with my brethren—(applause)—and, I venture to say, before God and man, with an unalloyed desire to serve the Church in which I was born, in which I have heard the Gospel, in which I was trained to the ministry, in which I have been privileged to exercise a sphere of usefulness? (Applause.) I accepted the admonition, feeling, as an honest man, that I could continue to hold office, and that, as a scholarly man, I could find work to occupy myself without agitating the mind of the Church. I can assure you, from the depths of my conscience, I have never said and never thought that it would have been right in me to write the article, ‘ Hebrew Language and Literature,’ under the decision of last Assembly. I do not think it would have been right for me to have written it. Now, I may say, since the question has again been raised, I would have been glad to have taken it back, not because I did not believe what I had written—for if a libel is brought I am prepared to answer it—but because I felt it would not have been a charitable thing to have written such an article as that, after the solemn circumstances through which we had passed. . . . It has been said,” he continued, “ that the writing of my letter in regard to this article on ‘ Hebrew Language and Literature ’ was worse even than the article itself, but I can tell you that if ever there was a document that was written with all feelings of charity

and wishes for peace in the Church, it was the letter which I sent to Dr. Spence. I tell the Assembly again that I claim no such right as that imputed to me in Dr. Rainy's motion, and no man can honestly vote in support of the statement in Dr. Rainy's motion when I tell him distinctly that I claimed no such right.

"It is not probable," he went on, "that anything I may say now will move such a coalition as has been formed. What I wish to do is, that I shall not part with you—if I must part—with a cloud upon our relations which it is possible for me by frank and friendly explanation to remove, and, therefore, I have sought to give at some length a plain history of this fault, if you call it a fault, which showed that I have neither a disloyal heart to you, nor a disregard for my position as a professor of this Church. (Applause.) We have come to a constitutional crisis, of the legal results of which I will not speak, but it is evident that there is a possibility that the Church, by taking the strong step proposed, may compromise itself before the State."

Smith proceeded to dilate upon the probable results of the interference with the doctrine of appointment *ad vitam aut culpam*, and strongly protested against Dr. Rainy's argument that the Church had a power in reserve above the ordinary constitution and law. He concluded by saying :

"The power of the Church is regulated by common law. In his motion Dr. Rainy appealed to no spiritual considerations. In his speech he gave no Christian arguments, none that did not come from common expediency—(applause)—no argument but that by which despotism has always been supported—the argument that the State must have the power to prevent the State from suffering ill. There is a power watching over the Church, there is a power watching over it now in this crisis, which I and all of us hope and pray will not desert this Church, even though on this occasion she may be led wrongly. The power which watches over our Church is not a power arbitrarily asserted by a mere body of men without a constitution and on grounds of mere temporary expediency. The power that watches over our Church is that power which enables us to be patient, to be temperate,

to be truthful, to exercise charity and faith to one another—it is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the power of His Spirit that lives in our hearts.”

Dr. Rainy's reply came at midnight and, according to contemporary critics, “was not delivered with his customary force and care.” He accepted Smith's correction of the interpretation to be placed on the letter to Dr. Spence, and proposed to meet his objection to the form of the charge of contumacy by omitting the words “as he has done” from the first of the five clauses¹ of his motion. A somewhat confused argument followed, in the course of which the defence made a series of protests to the effect that, if the words were to be dropped, the whole motion fell with them. The Principal, however, denied that he had based any of his argument on the words which he proposed to omit, and was frank enough to explain that he had personally nothing to do with their appearance in his motion, but had inserted them at the request of a supporter whom he did not name. The protests were overruled, and, continuing his speech with increasing sadness of tone, Dr. Rainy justified afresh the wisdom of the course recommended in his motion, and abruptly concluded with the declaration that, whether he was believed or not, he would much rather that the case had been one of Professor Smith putting him out of his chair than of his putting Professor Smith out of the chair in Aberdeen.

Before the division was taken a somewhat heated discussion arose on a question put by Smith, “whether the members were to vote on Principal Rainy's motion as originally proposed, with the inconsistency with fact which it included, or as the Principal had proposed to amend it.” There was considerable doubt whether the House had consented or would consent to the proposed amendment, and a division was actually challenged; but

¹ See above p. 425.

in deference to the view of the Moderator it was decided that the motion should be put as amended.

Half an hour later the result was announced as follows :—

For Dr. Rainy's motion	.	.	423
For Dr. Whyte's motion	.	.	245
			178
Majority against Professor Smith			178

Thus the Assembly with no ambiguous voice declared its conviction that Smith's continued occupancy of his chair was no longer safe or advantageous for the Church.¹ It will be remembered that the last paragraph in Dr. Rainy's motion, which had now become the finding of the House, was that the Assembly should

¹ From this judgment of the Assembly Dr. Candlish and others dissented for reasons which may be summarised as follows: Because it was founded on a misstatement as to a matter of fact; because vague statements as to tendency and tone cannot be the basis of definite ecclesiastical action; because the matters based on in the finding were all antecedent to the admonition addressed to Professor Smith by last Assembly, and in justice to that Assembly opportunity should have been allowed for the proper influence of that admonition; because the declaration that it is no longer safe or advantageous for the Church that Professor Smith should continue to teach, can only express the opinion of a majority of this Assembly, and the Assembly is not authorised in this matter to speak in the name of the Church; because the declaration must either be entirely inept, or must lead to the summary removal of Professor Smith from his chair, an act which would be contrary to the Scripture principles of Church discipline and to the Form of Process; and because the finding is based mainly on seeming expediency and contributes nothing to the settlement of the vital questions involved.

The official answers, handed in by Dr. Rainy, were, in substance, that the Assembly was at all events entitled to repudiate a construction of last Assembly's decision which seemed to render it antagonistic to previous judgments and, if it was meant that Professor Smith had claimed only the right to hold his opinions though not to promulgate them, such was not the impression which his letter was fitted to make; that the judgment itself set forth sufficient grounds for the action taken; that it brought up matters of serious moment which were not in view of last Assembly and fell to be dealt with now; that the Assembly was entitled and bound to judge as to what was safe and advantageous; and that the judgment arrived at in no way precluded any subsequent action that might be required.

“ resume the matter on Thursday with a view to giving effect to this judgment.” Obviously, the judgment was one that was intended to have consequences ; but it was thought courteous, or at least desirable, to give the Professor thus declared to have lost the confidence of his constituents the opportunity of resigning, should he prefer to terminate his official connection with the Church in that way. For reasons other than personal he decided not to adopt that course.

On Thursday May 26, accordingly, Dr. Adam moved his predetermined motion, which declared that from the 31st of the month Professor Smith’s tenure of his chair should cease as regarded all rights to teach and exercise professorial functions in the College of Aberdeen, and as regarded all ecclesiastical rights and powers grounded on his professorial charge. The motion expressly reserved to Smith his full salary, leaving to future Assemblies the further regulation of that matter. Steps were to be taken to appoint a successor and to make arrangements *ad interim* for the instruction of the classes. As regarded the overtures from various Presbyteries which cried aloud for action anent *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, various considerations were set out, the effect of which was that, while the matter was a very grave one, and the anxieties connected with it serious and justifiable, the Assembly were invited for the present to take no further action.

The last stand of the defence, a forlorn hope indeed, was taken in a simple direct negative by Professor A. B. Bruce, who moved that the House decline to adopt Dr. Adam’s motion on the ground that his colleague’s summary removal would be an act neither consistent “ with the Scriptural principles of Church discipline,” nor likely to contribute to the settlement of the vital questions at issue regarding the truth of Scripture. He and his friends knew that failure was inevitable, and they had considered whether a simpler protest than a formal motion would

not be sufficient. On reflection, however, they had resolved to divide the House once more and to argue their case again, as the most effective means of discharging their responsibilities.

Dr. Bruce's argument was much the same as that which at each successive stage of the case was pressed upon the Church, and has with sufficient frequency been brought before the readers of this book. Conducted not only with great lucidity, but with great earnestness, and without any note of theological bitterness, it concluded with these words of memorable intensity :

“ I cannot sit down without expressing my sorrow and shame at what is about to be done. I never expected to see the day when such a spectacle could be witnessed in our Church. Had I foreseen it, I do not know that I should have been very much inclined to be either a minister or a professor in this Church. But, notwithstanding all that has happened and is about to happen, I do not regret, nor do I think any of us regrets, that he is a Free Churchman. We are proud of our Church's past history and achievements, and we will not despair of her yet having a future of which we can be proud—a future in which she shall appear orthodox yet not illiberal, evangelical yet not Pharisaical, believing yet not afraid of inquiry. And even now we love our Mother Church, and will serve her faithfully and loyally as long as she will allow us. We will cling to her through good report and through bad, and we will use our influence to induce all others to do so—our members, our office-bearers, our students. We humbly think she is doing a great wrong, but we count surely on a reaction and a noble repentance, in which she will cancel the ostracism which she is about to exercise against her ablest servant and devoted son.”

The debate continued for some hours, and several of the more prominent persons in the drama made their final appearances. Dr. Marcus Dods intervened publicly, both for the first and the last time, taking the obvious point that, if the Church suspected a heresy, she should deal with that heresy before she dealt with the heretic. For himself, he regarded the Professor's views with

regard to the Deuteronomic authorship as demonstrably false in some particulars,—almost as indefensible as the old traditional views,—but while the Professor had made mistakes as a scientific investigator, he had likewise rendered most valuable services to the cause of orthodoxy ; and he entreated the House to take account of the immense benefits the Professor had conferred on the Christian Church at large. He appeared, therefore, for delay and suspension of judgment before an irretrievable step was taken. Dr. Begg and Sir Henry Moncreiff delivered characteristic speeches on the other side. Dr. Begg recalled the attention of the Assembly to the business in hand, which was to execute the judgment of the day before, and not to argue about its justice or expediency. He called for the immediate exercise of the *nobile officium*, and amused the House with the customary illustrative anecdotes. Sir Henry could neither feel nor express enthusiasm for Dr. Adam's motion, but accepted it subject to his old distinction between the case of Professor Smith and a case of discipline, and, having administered to himself this dialectical consolation, quietly fell into line with the other members of the coalition. The only other feature of the debate worthy of note was an attempt made by Mr. Cowan, Law Agent to the Free Church, to hearten the weaker brethren by disputing the view expressed by Mr. Guthrie on the previous day as to the legal position of the Church in regard to Smith's tenure of his chair.

Dr. Rainy spoke shortly towards the close of the debate : the subject so far as he was concerned was practically exhausted, and, indeed, he at first proposed to leave the debate to Smith and Dr. Adam who, of course, would exercise his right of reply. This course did not commend itself to the House, and the Principal was induced to say a few words. He began by explaining that until the publication of the recent lectures he had purposely maintained a neutral attitude, and that even

now he had listened with much sympathy to the appeals made by Smith's friends ; at the same time he frankly intimated that he and others had suffered too much already in connection with the present case to be easily driven from the course they had marked out, more especially as he felt that inquiry by a Committee would assuredly land them in a libel. He did not object to the investigation of the questions raised by means of a grand committee, but he was not disposed to consent to such an investigation while Professor Smith remained in the chair at Aberdeen.

When Smith took his place at the table to deliver the last of all his many speeches, his manner and bearing (so the contemporary chronicler tells us) showed plainly enough that he appreciated to the full the seriousness, not to say the hopelessness, of his position so far as the verdict of the present Assembly was concerned. He began by remarking that, though unable to regard the decision of the previous Tuesday as in any part a decision on a point of law, he could not fail to see in it a strong personal expression of disapprobation on the part of the majority of the House. It had gone so far as to place upon words of his a construction which he had solemnly and before God repudiated, thus placing between himself and them a personal bar of a kind which in ordinary circumstances would have led him to shrink from again meeting with them on that floor. Yet, painful as it might be to meddle further in the case in this Assembly, he also felt compelled to consider that he was still a Free Churchman, a member of Assembly with a commission from his Presbytery, and, therefore, so long as he had strength and voice, he was resolved to do what he could to protest—not to save himself from personal consequences—which, indeed, after what had come and gone might perhaps rather be a relief—but to save the Church from at one fell swoop destroying her whole constitution. He then went on to argue that the finding—

a "judgment" as it called itself—of Tuesday had not expressed any opinion as to the Church's legal power in the way of removing professors or other office-bearers. It had simply stated that the Assembly had certain responsibilities to which it was sensitive, and had accordingly emitted a declaration, not on a point of law, but on a point of expediency merely, to the effect that it was no longer safe or advantageous that a certain professor should teach in a certain chair. But it did not require so much as one word to prove that between such a declaration and the conclusion that it was necessary to remove the professor from his chair there was a very important link missing—the link which Dr. Adam's motion tried to supply. It was vain to argue that Dr. Adam's motion was one to which the Assembly was shut up. It might be true that the first step was one which could hardly be justified, unless the Church was prepared to take the second. Still, there were two separate steps indicated by the two separate motions; and no church can be shut up, without discussion and without vote, to take a second step because it has taken a first. There was a new case to-day, which had to be decided altogether upon its own merits. Still dwelling upon the constitutional question, he proceeded to argue that if the inherent power of the Assembly as defined by Dr. Rainy—a power not regulated by law, but solely by the responsibility of the Assembly—were to be admitted, there would be a temptation, such as had never existed before, for those who felt strongly on some subjects to agitate with the set purpose of producing a crisis. By way of illustration he proceeded to refer to the disturbance that had been diligently fostered in connection with the appearance of his article on "Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament" in the *Journal of Philology*. His references to this subject brought to their feet both Dr. Rainy and Mr. Macaulay—Dr. Rainy to say that he had not been present at the

meeting of Presbytery when the subject had been brought up, and Mr. Macaulay to crave liberty to vindicate all he had then said, adding, however, that in that case the galleries would need to be cleared. The speaker, without taking this unfriendly interruption too seriously, insisted that a definite mischief had been done, that those who might have controlled it had not interfered, and that many elements of a similar kind, diligently fostered on the one hand and left uncontrolled on the other, had combined to form a current of feeling which had culminated in the present crisis which it was now proposed to deal with, not by methods of law, but by the exercise of "a sense of responsibility." The result would be to close the mouth of a professor in his chair while leaving open to him the pulpit, while permitting him to officiate at the Communion table, while enabling him to put on the title-page of his book, "Minister of the Free Church of Scotland." Would the gain be so very great? It was no paradox to say that there is probably no way of promulgating individual opinions in which the position of the promulgator is less influential than that of a professor. Becoming for the moment reminiscent and autobiographical, he recalled his own experiences as a pupil of Professor Bain,

" . . . perhaps the most powerful teacher intellectually in many respects whom I ever sat under. At the present moment my attitude to all the problems Professor Bain discussed is perhaps as remote from his as is possible to any person in Scotland: but that does not affect the fact that he was an excellent, powerful, and conscientious teacher. The really good teacher will teach his students to form conclusions, but he will not and cannot supply them with conclusions ready made, . . . his influence is great, and it leads to the formation, not of conclusions, but of habits of thought."

Returning to the main argument, he contended that the proposed course of procedure would mean the introduction of a principle new to their ecclesiastical system.

The assertion that the Church must have whatever power is necessary is merely another way of saying that she must have what she considers necessary—what the Assembly—what this Assembly—what the majority of this Assembly—considers necessary. This might be called the old claim of prelacy; but it was something more, and worse, because even in prelacy there was something of a constitution. The Free Church Claim of Right spoke of Church government as “ministerial, not lordly”; was this the kind of government proposed in Dr. Adam’s motion? In it there is claimed for the Church a power which is limited by no right. There is a sense in which the Church has this power, for there is no Court of Appeal beyond it; but because a body is irresponsible in the sense that there is not any one able to call it to order, that is no reason why it should go beyond the point defined by law. In an impressive parenthesis he repudiated the proposed reservation of his salary. He would never, he declared, consent to eat the bread of a Church which did not permit him to serve her. No honest man, having formed views, could yield them except to argument, and what he said now would be said to-morrow by thousands throughout the Churches if the violent step proposed in the motion was taken. There had been some talk about secession. Secession was not unknown in Scotland; but it was not the attitude of the Free Church. . . .

“In 1843 we left the State; we did not secede from the Church; we carried her with us. And there will be no secession from the Church now. There will be an adhesion to the principles of the Church, and there will be an open, frank declaration of that adhesion against any majority and any power. And, Moderator, my removal from the place which I now hold in this Church, painful as it is to me, and grieving as it is to me in my personal life, is a mere incident in the case before the Church itself. The case is only now beginning.”

In conclusion, he went on to describe the other side as

having secured a majority, or being about to secure a majority, not by the exercise of a constitutional right, but by the temporary tyranny of a despotic power.

“What all sound Free Churchmen will do,” he concluded, “is this. We will hold by the principles of the Church, by the freedom which Christ has given us and the constitution has secured for us. And we will endeavour, without dispeace or evil feeling, in every constitutional way—some as office-bearers, some as adherents of the Church—to make it plain, as we have done once and again before, that the people of the Free Church can pull it through any trouble which its leaders have got it into.”

Amid a tumult of applause, Smith then left the House, and did not return.

Dr. Adam briefly replied to the effect that the power which it was proposed to usurp was simply that of asserting authority as to who should train the future ministers of the Church, a power to interfere if the teaching were of a kind believed to be hurtful. As for the constitutional rights that had been spoken of, if these were of such a nature that danger was likely to arise from them to the faith of the ministry, if the rights were of the kind that the Assembly must simply stand aside and let any amount of injury be inflicted without interposing, then he was no friend to such rights as these.

The vote which followed showed a majority of 163 for Dr. Adam's motion (394 to 231). The decision, which had long been foreseen, was quietly received, and immediately after its announcement Professor Bruce submitted his reasons of dissent ¹ which had already been signed by Dr.

¹ The reasons given were repeated a couple of days later, and are given below (p. 450).

The official reply was that it was unreasonable and unconstitutional to hold that in all circumstances a professor could maintain his right to teach unless libelled, or that the Church has no right to judge whether his duties are discharged to edification unless prepared to make good a libel for immorality or heresy; and that the only rights taken away had been those based upon the charge which naturally terminated his tenure of the chair.

Whyte, Dr. Marcus Dods, Mr. Benjamin Bell, Professor Salmond, and others. Immediately after its presentation other members desirous of signing crowded to the platform in such numbers that it was found necessary to intimate that ample opportunities for doing so would be afforded later.

Smith, we have seen, had said, at the close of his speech, "There will be no secession." If such a thing had ever been thought of, these words were enough to put an end to the idea. For the only possible leader in any such movement was Smith himself, and he had explicitly renounced the task. We may leave undiscussed the validity of the only reason expressly put forward by him—that secession had never been a principle of the Free Church,—meaning, we may suppose, however un-historical the view may seem to some, that the principles of the Church of Scotland as exemplified in her practice had hitherto been against such a course. The simple fact was that, as yet at least, there was nothing to secede about. If secession were to become the normal remedy for every act of administrative injustice, it is difficult to see how any popularly constituted church could long escape complete disintegration. But in the present case there was this special peculiarity, that if Smith had consented to place himself at the head of a secession he would (so far as then could be known) have found himself almost destitute of followers. On the constitutional question, no doubt, he had many sympathisers; but on the primary and ultimate issue—that of the truth or falsehood of the new reading of the Old Testament—the number of those who were prepared to give him their unhesitating support perhaps did not exceed half a dozen.

It remained to be seen, however, whether there was to be toleration. Smith had been indeed "sacrificed"; in compensation it might perhaps be said that the libel also had been sacrificed. How far this compensation was a real and not merely a nominal one required to be

made clear. Was the libel to be kept in store, ready to be brought forward again when a seemingly suitable opportunity offered, whether in the case of the Rev. William R. Smith (no longer Professor) or of any other? And, above all, what limits, if any, were to be set to this "reserve of power" which had been claimed for the Assembly, and in the present case so violently exercised? Evidently some more overt action than the mere recording of dissents by those who felt themselves threatened or aggrieved was called for.

No time was lost in organising a protest, and on Saturday May 28 an important meeting of the minority of the Free Church took place. It took the form of a public breakfast, and was attended by some three hundred ministers, elders, and others. The place of meeting¹ proved quite inadequate for the large numbers who eagerly signified their desire to be present, and had the time at the disposal of Professor Lindsay, the energetic organiser, been longer, it would have been easy to arrange for a very much more numerous gathering. Of the company present it is sufficient to say in general that it included most of the prominent laymen who had consistently supported Smith, and that very few of the ministers junior to Dr. Rainy, who have since reached eminence in the councils of the Church, were absent.

Mr. Benjamin Bell presided and addressed the gathering, and among the other speakers were Dr. Whyte, Professor Bruce, Professor Lindsay, Mr. Taylor Innes, Dr. Walter Smith, Dr. Dods, Professor Candlish, Dr. Macdonald of Ayr, Mr. Gilbert Beith, M.P., Mr. Ferguson of Kinmundy, and Mr. Henderson of Devanha. The spirit of the meeting was admirable; at the outset the chairman was able to congratulate the audience on the jubilant and cheerful aspect of every countenance. Though defeated, they bore no appearance of defeat, and this he believed was due not only to the inward conscious-

¹ The Masonic Hall, George Street, Edinburgh.

ness that during this controversy they had taken no step of which they could be ashamed, but also to the feeling that now virtually they were masters of the situation. Dr. Whyte and Dr. Bruce repeated the declarations they had made in the Assembly that there would be no action on their side which would threaten the integrity of the Church. "Rather," observed Dr. Bruce, "we should feel as men who are convinced that we have right on our side, and that the candid and honest feeling of the community in general will sooner or later come over to our side."

The language of the elders was equally hopeful. Mr. Taylor Innes reminded his hearers that the battle might be long, but he spoke with a certain exhilaration of the prospect. "We have an opportunity of fighting a theological and constitutional battle together such as we have never had before ; and, with regard to the spirit in which it can be fought, I think nothing could be more admirable than the way in which that was put in the closing sentences of Professor Smith's speech and manifesto the other day. It is he who has told us the right way of doing it, and the way in which we are bound in conscience to carry it out. In all these matters we are indebted far more than to any other to that most loyal son who has thrown his shield over the weakness of his parent Church in its unvenerable hour." The magnanimity of Smith's conduct in not forsaking the Church which had cast him out formed the theme of several of the speeches. Dr. Ross Taylor and Dr. Walter Smith dwelt much on this aspect of the situation, and with the zeal of friends they perhaps almost exaggerated the danger to which the Free Church would have been exposed by the personal withdrawal of the heretic. Little, on the whole, was said of the merits or demerits of the heresy until it came to the turn of Professor Lindsay, who made what was in some respects the most notable contribution to the morning's discussion by articulately, explicitly, and



PROFESSOR SMITH'S ROOMS, FELLOWS' BUILDINGS, CHRIST'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE (*page 480*).

From a Photograph by C. M. Smith, Esq.

publicly asserting his right to believe and to teach the views laid down in the article on "Hebrew Language and Literature." The future, it had been said by Dr. Adam in the Assembly, depended on what Professor Smith and his friends did and, presumably, said. Professor Lindsay had never stated his views on the questions which had been discussed, "partly," he explained,

" . . . because, to a large extent, my views were not quite the same as those of Professor Smith, and I did not wish by any word of mine in any way to do anything that would not improve his position—but I am now going to say this, and let Dr. Adam take it for what it is worth, and do what he can, . . . there is something to be done in reference to the reconciliation of the legislation with the history of the Old Testament. The old way of doing it was to look upon the legislation as the easiest thing, and make the history suit it. . . . The new critical method is to take the history as being the simplest thing, and try to make the complicated law-book—which is a much more difficult thing to understand—fit into that. (Cheers.) Now, in whatever details I may differ from Professor Smith and others, I think that is the method that we must take to reconcile the difficulties. I take my stand, therefore, on the critical position. (Cheers.) Another thing is this, that with everything that Professor Smith has said about prophecy except one—reading it in my way, and according to my understanding of what he has said—I agree with him. Let Dr. Adam do what he likes."

Other speeches followed, and before the meeting adjourned arrangements were made for giving practical form to the results of the morning's proceedings. The issue was a largely signed protest in the following terms :

" We, the undersigned, ministers, office-bearers, and members of the Free Church of Scotland, feeling deeply grieved by the action of the last General Assembly in the case of Professor W. Robertson Smith, and feeling that, by our continued membership in the Free Church, we may be regarded as consenting thereto, desire to make the following explanatory statement of our position :

" 1st. We loyally hold and maintain all the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, and more especially its

principle of spiritual independence, and, therefore, we declare that any ecclesiastical wrong done by the Church must be set right only by the Church itself.

“2nd. We cordially adhere to the reasons of dissent against the finding of the General Assembly of Thursday, May 26, read by Professor Bruce on the floor of the House, viz. : We dissent from the finding of the Assembly : ‘(1) Because to appoint and declare that Professor Smith’s tenure of his chair shall cease is inconsistent with the terms in which he was appointed to it, inasmuch as no charge has been regularly proved or formulated against his life or doctrine. (2) Because this act is a violation of the Scriptural principles of discipline, and implies an assumption of power which is not merely ministerial but lordly and despotic. (3) Because, besides removing Professor W. R. Smith from his chair, it also deprives him of ecclesiastical rights and powers distinct from the function of teaching.’

“3rd. We pledge ourselves by all lawful means to do what lies in us to maintain the ancient constitution of the Church violated by last General Assembly.

“4th. We also declare that the decision of the Assembly leaves all Free Church ministers and office-bearers free to pursue the critical questions raised by Professor W. R. Smith, and we pledge ourselves to do our best to protect any man who pursues these studies legitimately.”

This may be said to have been the last word spoken in the second Robertson Smith case. No reader who recalls the words of admonition with which the first case terminated can overlook the dramatic contrast of the two scenes. Then the note was almost one of whispered humbleness ; now there was bold assertion of the liberty of research and outspoken discussion. It was a Protest and Claim of Right which, like its famous prototype of 1843, was destined never to be answered and never to be withdrawn. Professor Lindsay’s challenge, needless to say, was not taken up, and without any disparagement of his well-known courage we may venture to say that probably he never expected that it would be. Professor Smith’s lectures were not, as had at one time been threatened, made the subject of a third process.

The suspected professors in Edinburgh and Glasgow were allowed to remain undisturbed. In the years that followed, low murmurs were now and then heard regarding the writings of Professors Dods, Bruce, and G. A. Smith, yet they continued to exercise their liberty with impunity.

How many ministers and office-bearers of the Free Church would be prepared even now to say that they accept the modern critical reading of the Old Testament history in the sense in which that was expounded by Smith in the 'seventies, it would be rash to conjecture; but the opinion may be hazarded with some confidence that no repetition either of the first Smith case or of the second is now possible. On any of the problems of Old Testament history it is hardly conceivable that the question could be raised. But if any one wishes a ready means of realising for himself what the then new Deuteronomy heresy meant to the old orthodoxy, he has only to ask himself what would now be likely to happen in any Scottish Church to any responsible person who should venture to signify his acceptance of, let us say, the analogous critical position now so widely accepted among scholars on certain New Testament questions, such as those relating to the origin of the three synoptic Gospels, or to the authorship and date of the various writings attributed by long ecclesiastical tradition to Saint John the Apostle.

CHAPTER XI

EDINBURGH AND CAMBRIDGE (1881-1883)

THE action of the Assembly, and Smith's energetic and entirely proper repudiation of the proposed *solatium*, had now deprived him of his occupation and—for the moment—of his livelihood. Fortunately, however, there was not likely to be any very serious anxiety about means of subsistence. Other institutions, whose academic reputation was as great as that of the Free Church, but whose orthodoxy was less unbending, had, as we have seen, already made determined efforts to secure the stone which the builders had rejected; and it was at once clear that Smith would not have long to wait for a choice of suitable employment. Meanwhile his friends and admirers took counsel together, and concerted a scheme for making the period of transition as comfortable as possible. In June 1881 a plan was formed for raising £1000 to enable Smith to provide himself with the Oriental books and MSS. necessary to his studies, and a further sum of £2500 to secure that for five years at least he might pursue these studies without being harassed by material anxieties. The scheme was well received, and money was easily found; but Smith declined to live on the generosity of his adherents, and only accepted the proffered testimonial in so far as it enabled him to extend his library and to carry on his heretical researches without having to depend on the official resources of the Free Church. The presentation was made to Smith in the following October in the

name of "many persons all over the country, who were desirous of testifying their approbation of Mr. Robertson Smith's achievements in the past, and of aiding in the prosecution of his researches."¹

Meanwhile, he had effected a provisional but highly satisfactory solution of the practical problem. Many rumours had been current on the subject of his intentions and of the offers which had been made to him, but at the very beginning of June, a few days after the closing scenes described in the last chapter, it was authoritatively

ERRATUM

Page 452, Chapter Heading, *for* 1883 *read* 1886.

had attained such a distinguished position."

He accordingly abandoned his house in Crown Street, Aberdeen, and in the course of July removed his books and furniture to 20 Duke Street, Edinburgh, which was to be his home for the next two years. He had already taken up his new duties, and was constantly in attendance at 6 North Bridge, then the offices of Messrs. A. & C.

¹ The books and MSS. which he thus acquired greatly enlarged his already considerable library, which by his will was left partly to the Cambridge University Library and partly to that of Christ's College.

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He accordingly abandoned his house in Crown Street, Aberdeen, and in the course of July removed his books and furniture to 20 Duke Street, Edinburgh, which was to be his home for the next two years. He had already taken up his new duties, and was constantly in attendance at 6 North Bridge, then the offices of Messrs. A. & C.

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Black, and the headquarters of the *Encyclopædia*. He was received, as we have said, with the warmly expressed goodwill of his co-editor, and with a no less appreciative and admiring welcome from the members of the editorial staff. The cordial relations established at the outset continued to the end. It was more and more perceived that he was almost an ideal chief. If any one was occasionally tempted to think him rather autocratic, it was at least acknowledged that his was an autocracy of the fittest, and generally in the end it had to be owned that he had been right. Particular instances of this quality must be noticed in their proper place, but it may here be said that in the thirteen volumes published between 1881 and 1888 there are few articles that do not bear, directly or indirectly, the impress of his powerful personality. To the delicate question what were the new features, if any, that he introduced, it would be difficult to give a very definite answer. Or rather it ought to be said that he had no wish to introduce any radical innovations, being fully satisfied with the general scheme of the work as originally laid down by Professor Baynes in consultation with Huxley, Clerk Maxwell, Cayley, Geikie, and other specialists eminent in their various departments. But upon the main lines already laid down, and within the limits of the ground plan long ago marked off, and in many parts already built upon, there was ample room for the fresh activities of a mind so vigorous and well stored. He himself was the new feature. His own contributions increased greatly both in number and in extent. Whereas in the first eleven volumes the articles from his pen, whether signed or unsigned, did not exceed twenty in number, the remaining thirteen contain more than two hundred, many of them large and important.¹

If it had been a fortunate circumstance for Smith that the *Encyclopædia* could offer him an editorial chair and a means of livelihood at a critical juncture in his

¹ See the Bibliography appended to this volume, p. 617.

career, it was a no less fortunate circumstance for the *Encyclopædia* and for the world of letters that the course of events had left him free for such work at this stage in the history of a great undertaking. While his advent brought new life into all departments, his influence was naturally most conspicuous in the group of subjects connected with comparative religion and theology, and with Biblical Criticism.¹ He resumed the interrupted series of his own articles on these subjects, which had commenced with "Angel," "Ark," and the too celebrated article "Bible"; and his wide acquaintance among English and continental scholars enabled him greatly to widen the field from which the *Encyclopædia* drew its contributors. Almost the first of his editorial letters were addressed to Wellhausen, Nöldeke, and Ritschl; and though the last-named unfortunately found himself unable to comply with the request for an article on Lutheranism, the contributions of the two first-named scholars were, it will be on all hands admitted, of singular importance and value. Among Biblical critics it will suffice to mention the names of Hatch, Schürer, and Harnack.

It is perhaps in his relations with the publishers and proprietors that an editor will oftenest find the autocratic gift most desirable and most embarrassing. To discriminate successfully between what the public actually does want and what the public ought to want, and to decide in a manner that shall serve every obvious interest, is not the good fortune of every editor. Nor is it always his good fortune to have a public testimony to the feelings of goodwill with which his regime, autocratic or other, is regarded. All the more pleasant, therefore, is it to read

¹ Smith's own Biblical articles now and henceforth attracted little notice; but he resumed the interrupted series with unremitting industry, and it is interesting to note that so high, and usually so critical, an authority as the *Athenæum* observed of the articles "Kings" and "Lamentations" (among the first to be written after he recovered his freedom), that they were "two of his best pieces of work," in which he had been more original than had been his wont in previous contributions.

the appreciative words written after Smith's death by one of the publishers of the *Encyclopædia*, the late Mr. Adam W. Black. In the pages of the *Scotsman* of April 3, 1894, writing as one who had "held very intimate business relations with Professor Smith," Mr. Black thus summed up his qualities as an editor :

"His business aptitude and administrative ability were on a level with his high intellectual gifts. He possessed a penetrative power of observation and a quickness of judgment that, together with his varied and exact knowledge, made him an expert in dealing with the circumstances and transactions of practical life. There never was a more tremendous worker. That his actual achievements were but an earnest of what he would have attained to, had health permitted, could not be doubted by any one who ever had the good fortune to come in contact with him."

Much, however, as he valued his editorship as a sphere of useful work, and as a means of earning an honest livelihood, it cannot be concealed that he often found his task excessively irksome. It kept him (and in this most of those who knew him best agreed with him) from his proper work. "Anybody," he would sometimes say, with pardonable, if whimsical, perversity, "can edit." And in the more exasperating moments, at least, he was tempted to call the editor's "a dreadful trade." As we shall see, it was with real relief that he saw the way gradually reopening which should lead him again to an academical career, and with a right good will that he transferred to other hands more and more of the responsibility for one after another of the departments which he himself knew so well how to guide.

In the meantime, even in the earlier and most laborious days of his editorship, it was much that the ruinous waste of his energies which had marred six of the best years of his life was now finally at an end. It was a time of new beginnings, but he had still to render what may be called a final service to his ecclesiastical friends, at whose instance he delivered a course of eight lectures entitled

“The Prophets of Israel,” which, as he himself explains in the preface to the volume, were based mainly on lectures regularly delivered by him during the years of his active professoriate. Notwithstanding the circumstances in which they were delivered, the lectures, which were favourably received by large Sunday evening audiences in Edinburgh and Glasgow, were by no means controversial in form or tone. In spirit and intention they may fairly be described as a series of historical and (in the large sense) expository discourses on certain portions of Scripture, for the instruction and edification of Christian believers by one of themselves. Only four prophets were taken up—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah; *i.e.* only some sixty chapters in the four canonical books bearing these names. “Deutero-Isaiah,” as well as Isaiah xiii.-xiv. and Micah vi., vii., were left out of the reckoning as belonging to a later date; but the chapters treated constitute the whole of the prophetic literature surviving from the short but most fruitful period of considerably less than a century to which they belong. Again and again the lecturer is at pains to make clear the “positive” character of the religion of the prophets, and of our religion. By positive he means that which is more than merely subjective and personal.

“All true knowledge of God is verified by personal experience, but it is not exclusively derived from such experience. There is a positive element in all religion, an element which we have learned from those who went before us. If what is so learned is true, we must ultimately come back to a point in history when it was new truth, acquired—as all new truth is—by some particular man or circle of men who, as they did not learn it from their predecessors, must have got it by personal revelation from God Himself. To deny that Christianity can ultimately be traced back to such acts of revelation, taking place at a definite time and in a definite circle, involves in the last resort a denial that there is any true religion at all, or that religion is anything more than a mere subjective feeling.”

Free though the lectures were from anything that could be described as destructive criticism, it does not require much attention to perceive that they accept as established the two great negations with which we have already become familiar. They almost wholly ignore the "predictive" element—as that had formerly been understood—in the prophets' work; and they convey with unmistakable clearness that it was no part of the prophets' business to preach a return to "Mosaism," for the simple reason that Mosaism as we now understand it had not yet come into being. If the question is asked, What was the contribution of these prophets severally to "revealed religion"? the answer will perhaps seem somewhat meagre and vague. The earliest prophetic literature, it is pointed out, set forth the prophetic ideas, as might indeed be expected, in their least complex form. The theological thought of the Hebrews underwent a great development *after* the time of Isaiah. But in the days of Amos and his successors the supreme truths of religion "were first promulgated and first became a living power, in forms that are far simpler than the simplest system of modern dogma." For those teachers the religious unit was the nation, and it was the primary function of the prophet as the man who stood "in the secret" of Jehovah to bring about right relations between Jehovah and Israel. "The cause of Jehovah in Israel was the cause of national freedom and social righteousness; and the task of the religion of Jehovah was to set these fast in the land of Canaan in a society which ever looked to Jehovah as its living and present head."

But the difference between the religion of Israel and other religions "cannot be reduced to an abstract formula." "In truth, metaphysical speculation on the Godhead as eternal, infinite, and the like, is not peculiar to the religion of revelation, but was carried by the philosophers of the Gentiles much further than is ever attempted in the Old Testament." If the sum of the teaching of these prophets under consideration, and the

whole revealed Will of Jehovah as made known to them, has to be expressed in a single sentence, it must be in the words of the prophet Micah (vi. 2)—which tell us that a heart that delights in acts of piety and loving-kindness, and a humility that walks in lowly communion with God, are the things in which Jehovah takes pleasure. What, if any, were the religious ordinances and institutions that the prophets introduced, encouraged, or regarded as most helpful or necessary in promoting “lowly communion” with God, is a question, the attentive reader perceives, that the lecturer is not yet prepared to answer with precision. In reality it remains unsolved. It was destined to be taken up again in later years in the lectures on the Religion of the Semites; but even then it received no very definite or conclusive answer.

The lectures were published in book form towards the end of April 1882, under the title, *The Prophets of Israel and their Place in History to the close of the Eighth Century B.C.* The volume met with a very favourable reception both at home and abroad, and a large edition was sold. The success would no doubt have been still greater had the author's engagements permitted him to proceed to the discussion of Jeremiah and his relations to Deuteronomy, and of Ezekiel and his relations to Leviticus. The work, however, remains a fragment. The author found it comparatively easy in later years to revise and bring down to date his lectures on Old Testament Introduction (*The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*); but so far as rendering a like (but more difficult) service to those on *The Prophets of Israel*, he doubtless considered that it had been to some extent, though indirectly, rendered in his second edition of *The Religion of the Semites*, the preparation of which was the last labour of his life.¹

¹ The edition of *The Prophets of Israel* with Introduction and Additional Notes by Professor Cheyne, published in 1895, may safely be taken as indicating the direction in which Professor Smith's mind had been moving during the interval between the first publication of these lectures and his lamented death.

Smith's career was now about to enter on its final and most brilliant phase. His fame was daily growing, and brought with it an access of worldly recognition and an ever-widening circle of friends and correspondents. In 1882 he was elected a member of the Athenæum under Rule 2, and almost simultaneously his old University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. About the same time also he received the usual compliment to British celebrity of being invited to lecture in America, but this experience he was obliged by the claims of the *Encyclopædia* to decline. The correspondence which has been preserved from this period is voluminous and interesting, both because of the distinction of the writers and of the remarkable intimacy and cordiality with which they address him. His gift for making friends had made him a popular figure in many mutually antagonistic camps, and the cross references of eminent correspondents to each other are often more amusing than discreet. The expressions of sympathy in the finally adverse result of the case which he received from his German theological allies are intensified by their own feelings of isolation and revolt against the ecclesiastical situation in their own country. Ritschl was then involved in bitter controversies, and, in declining to undertake the article on Lutheranism in the *Encyclopædia*, professed himself unwilling to expose (as he would have had to do) the shortcomings of his Mother Church to a foreign and largely Calvinistic public. Wellhausen, with whom Smith maintained an uninterrupted correspondence until very shortly before his death, at this time severed his connection with theology altogether at some considerable personal sacrifice, and had to resent in no unmeasured terms an unfounded statement in the *Athenæum* that his migration to a Chair in the Philosophical Faculty at Halle was not unconnected with official displeasure in high quarters excited by his writings. Lagarde's characteristic letters are at this time frequent and melancholy,

but all convey the strong impression that his friendship for Smith and his admiration for his attainments were among the bright things in a rather sad existence. Lagarde's friendship indeed carried him so far as to start a suggestion that Smith should be called to a chair of Oriental Languages in the University of Königsberg, and though this proposal was not carried far, it was taken seriously enough to cause some uneasiness to at least one other very distinguished candidate.

During the brief period of his second residence in Edinburgh, Smith was restored to his old associates and to his place in the circle which by that time had almost ceased to gather at the Evening Club. He affected ecclesiastical society less even than in the days previous to the case, and his numerous occupations made it necessary for him to be careful in the expenditure of his leisure. But he was often to be met at the literary, legal, and academic dinner tables of Edinburgh, and he kept in close touch with the more intimate of his former friends. Apart from his change of occupation there was little that was new in his manner of life. His attire was by this time that of a layman, and he discouraged so far as possible the use of the title Reverend; but he remained in full communion with the Free Church, was an elder in the Free High Church, the minister of which was then Dr. Walter Smith, a very old friend, and "taught with great efficiency a young men's class."

Nor, as yet, did he altogether abandon the church courts. As "*bona fide* acting elder" he was eligible for a seat in the General Assembly, and, on the nomination of the authorities of the Free High Church, he was appointed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to be one of its commissioners to the Assembly of 1882. In view of the many other imperious calls upon his time, it would not have been surprising had he refrained from seeking this honour. There is no direct evidence as to the motives which led him to accept it, but it cannot be doubted that

his chief reason was that he believed that in that capacity also he could contribute to "the work and growth of the Church." Incidentally too, perhaps, it may have seemed desirable to make it clear from the first that a "lay" elder at least might continue to hold office in the Free Church although tainted with views that made him ineligible as a theological teacher. This last point was made abundantly clear, as we shall see. But it cannot be said that his brief career as a representative elder in the Assembly was conspicuously successful, and it may be doubted whether, even had he remained resident in Scotland for another year, he would have sought reelection. At all events, this was the last Assembly of which he was a member. Three incidents in it are associated with his name. His first intervention was on May 23; the question of disestablishment came before the House, and Smith, in supporting a motion proposed by Professor A. B. Bruce, took the opportunity to repeat the views which he had urged on the Synod of Aberdeen in 1874. These views commended themselves as little to the Assembly as they had to the inferior court, and the arguments of Dr. Bruce and his seconder were so coldly received that on a division they could not muster more than thirty-eight supporters. Two days later his ecclesiastical brethren made their last attack on the orthodoxy of his writings, and there was some discussion on a proposal to appoint a committee to deal with *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. After a good deal of talk a motion declining to act, which was proposed by Principal Rainy and seconded by Sir Henry Moncreiff, in speeches which cautiously reserved judgment on the confessional soundness of that book, became the finding of the House. Finally, in the course of a discussion next day on the use of instrumental music in churches, Smith had a sharp encounter with Dr. Begg, who had provocatively alluded in the course of his speech to ministers and elders who took a "slipshod" view of their ordination vows.

The passage is of little interest except as showing that Smith's continued interventions in church politics were extremely distasteful to a large and growing section of the Assembly, which on this occasion went so far as to refuse him a hearing. We shall henceforth have no more to say of his appearances in church courts.

Meanwhile his life in Edinburgh was strenuous and amply filled with other interests. He corresponded steadily with the now scattered members of his family; and his younger brother Herbert, a delicate youth, lived with him and attended classes at the University. His own entertainments were necessarily limited by circumstances and want of leisure, but he contrived on occasion to see his old and new friends at his own house. "I think I never told you," he writes to his sister, "how much my pepper mill is admired and envied by every one who comes in to get a bowl of soup at lunch time. For you must know that, as I am near the office, J. S. Black¹ always lunches with me, and pretty often some one else turns in." These luncheon parties were the outstanding feature of the hospitalities at 20 Duke Street, and it is recorded that Smith, who had taken to parlour games owing to the exceptional severity of the winter, occasionally persuaded his guests to remain for a set of battledore and shuttlecock in the library.

The labours of the Revision Committee still necessitated frequent journeys, during which he renewed acquaintance with his London friends, and extended a growing connection with Cambridge which soon became of great importance. His chief friends at that University were Professor William Wright and Mr. Ion Keith-Falconer.² They had "watched the final stages of the

¹ By this time Assistant Editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

² The Hon. Ion Grant Neville Keith-Falconer, third son of the ninth Earl of Kintore, born in 1856, educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, was Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholar in 1878, published a translation of the Syriac version of *Kalilah and Dimnah* in 1885, succeeded

case with pain and disgust," and Professor Wright already cherished the hope of seeing Smith established by his side as a Cambridge teacher. A tragic event soon gave him an opportunity of using his influence. Professor Palmer, Lord Almoner's Reader in Arabic in the University, who had accepted a political mission from Mr. Gladstone's Government, was murdered in October 1882 by the Arabs of the Sinaitic Peninsula, and as soon as his death was ascertained beyond all doubt, Professor Wright urged Smith to become a candidate for the vacant chair, and took all possible steps to impress his claims on influential persons.

As in 1870 and 1879, Smith's distinguished foreign friends hastened to testify in his favour, and one of the present writers well remembers the pleasurable excitement which their testimonials, arriving in quick succession, used to cause at the Duke Street lunch parties. The earliest, dated November 22, was from Professor Nöldeke, and took the form of a long letter to Professor Wright, in the course of which the great Arabist observes :

" . . . it at any rate is of great importance that Robertson Smith personally knows the East, and in particular has lived for a considerable time in the home of the Arabic language. His quite modest notes of a journey in the Hejaz, contributed to a Scottish newspaper, rank absolutely among the most instructive things that have been written about Arabia ; it were greatly to be wished that they should appear in book form. So think, I may mention in passing, also my friends Professor Socin (who himself has spent much time in the East) and Professor Thorbecke (one of the most thorough Arabic scholars now living). Robertson Smith, moreover, has shown by published writings that he not only has learned Arabic as a spoken language, but is also master of the language as written, and well read in its literature.

" In those circumstances it is my hope that so highly meritorious a scholar will receive the post. It may

Professor Smith as Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in 1886, and was recognised as missionary to the Arabs by the Free Church Assembly in the same year. He died of fever at Shaikh Othman near Aden in 1887.

doubtless be taken for granted that you, the most distinguished specialist on the subject, and nearest colleague of the man to be appointed, will be consulted in the matter ; this being so I am sure that you will give your voice, and that with effect, for Robertson Smith."

Wellhausen wrote from Halle on the 29th :

" Though not myself a competent witness as to the linguistic qualifications of Dr. W. Robertson Smith, I can at least testify that one of the most competent of living Arabists, Dr. W. Spitta, formerly librarian to the Khedive, in autumn 1881 expressed himself in my presence with high appreciation, and indeed with astonishment, on the ease with which Dr. Smith had learned to speak Arabic, and in particular on his extraordinary talent for seizing and reproducing the difficult Arabic sounds. This opinion is shown to be correct by Dr. Smith's journey in the Hejâz ; he could not have carried it out as he did without unusual powers of apprehension, both linguistic and intellectual, and faculties of self-adaptation. Of the value of this excursion in its historical and geographical aspects I feel qualified to speak, and I have to say that I have for the first time gained from Dr. Smith's account a clear idea of the geography of the central Hejâz and of many indispensable, if seemingly trifling, matters that go to a clear understanding of Arabian antiquity. I regret that the narrative has appeared only in ephemeral form, and thus has not come to be so widely known to the learned world as it deserves."

Professor Socin wrote briefly from Tübingen in a similar sense, expressing the confident anticipation that Dr. Robertson Smith was destined still to do important work in the Arabic field.

On December 1, Spitta Bey, late Director of the Viceregal Library at Cairo, and author of *Grammatik des arabischen Vulgärdialektes von Ägypten*, wrote to Smith that he for his part knew of no one in England better fitted to succeed Palmer than Smith himself.

" Not only are you perfectly acquainted with the older Semitic dialects ; you have also—and here perhaps I

may take leave to pronounce a judgment—during your sojourns in the East, acquired a knowledge of the living Arabic such as, certainly, but few Orientalists possess. Your journeys up the Nile, in the desert, and in the Hejâz have brought you into relations with all classes of the population, and given you a full knowledge of the practical life of Orientals.”

Lagarde’s testimonial, written as usual in English, was no doubt one of the most welcome as it was perhaps the most influential of them all. Lagarde bore witness to “the brightness and clearness of intellect with which Smith mastered the most difficult parts of Arabic grammar. Having begun Arabic with me during the Easter term, he was so far advanced in July as to find his way through Ibn Arabshah’s *fâkihat al khulafâ*, a book by no means easy to understand.”

His Excellency Alfred Von Kremer, author of *Kulturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, wrote on December 5, from Vienna :

“It would be a lively satisfaction to me if you were to be appointed. By your thorough knowledge of Oriental languages, and especially of the Semitic dialects, you are certainly well entitled to lay claim to the post. I could name no English scholar whom I would welcome so gladly as you to Palmer’s chair.”

Professor Hoffmann of Kiel, an old Göttingen friend, wrote on December 9 :

“I certainly wish to give you all the aid I can. Having been an eye-witness of your taking up the study of Arabic some ten years ago at Göttingen, I was particularly pleased to observe, from your publications of recent years, that the duties of your Hebrew professorship at Aberdeen did not prevent you from most successfully continuing the study of Arabic. As your books and papers show, the Old Testament has carried you to select ancient history, ethnology, and geography of the peninsular Arabs as your special field of exploration. . . . If I am not wrong in my understanding of the duties of the Cambridge chair, I should venture to maintain, that there scarcely is an English Arabist, at least of literary merits,

who has juster claims to it than you; and, I have no doubt, the great English and Continental authorities in Oriental science will anticipate the same opinion."

Ignazio Guidi, Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Philology at Rome, wrote in praise of the articles "Mecca" and "Medina," and observed that the celebrated paper on "Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament" "displays great acumen, and undeniably the author has opened up in it a new field of research." Kuenen and De Goeje wrote on December 15, in English, a joint testimonial in which again great stress was laid on the importance of the letters from the Hejâz. Kuenen's testimonial was accompanied by a private letter conveying his cordial good wishes. He expressed himself very modestly about his own right to intervene where the election of a Professor of Arabic was in question, and also was doubtful whether a testimonial from "a notorious freethinker" might not do more harm than good. He left Smith perfectly free to use the testimonial or not, as he might judge best.

The doubt thus good-naturedly expressed was not wholly out of place. Among Smith's warmest supporters in Cambridge anxiety was felt and expressed lest his questionable orthodoxy (which was Presbyterian at the best) might be an obstacle to his success. The Lord Almoner¹ himself on a subsequent occasion confessed that, having learned that Smith was "under a theological cloud" in Scotland, he thought it necessary to ascertain that the candidate was at least a Christian before seriously considering his claims. His Lordship, it appears, was completely satisfied upon that point, and did not think it necessary to pursue his inquiries further. The strength of the testimonials and the urgency of the representations made by Professor Wright and others had their due

¹ Lord Alwyne Compton, then Dean of Worcester, and afterwards Bishop of Ely.

effect, and on January 1, 1883, Smith received the appointment, which he announced in the following terms in a letter to his sister who was at that time with the M'Lennans.

“This is the first letter of the New Year, and so, though it will not reach you on New Year's day, I begin it by wishing you all good things in the year now opening.

“‘But afterwards,’ as the Arabs say, I thank you very much for the flowers, especially the delicious violets, which also stood the journey best.

“And lastly—and really this is what makes me sit down to write to you the first thing after telegraphing home—I had a letter this morning from the Dean of Worcester, offering me the Cambridge chair (of which you know he is patron). The salary is £50 a year, and the duties *one* yearly lecture; but I mean to reside and work, taking with me as much other work as I need to live, and hoping by and by to get a fellowship. I can't tell you how pleased I am to find myself again in academical work and with a chance of escape from the treadmill of the *Encyclopædia*. Of course, I can't leave the Blacks suddenly, and I daresay that for a year to come I shall only *visit* Cambridge.”

The Lord Almoner's choice seems to have been from the first well received in Cambridge. Smith at this time, as a London journalist once quite accurately described him, was “a Presbyterian clergyman suspected of unsound opinions,” one who had been cast out by his brethren and stigmatised by some of them as a contributor of improprieties to the *Journal of Philology*. He was known, so far as he was known at all, as a heresiarch. His fame as an Encyclopædist was still quite restricted, and he had not the advantage of a previous connection with any college in the University. He had nothing but his Oriental learning, and the friendship of a few Cambridge scholars who were members of the Revision Committee to recommend him; but he was received with the ready cordiality and friendliness which is an honourable tradition in both the ancient Universities. In his own department

Mr. Bensly, afterwards well known for his Syriac labours, hastened to welcome his new colleague with warm congratulations. "As you are not a man to neglect opportunities," he wrote, "I hope to see you soon resident among us, infusing life and light into studies which are often apt to droop for want of sympathy."

The very day after the appointment was made known, Wright was able to report expressions of approval from the President of Queens', and the eminent Dr. Hort, then at the height of his reputation and a social force in Cambridge. Dr. Hort and others predicted with remarkable prescience that the new Reader would be well received everywhere, and Wright himself was enthusiastic about the accession of strength to the teaching staff which would enable him to complete a whole series of unfinished Oriental inquiries. It was Smith's ardent desire, as we have already seen, to be occupied again with some steady academic work, and it was his intention to reside in Cambridge and to take up teaching and research work there as soon as possible. For the moment, however, circumstances did not permit this plan to be carried out, and Wright had to mingle with his friendly congratulations some equally friendly words of cautious advice.

"Now, don't do anything hurriedly. As I said, no one *requires* you to come here: the 'chair has absolutely no official duties and no obligations beyond what the Lord Almoner may impose. Considering your private circumstances, of which you have made no secret to me, I think it is a pity that you should throw up the editorship of the *E.B.*, when you can retain it, and yet do a great deal more than is asked of you here. When that comes to an end, by all means settle permanently in Cambridge, and be ready to take my place when I go. An additional reason why you should not throw up your present post is, that for years to come, under the new arrangements, it will be very difficult indeed for any outsider to get a fellowship in any college."

Not long afterwards, as the business of the Revision

Committee required him to be in London, Smith took the opportunity of paying short visits to Cambridge. Of one of these he wrote towards the end of January 1883: "Had a good time in Cambridge, and seem to have some chance of getting into Trinity, but of course this is not a small favour." Later, he wrote to his father of the official commencement of his Cambridge career:—

"I came down here yesterday evening on the close of our revision, and was admitted Professor to-day at 2 P.M., previous to a number of graduations in the Senate House. The thing did not take two minutes. I had to answer 'ita do fidem' to a Latin demand whether I promised faithfully to discharge the duties of my office, and then had to kneel before the Vice-Chancellor, who admitted me in the name of the Trinity (holding my hand all the time), and when I rose congratulated me in English.

"I am staying in Trinity with W. Niven, and I mean to try and get admitted as a member of that college—which will be possible when I get M.A., as I am told by the Vice-Chancellor that I shall presently.¹

"If I succeed in this I shall probably move south for good about October next. But if there is likely to be much delay I may have to keep my Edinburgh house for a year.

"We have now finished the second revision, and have only a last polish to give to our work. I think this will not occupy more than one other year."

In the May term the Public Orator, in presenting Palmer's successor to the University, referred in proper terms to the loss sustained by the University of one "whose skill in Eastern tongues won him both a high celebrity and a melancholy death," and then continued in adroit and polished sentences, which praised the variety of Smith's attainments, and suggested, without relating, the stormy passages in his previous career. "Nuper in Arabia exul felix commoratus," he concluded, "et Arabicae linguae consuetudine cotidiana adsuetus, nobis iam praeceptor datus nostra certe in Academia doctrinam suam libere

¹ The Grace conferring on him the degree of Master of Arts *honoris causa* passed the Senate on May 24, 1883.

impertiet; orientalium gentium historiam et linguas libere illustrabit; probabit denique non de rerum tantum natura verum esse, 'Ex Oriente esse lucem.' Vobis praesento linguae Arabicae lectorem doctissimum, Professorem Robertson Smith."¹

In the same term he began his teaching by delivering a course of three lectures on "The Early Relations of Arabia with Syria, and particularly with Palestine," and in a letter to Dr. Black he speaks of having had good audiences and a pleasant but busy time. He gives a more detailed account of his first impressions of Cambridge work in a letter written from St. Ives, where, along with his old friend Mr. James Bryce, he was paying a visit to Mr. Leslie Stephen, then a new acquaintance. He observes:

"My audiences were counted very good. I was rather nervous, but got through very well, I think. I felt, however, that the audience is quite a new one, and that it will take some experiment to get into touch with it. I shall probably have to go down again to get my degree before the Revision is over."

The Cornish visit, in spite of broken weather, seems to have been particularly successful, and there is in the same letter and others of this period an agreeable picture of growing intimacy with his distinguished host.

"Stephen, though a silent man, is particularly likeable. He is very hospitable, and we three men, having the place to ourselves, smoke in the drawing-room, and in general have a good time not conducive to work in the evening. The country is easily described. It is just like the coast between Aberdeen and Muchalls. A moory table-land with a succession of granite trap and slate headlands and coves. Of course the vegetation is different—very rich and lovely in sheltered spots, and at a few points, though not everywhere, the cliffs and headlands are higher. But apart from the ferns, hyacinths, primroses, squills, one might be at Portlethen.

¹ See J. E. Sandys, *Orationes et Epistolae Cantabrigienses* (1878-1909); London, 1910.

“ I wrote Gibson some history of our doings. Since then we have had two capital days. The first day we took train to Redruth, walked down a lovely valley to the sea, and returned by the coast along cliffs, over breezy moors, and then for four miles along a beach for all the world like that at Barra, mindful of which I (and following me Bryce) took off our boots and paddled along in great happiness.

“ Yesterday was rather commonplace according to Stephen. We did quite an ordinary tourist thing, driving from Penzance to Land’s End, and only doing some five or six miles of coast walking I suppose—perhaps a little more. Bryce is not allowed to do long walks, and is still looking a little seedy, but better, and he can do his sixteen miles or so quite well, as we saw on Monday and Tuesday, though he declined to walk from Penzance to Land’s End.

“ I feel much set up by the last three or four days, and in London shall be game for plenty of work, as the Revision, though engrossing, will not be fatiguing. . . .”

In London one of his occupations was to act as *cicerone* to his parents, then on a visit to friends in one of the home counties. He recounts their doings in a letter to his sister, which it would be a pity not to print.

“ We kept our time at Charing Cross and walked across the street to the National Gallery, where I showed Father and Mother a careful selection of the best pictures without letting them weary themselves.

“ Then we thought it well to take an omnibus to the corner of New Burlington Street, which is only a step from our rooms. After a short rest we walked up to Oxford Circus and took a bus to the Museum, where we confined ourselves to the Elgin Marbles, the big Assyrian and Egyptian things, and a glance at the Reading Room and the Alexandrian MS. and some autographs. Then we went to the Horse Shoe in Tottenham Court Road close by, where we had a nice early dinner in the ladies’ room (a very good place) and thence a bus brought us down to Westminster. The parents sat in the Abbey while I got my letters at the Athenæum, and hurried back to take them to the House of Commons lobby, where Bryce was waiting. Father got in at once, heard all the questions, and heard

Gladstone speak. Mother got a peep of both Houses, and was shown the library and tea-room, Biggar, Parnell, etc., etc. Bryce was most kind. Then, leaving father to come home in a cab, I took mother over the park (St. James's), where we sat in the sun, and up to Pall Mall, whence we took a short drive in a hansom to Hyde Park Corner, and so by Park home to get a glance at the crowds. You see it was quite a day's work, and yet not *very* fatiguing. Both are tired, but they have a long evening to rest, for we were home by six."

The long vacation of 1883 was spent chiefly in Scotland. The house in Duke Street was temporarily shut up, and by midsummer Smith was established in a simple rural lodging at Colinton, some four miles from Edinburgh, at the foot of the Pentlands. He greatly enjoyed the quiet and seclusion of the place, and the free access it gave to the hills, where he delighted to wander in the long summer evenings, lingering over their glorious outlook upon the Firth and the Ochils. The mornings were spent in preparation for lecturing to his pupils on Al-Fakri the Arab historian,¹ and in studying and committing to memory large passages of the pre-Islamic poetry which, with a vivid accompaniment of elucidation and appreciative criticism, he was ever ready to recite to willing ears. In the afternoon his habit was to go into Edinburgh, and after attending to the business of the day at the office of the *Encyclopædia*, to dine at the University Club, returning to the country in time for an evening stroll. They were days of hard work, but there was no risk of their ever becoming monotonous or dull, and brief visits to London on Revision and *Encyclopædia* business, as well as week-ends at Tulliechewan and elsewhere, were agreeable episodes. During the latter half of August he had the pleasure of entertaining his friend Professor Wellhausen, who had been advised rest and quiet, and doubtless surrendered himself willingly to the soothing influences of the climate and scenery of the Lothians,

¹ The subject of lecture chosen for the Michaelmas Term of 1883.

although it is recorded that he did not carry out with any pedantic strictness his doctor's orders to abjure all discussion of things Semitic.

With this period Smith's continuous residence in Scotland may be said to have ended. No doubt his visits to his family and friends were frequent and extended, but henceforth his headquarters were at Cambridge, and he became by domicile an Englishman. The early autumn was divided between a flying visit to Cambridge, where he made arrangements for temporary lodgings until such time as he could be made a member of Trinity, and to a Congress of Orientalists at Leyden,¹ at which he was elected to the honourable position of Vice-President of the Semitic Section. This expedition was somewhat marred by an attack of ulcerated throat which restricted his activities, but he much enjoyed the hospitality of Professor Kuenen, whose guest he was, and he had the opportunity for the first time of meeting a number of interesting people, some of whom he already knew well, but only by correspondence, such as Socin, Kautsch, Nöldeke, and others.

In October he was established in Cambridge, and became a member of the High Table at Trinity. He had already removed many of his books and other possessions from Edinburgh, but it was not found possible to provide him with rooms in College for some time.² By the middle of the month, however, he was able to report the beginning of his tutorial and lecturing work, which he had already planned on a larger scale. "I have two pupils, Keith-Falconer and a beginner, and lecture five days a week. So I am fairly busy. I am very well, but unsettled till I can move into my rooms. I lecture in them now, and also read there, having some

¹ In September.

² Robertson Smith resided in Trinity from Christmas 1883 to Michaelmas 1884 in the second staircase in the second Whewell's Court—"the billiard table"—first floor 43. From Michaelmas 1884 to Easter 1885 he lived in R 8 Great Court.

of my books in them : but this makes a very divided state."

He was already beginning to take his part in the social life of the place, and, just as of old in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, he soon began to complain of a multiplicity of engagements. Thus, "The College feast season is beginning, and threatens to be trying," and again, "A rather weary series of dinners is imminent, indeed has commenced." In spite, however, of this pessimistic formula, which occurs neither for the first nor for the last time in his correspondence, there is satisfactory evidence that Smith thoroughly enjoyed the genial hospitality which was offered to him, and we know that it was the occasion of his laying the foundation of many of his most valuable friendships. The trouble caused by the transport of his books and belongings to the various abodes occupied by him in those early days was more serious than the labour of going out to dinner. But presently order began to emerge gradually from the chaos to which all his current work was at first reduced. "Diogenes is getting used to his tub, and hopes to be comfortably settled by Monday. My papers and books are still in an awful mess, which makes work difficult. I hope to get rooms in June, but I fear not till then. Ward's rooms will then be vacant—a nice set—and he wishes me to have them."

In the Lent term he lectured on the Koran, and in Easter term on the Palmyrene Dialect and Inscriptions. He also (May 2 and 5) delivered two public lectures on the History of Palmyra. Apart from his teaching, there was a continual undercurrent of work in connection with the *Encyclopædia*, which was then hovering between M and P. His correspondence shows that the editorial dealings with publishers and contributors, the unreason of reviewers and other critics, not to speak of his own constant and important contributions, were almost as serious a tax on his time as they had ever been, though a process of devolution had already begun and his main

concern was more and more his Cambridge work. His friendships in so favourable and congenial an atmosphere rapidly increased in number, and in the spring of 1884 we hear of a short visit to Rome with Mr. John Henry Middleton, in the course of which that eminent antiquary seems to have worked Smith so hard that he had no time to set down his impressions at any length. At the end of the Easter term he was engaged in preparing a lecture on Mahdism for the Royal Institution,¹ and in the course of the same summer the work of revising the Old Testament, in which he had been engaged for more than ten years, was brought to a close. In the autumn he paid a visit to Scotland, and after transacting necessary business in Edinburgh he had a well-earned holiday in the Highlands with Dr. Sutherland Black and Mr. J. G. Frazer, whose labours in the anthropological field were already important, and in whose work he always showed a warm and helpful interest.

He returned to his winter's work much invigorated by his travels, and wrote in high spirits to Miss Smith: "The term has begun very pleasantly and one feels more like an old *habitué* of the place. Every one is always very friendly. I have been walking in the afternoon lately with various people—Frazer, Aldis Wright, Sedley Taylor, Neil. To-day I go out on a double bicycle with Keith-Falconer."

Others, too, began to look upon him as a regular institution at Cambridge, and about this time an event occurred which he communicated in confidence to his more intimate friends, and which gave him great pleasure.

"A thing happened to-day," he writes on November 1, 1884, to an old friend, in Edinburgh, "which, though it has no immediate effect on me, is, I think, a good augury. I have just missed . . . being chosen professorial fellow of King's. . . . The main thing is that the King's

¹ Afterwards published in *Good Words*, 1884, vol. xxv. pp. 531, 620.

people felt sure that a Grace could be passed, which would make me eligible for a professorial fellowship—which opens up possibilities.”

The idea thus started at King's that he could be made eligible for a professorial fellowship gained ground, and there is reason to believe that more than one college about this time considered the possibility of attaching Smith to its foundation. Ambitious as he naturally was, however, of securing a recognised position in Cambridge, he felt that a professorial fellowship would lay on him increased duties, and “raise a very anxious question about his relations to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,” and he went off to spend his Christmas at Alassio with Mr. Bryce, well pleased with the condition of affairs as they were.

Of this visit Mr. Bryce afterwards wrote:¹ “Having once spent five weeks alone with him in a villa at Alassio on the Riviera I observed to him when we parted that we had had (as the Americans say) ‘a lovely time’ together, and there was not an observation I had made during those weeks which he had not contested. He laughed and did not contest that observation.” Arguments with Mr. Bryce and walks in the delightful neighbourhood of Alassio by no means exhausted his activities. He records that he was doing at least five or six hours’ work daily, and that he sat in a greatcoat working in a summer-house. In this way he kept the necessary *Encyclopædia* work up to date, and made some progress with a translation of the Arab geographer, Ibn Jubair, a task which he had undertaken for the Hakluyt Society at Sir Henry Yule’s instance, but which he unfortunately never managed to complete. Before he returned to England he paid a visit to Mr. D. M’Lennan, the brother of his old friend and the continuator of his researches, who was then living in delicate health at San Remo; and along with Mr. Bryce he also spent some days at Cannes

¹ *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, 1904, p. 323.

in the company of Lord Acton. By Lord Acton he was introduced to Lord Houghton, whom he found "pleasanter than one had expected," not having lost his *esprit* with age.

On his return to Cambridge, he found that events had moved in his absence much faster than he had expected, for he was surprised by a cordial communication from Dr. Swainson,¹ then Master of Christ's, announcing that he had been elected² some days previously to a fellowship of that College. He communicated this important piece of news to his father in the following letter.

"TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
January 17, 1885.

"MY DEAR FATHER—I have just been elected to a fellowship at Christ's. That is, I was elected about a week ago, but only got the letter on arriving here yesterday, so that the matter was not settled and in a case to be spoken of till this forenoon. I am to be admitted this evening before dinner and shall have the rooms of Vines³ who has just married. Of course, this flitting—the last I hope for a good while—will put me in a great state of confusion again. As to details I may simply enclose Swainson's letter. You need not send it back.

"I am quite sorry to leave Trinity, and all the younger men here at least seem heartily sorry also. But, on the other hand, it is a great thing to have a regular college position, and I shall now be able to reduce my *E.B.* work as soon as arrangements can be made. I don't suppose that I can give it up altogether.

"I may say that I have but slight acquaintance with the Christ's people, and was altogether taken by surprise. . . .

"I feel grateful to think that at length I may be said to have settled down in a permanent way. It is true that the fellowship is only for six years, but before the

¹ From 1879 to 1887 Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, and author of many useful articles in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography* and the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*.

² On January 10, 1885.

³ Dr. S. H. Vines, now Sherardian Professor of Botany in the University of Oxford.

end of that time it is pretty sure to be changed into a senior fellowship, which is permanent, and, at any rate, by that time it would be quite unlike Cambridge if I were not regarded as a fixture. . . .

“ I must write a little note to thank Mother for her gift, and with love to all, am, ever your loving son,
W. R. SMITH.”

He was accordingly soon established in the rooms on the second floor of Staircase A, in the Fellows' Buildings at Christ's, which were to be his home till the end of his days. At first he possessed only half the territory which his friends will remember as his; but some years later he was allowed to annex the rooms at the end of the Buildings on the other side of the passage, and by placing a partition across this he turned the whole into a very commodious flat. He was always fond of recalling the fact that this second set had for many years been the home of Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist. The final “ flitting ” was naturally a serious affair, but the sense of its finality reduced the hardship, and soon we find that his books are once more commodiously installed in the old black book-cases, which had “ turned out an excellent fit,” and that he himself before the end of his first term had become *alumnus addictissimus*, a most enthusiastic Christ's man.

The present Master describes for us how rapidly he took his place in this new circle.

“ From the day of his election to a Fellowship at Christ's he took the keenest interest in the College, and became one of its most loyal members. He was always anxious to meet with the undergraduates and the senior members of the College who from time to time revisited their old University, and he took trouble to introduce the younger men to any celebrity or distinguished visitor who might be stopping with him. Having no College work, he did not necessarily come across the Christ's men very often, but he never missed an opportunity of meeting them, and to those who were reading Semitic languages his care and kindness were never failing. . . . His presence

amongst us attracted boys from the north of the Tweed to the College, and he was never more pleased and proud than when they did well and were a credit to the College. . . . He was fond of giving presents, and especially something which would be of use to the College—books to the Library, an atlas for the Combination Room, etc.

“He was undoubtedly the ablest conversationalist I have ever heard, and I have always regretted that Stevenson in his brilliant essay did not include a sketch of him as a talker. To many of us the most vivid recollection of him will always be the hour in the Combination Room after dinner when he always had something interesting to say, and raised the conversation to what outsiders often think it to be and what in fact it so seldom is.

“He was for us a link of connexion with the outside world, and nothing pleased him more than to arrange little dinners in his own rooms or to organise congenial parties to dine in Hall. He was always anxious that strangers should be interested in his College and impressed by it, and he made a most stimulating and patriotic host.”

The rearrangement of his relations with the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which was foreshadowed in the letter to his father given above, was immediately taken in hand. He found it necessary to retain some final responsibility as Editor-in-Chief, and this responsibility was faithfully discharged. We still find in his letters dissertations on the proper manner of treating such subjects as Poker and Pugilism in a publication intended for serious readers; and his advice on more important matters was always at the disposal of his colleagues and his publishers. But the current labours of the great book which was as yet by no means completed were now mainly discharged by the “Resident Editor,” Mr. J. S. Black, whose duties and responsibilities were correspondingly increased by Smith’s partial retirement from the active management of the affair.

Smith’s reputation among Cambridge teachers was now firmly based, and his election to the office of University Librarian which forms the starting-point of the next chapter

showed in a very emphatic way the impression which his three years of strenuous and fruitful work had made upon the University at large.

As we have seen, the yearly public lecture which exhausted his official responsibility as Lord Almoner's Professor was punctually delivered each Easter term. On each occasion not one lecture, but at least three were given, the subjects being "Early Relations of Arabia with Syria and Palestine" (1883), "History of Palmyra" (1884), "Marriage and Kinship in Early Arabia" (1885), and "The Theory of Sacrifice illustrated by a Comparison of Semitic and Greek Ritual" (1886). During the Michaelmas and Lent terms, from 1883 to 1885, he read Arabic authors with his pupils, the list of whom includes the names of Messrs. Kennett¹ and Bevan.² At this point it may not be out of place to record the admirable appreciation published in *The Expositor* in 1894 by Mr. N. M'Lean,³ although he himself did not become a pupil till a later date.

"There was never," he says, "a scholar of whom it was more true that he himself was greater than the works he gave to the world. I think it was perhaps in attending his lectures that one best learned to appreciate his mental powers. He possessed a familiarity with the details of Arabic history and literature—with the topography of Mecca and the other important centres—with the names and relations of the very numerous Arab tribes—and with the usages of Arab life in ancient and modern times, which enabled him to render luminous all the Arabic works he read. Here, as in the case of Hebrew literature, he showed always that 'grasp of the concrete realities of ancient history' which Professor Bevan has justly noted as pre-eminently distinguishing him. A favourite subject was the 'History of the Arabs

¹ The Rev. R. H. Kennett, now Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge, and Canon of Ely.

² Professor A. A. Bevan, Fellow of Trinity College, and Lord Almoner's Reader in Arabic, Cambridge.

³ Mr. Norman M'Lean, University Lecturer in Aramaic, and Fellow and Hebrew Lecturer, Christ's College, Cambridge.

before Islam'; like all recent investigators he distrusted the later traditions which had passed through the disturbing medium of Mohammedan prejudice. The exactness of his scholarship, shown especially in skilful analysis of the most difficult details of Arabic syntax, taught a lesson that no pupil of his could ever forget. His reading of the poets was rendered delightful by his keen literary sense, and by a peculiar appreciation of the moods and humours of the Semitic mind. However small the number of his students—and Arabic has not many votaries in this or any other University—he gave them of his best. It was one of the lessons he taught by example as by precept that every lecture ought to be thoroughly prepared, its material arranged and digested beforehand."

The *Encyclopædia* articles belonging to this period cover a wide range of subjects. There was a reversion to his mathematical studies in the interesting archæological and historical disquisition given under the head of "Numerals." Many important articles in Biblical Introduction and Theology also belong to this period, the chief being the articles "Messiah," "Micah," "Nahum," "Nazarite," "Noah," "Obadiah," "Paradise," "Passover and Pentecost," "Philistines," "Psalms," "Ruth," "Sabbath," "Samuel." Under the heading of Comparative Religion must be mentioned "Prophet," "Priest," and, above all, "Sacrifice" (the latter especially giving in its germinal form one of the leading theses of *The Religion of the Semites*). It was specially appropriate that the Professor of Arabic should undertake such subjects as "Mocha" (he had already written "Mecca" and "Medina"), "Movers," "Muscat," "Nabataeans," "Nawawi," "Ockley," "Ophir," "Osman," "Palmer," "Palmyra," "Caussin de Percival," "Petra," "Pocock," "Quatremère," "Reinaud," "Reland," "Remusat," "Renaudot," "Rosellini," and "Sabians." Within this period also he saw through the Press, in their complete form, the third series of his public lectures, under the title of *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, which has

been singled out by more than one of his critics as the most original and remarkable of all his works, and which, therefore, requires some brief notice here.

In his article "Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament," published in July 1880 in the *Journal of Philology*, he had explained that at the time when it was written he had access to no good library of Arabic texts, but the results of his provisional exploration "appeared so promising that it seemed desirable to publish them and to invite the co-operation of scholars better versed in the early literature of Arabia." Several Orientalists of mark had responded to this invitation, especially Professors Wellhausen, Goldziher, and Nöldeke, who have recorded with much emphasis their appreciation of the originality and value of this contribution, Nöldeke in particular declaring that even if he had written no further on the subject he would by this paper alone have earned for himself an enduring name in the list of investigators of Semitic antiquity. As early as July 10, 1880, Goldziher had contributed to the *Academy* a list of important references to various Arabic sources in further confirmation of Smith's tentative hypothesis. Smith himself, after his paper had left his hands, continued his researches in the Viceregal Library at Cairo and elsewhere, and certain notes appended to *The Prophets of Israel* (1882) embody some further results of these. A Dutch scholar, Professor G. A. Wilken, followed up Smith's suggestions in a work entitled *The Matriarchate in Old Arabia*, published in Dutch in 1884, and also in German in the same year; and the discussion was continued by Nöldeke and others in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* and elsewhere. The result of a cautious and ever more widely extended research was to satisfy Smith increasingly of the soundness of the views he had put forward in his early paper, and he was thus led to select the subject of it as the theme of his third course of public lectures in 1885. To the four

actually delivered were added other four with many notes and dissertations in the volume published by the University Press in the following October.

Alike in his early article and in the finished volume the object is to collect and discuss the available evidence as to the system of female kinship and its corresponding laws of marriage and tribal organisation which prevailed in Arabia at the time of Mohammed, the conclusion being that male kinship had been preceded by kinship through women only, a conclusion corresponding, therefore, with the general theory that had been propounded in 1871 by J. F. M'Lennan in *Primitive Marriage*. Further, it was argued that the Arabs must once have had the system which M'Lennan had been the first to expound under the name of totemism.

A second edition of *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* appeared in 1903, with additional notes by the author and Professor Goldziher, under the editorship of Mr. S. A. Cook, who tells us that, among others, Dr. J. G. Frazer, Professor Nöldeke, and Professor Bevan had also interested themselves helpfully in his task. The book continues to be regarded as of first-rate importance, not only as lying at the foundation of all subsequent research in this department of study, but as exhibiting in a singularly striking way the skill which is able to co-ordinate and correlate a bewildering mass of fragmentary and seemingly unrelated facts, and make them converge with irresistible force upon the logical conclusion which is ultimately seen to be inevitable.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (1886-1889)

TOWARDS the middle of February 1886 the sudden death of Mr. Henry Bradshaw deprived the University of Cambridge of a most accomplished Librarian, and cast a shadow of bereavement over a wide circle of admiring friends. Mr. Bradshaw had been one of Smith's many friends in King's College, and shortly before his death Smith and he had travelled together in the Loire country. Only a few scattered references remain to testify to their friendship, but there is enough to show that they regarded each other with mutual esteem and affection. The post which had been vacated in so melancholy and sudden a manner is one which in the nature of the case is particularly difficult to fill. From a learned society in which each man's duty is to specialise, it is hard to select the synoptic mind to which may be safely entrusted the task of supplying each man with the very material and stock-in-trade of his specialism. The method of appointment to the office, which is given by the free election of Masters of Arts qualified to vote, is not one which ensures a dispassionate consideration of the claims of the various candidates. In such a contest private and party feelings, irrelevant matters of all kinds, are apt to intrude themselves. This being so, Smith's appointment as Bradshaw's successor is a very striking testimony both to the general appreciation of his attainments and to the remarkable

personal ascendancy in the University which he had won for himself during the first three years of his residence.

The idea of bringing him forward as a candidate seems to have occurred to his friends almost immediately, for we find him writing to Dr. Black very soon after the death of Mr. Bradshaw :

“ A good deal of pressure is being brought to bear on me from various quarters to stand as Bradshaw’s successor. I have not quite made up my mind, but am beginning to think that it will not be easy to persuade any of the better qualified men to stand, and that I can’t well refuse. Besides, an appointment for life beginning with £500 and a fellowship, with the run of a noble library, is well worth setting against the loss of liberty involved in office hours and shortened holidays. . . . The election will be next week. If I do go in, and get it, the work at first will be very heavy. On the other hand, after the first year I ought to have a good deal of time for my own work even during library-hours. But this is counting one’s chickens before they are hatched.”

The support which his candidature received was in every way remarkable. Men who were expected to stand, and might well have been elected, resigned their claims in his favour. Mr. Prothero, the present editor of the *Quarterly Review* and Mr. Bradshaw’s biographer, wrote to say that he believed that Smith’s election was what Bradshaw himself would have wished. A large and influential committee led by six Heads of Houses, and including most of those of note among the younger generation of Masters of Arts, was formed to promote his success. The vote was even more striking. Smith’s opponent was the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who, by reason of his own high qualifications for the post and of his influential Cambridge connection, was a formidable competitor. The constituency, however, of which over four hundred went to the poll, gave a majority to the new-comer of nearly two hundred votes, and Smith was soon

receiving a budget of congratulations, among the first of which he gratefully acknowledged a friendly letter from Mr. Wordsworth himself. Sir Frederick Pollock wrote: "I am glad to see how far the vote I held in reserve for you was from being wanted. You will go as near as it is possible towards consoling the University for the loss of Bradshaw, and that is saying much"; and the following letter from Mr. Leslie Stephen shows the development of the friendly relations which had begun the previous year at St. Ives:

"MY DEAR SMITH—I had the pleasure yesterday of adding one vote to your majority. I was obliged to leave by the first train this morning or I should have tried to find you to say in person how much pleased I was at the result which is creditable to everybody concerned.

"I am selfishly glad, too, to have a friend at the Library in case of need.—Yours ever, L. STEPHEN."

Wellhausen's note is both characteristic and to the point:

"MEIN LIEBER S. !—Gratuliere vielmals. Sie sind durch die seltene Vielseitigkeit Ihres Wissens und durch Ihre praktischen Anlagen zum Bibliothekar prädestiniert: es wäre aber doch Schade, wenn Ihnen die Sorge für fremde Bücher keine Zeit liesse, noch selber welche zu schreiben. Können Sie nicht mindestens die Encyclopädie jetzt aus der Hand geben? Mich dauert die viele Zeit, die Sie für so etwas zum Opfer bringen müssen.—Viele Grüße. Ihr WELLHAUSEN."

The progress of the candidature and its final issue had been duly reported in frequent telegrams and letters to Aberdeen, and on February 25 Smith wrote to his father:

"I have been too busy to-day to be able to write at length, but I must in a word tell you how pleasant and cordial *every* one has been—even the Master of Trinity¹ called on me to-day, or rather sent his card. I was inducted at 2 P.M. and went round afterwards for an hour, but my regular work does not begin till to-morrow.

¹ Dr. Hepworth Thompson.

“Wordsworth has written me a nice letter. His chief friends here did not wish him to stand; but many clerics thought it horrible that a Presbyterian should be placed in such a post of trust. If they had had more time I daresay they would have pressed me hard.”

Smith was now in his fortieth year, and his health, which had for many years been satisfactory, still seemed equal to the severe strain which he often imposed upon it. But a time of great stress and trouble was at hand. He was still very full of *Encyclopædia* work and very busy with weighty deliberations on the topics whose initial letters occur in the last quarter of the alphabet. The great task was now drawing to a close, and he was surrounded by efficient helpers; but the editorial responsibility still weighed upon him, and on occasion he exercised his powers of revision and rejection as decisively as ever. It is about this time that we find him in a curious but characteristically conservative mood, discussing the suitability of a very eminent person as the contributor of an article on a controversial subject, and coming to the conclusion that the celebrity in question was “too sceptical and absolutely devoid of reverence, and almost certain to give just offence!” But, on the whole, his labours in this field were now effectually lightened. It was otherwise with his new University duties.

He was not mistaken in anticipating that the work of the Library would at first be very hard. The unexpectedness of Mr. Bradshaw's removal naturally made the situation difficult for his successor, who found he had to deal with considerable arrears of work. “The Library is a very big job,” he wrote to Dr. Black, “but I like it, and hope to get it into shape.” He threw himself into the work with extraordinary energy, and soon impressed his assistants with his practical ability in providing for the accumulations of books by using to the utmost all the space that was still available for fresh shelving. He was soon called upon to deal in a more

comprehensive manner with the problem of accommodation which weighs upon all librarians, and it was under his supervision that the important addition to the Library, known as the Hancock Building, was carried out. Under his auspices also the methods of cataloguing underwent revision, and gained in economy as well as efficiency, and Mr. H. T. Francis, whose assistance in the work of the Library Smith highly valued, observes :

“ I never knew any one that could so rapidly appreciate the value of books ; and in sorting the accumulations of years he could be relied upon to pick out any books or pamphlets of real worth from a mass of printed rubbish. . . . He had no doubt the defects of his qualities, and from the high standard he always set before himself, he was apt to depreciate unduly any works that did not rise above mediocrity, and I fear it must be allowed that he did not suffer fools gladly.”

The judgments passed on his internal administration of the Library, so far as they were adverse, are doubtless to be attributed for the most part to the last-mentioned characteristic.

In another and no less important department of his work as Librarian, he appears to have been completely successful. An efficient administrator must not only be able to carry out a policy, but also to commend it to those under whose authority he works. This is indeed, frequently, the most arduous and the least pleasant part of his duty, and success in it requires both dexterity and firmness. Smith seems to have prevailed chiefly by virtue of the latter quality. The Master of Christ's describes, as an eye-witness, his method of getting business done :

“ Perhaps his most striking feature as a University Official was that he was not afraid of taking responsibility, a rare virtue in academic circles. As a rule, those in authority at Cambridge are supported by a Syndicate of some eight to sixteen graduates, who meet at stated intervals, and whose existence supplies that moral support which Mr. Jorkins afforded Mr. Spenslow in Doctors'

Commons. A good deal of the time of these meetings is taken up in the verbal criticism of the various Reports drawn up by the Secretary for presentation to the Senate. Much time is spent in arranging the commas to the satisfaction of the majority, and in settling whether we should say 'a few more' or 'a few additional,' and such questions. It was one of the business-like qualities of Robertson Smith, as Secretary to the Library Syndicate, that he would not allow waste of time on barren discussions. 'I am quite sure any one of the Syndicate could draw up an abler report than this, but I am quite sure that all the Syndicate working together cannot,' was what he used to tell us, and after that we usually let it alone."

These varied duties and responsibilities had not interrupted his Semitic studies. Some of his old opponents in Scotland affected to regard his appointment to be "a mere librarian" as a degradation from the professorial status with which Providence had justly visited him; but among persons of sense and learning his reputation as a scholar constantly increased. A proof of this came to him from Scotland itself in April 1887, when the Burnett Trustees invited him to deliver a series of lectures on Semitic Religions. This work, the outcome of which was to be the best known of his books, was thoroughly congenial to him. "This will be a nice job," he writes to his brother, "twelve lectures to be delivered—five years to write and deliver them in, and about £150 a year for doing so. It will be very pleasant to have some definite work again to bring me to Scotland."

He looked forward to devoting the leisure, or comparative leisure, on which he counted when the Library should be in order, to this and other similar labours; but the settling of the Library proved an even more arduous business than he had expected; and the first hint of a failure of his health appears about this time in references to troublesome and obstinate eczematous symptoms, and in his friends' expressions of anxiety about the effects of the confined air of the Library on his constitution.

“I have often thought,” writes the Master of Christ’s, “that had he not become Librarian he might have lived longer. When I first knew him he used to take long walks, not very often, but still he did take a certain amount of exercise in the fresh air. As he became more and more immersed in University business, these walks were given up. He used to say that he had plenty of exercise running about in the Library. This may have been true, but it wasn’t exercise in the fresh air and the sunlight. At that time he was very busy preparing his Burnett Lectures, and I recollect that after a hard day’s work in the Library he used to return to his rooms about five o’clock, having stopped after the Library closed to finish some piece of official business, and immediately set to at his book and work hard till seven; and all this without luncheon—he always mistrusted luncheons. Soon after Hall he would be back at his work and write hard till long past midnight. I never could understand how he did it, but his marvellous nervous force carried him on—up to a certain point.”

To the burdens of increased work were added those of anxiety and bereavement. Early in the year he was shocked by the unexpected death of his old and valued friend Mr. Gibson, who succumbed to an attack of pneumonia after a very brief illness. “I really do not know what to say,” he writes to another friend, “it is the biggest blank that has been made in my life since the death of my brother George. One does not make such friends again at our age.” His visits to Scotland in those days were much occupied with the melancholy business of winding up Mr. Gibson’s affairs, and were further saddened by the shadows which were gathering over his own family. His father and mother had by this time finally left the Manse of Keig, and were living in retirement in Aberdeen. With them lived one of his sisters and his younger brother Herbert, who had for some time been laid aside from his work by a tuberculous affection, and whose illness became more and more hopeless during the summer months of 1887. The afflictions of the family were increased by an alarming paralytic

seizure by which Dr. Pirie Smith was attacked in August, and the strain imposed on his mother and sister became almost unbearable. It is not surprising that Smith's own health visibly suffered in these sad circumstances. We find him writing in June :¹

“ The fact is that I am thoroughly pumped out—the ten days I had with Neil² in the Easter vacation not having fairly set me up after all the work and worries of the spring. When I came back I had a great deal to do here, and of course while you were away I had more *E.B.* work to do than usual, and somehow or other the net result is that I have got into a really bad state. When my routine work in the Library is done I feel quite tired out and feverish, and when I attempt to work in the evening I make no progress. . . . On Saturday I hope to go for five or six days to Cromer on the Norfolk coast so as to get a little freshened up for the term's accounts, etc.

“ Both Tuke, however, and Brunton have independently and unsolicited sent me word that if I have not a long holiday this autumn, I shall undoubtedly be seriously ill ; and I must try to take their advice, tho' how it is to be fitted in I don't know. If it were not for poor Bertie's state—he is worse—I would go to the Alps for five weeks, starting by the middle of July. But I don't want to be far from Aberdeen, and may probably come to Scotland instead. . . . ”

It was by this time clear to every one that his brother's case was desperate ; the sufferer himself knew this also, and one may easily imagine that he hardly wished it otherwise. But the depression of spirits so natural in such a situation took the distressing form which might have been expected in one of his upbringing. The letters show that he faced death and endured much suffering with praiseworthy courage and composure ; but in the imminence of the great change which was coming upon him he was haunted by the doubts and fears for the

¹ To Dr. Black.

² The late Mr. R. A. Neil, Tutor of Pembroke.

future which at such a time may beset the best of men. Smith being aware of this wrote to his brother a letter which contains the sum of his own meditations on death and immortality. On such subjects he was habitually reticent, and it is not without some hesitation that his biographers give publicity to so intimate an utterance. It has, however, a special value as giving articulate expression to the convictions which had only been confirmed by his theological studies and his deepening experience of life, and it is accordingly given here in full.

“ CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
July 3, 1887.

“ MY DEAR BERTIE—I came back on Friday evening from Cromer very much refreshed by the sea breezes and six long days in the open air ; and I would have written to you yesterday, but was detained past post-time by another matter—a University business. But I am not sure that I do not prefer to write on the quiet Sabbath forenoon, on which I hope that you also in spite of your pain are able to think of the rest that remaineth to the people of God. None of us can enter that rest without passing through pain and trial, even as He passed Who is our great Forerunner. You have had a sore share of trials, and yet perhaps one easier to bear than a long life of prosperity and worldly cares which make it very hard to keep near to God. At all events we know that He who orders all things wisely has dealt with you and with us all according to His will, which is the same as His purpose of love ; and He will not forsake you, even in the valley of the shadow of death, if you lean on Him. Do not look inwards and vex yourself with self-questionings about faith and assurance and such like things. God gives a joyous assurance to some of His servants, but He gives peace to all who simply throw themselves on Him, humbly accepting His will, looking to Him as children to a father, and beseeching Him to be with them and carry all their burdens.

“ I suppose Lucy will be with you now in about ten days. When I can come north is not yet clear, but I am longing to see you all again. I think I shall see Lucy on Tuesday, when I have to go to town on a deputation to Lord Hartington. We lunch at Devonshire House, and in the

afternoon I'll try to run down to Hayes or else to get Lucy to come up to town.

"I have given the duplicates to Wright, and have got from him some rare German official stamps, which I enclose. Professor de Goeje is with him just now. He is a good friend of mine as well as of Wright, and dines with me in Hall or rather in combination room to-night. I have the whole college to myself.—Much love to all from your ever affectionate brother,

W. R. SMITH."

Shortly after writing this letter Smith went to Aberdeen, where he found that his father had rallied, though his brother was lingering precariously between life and death. His presence was a great support and comfort to his family, and there are many pathetic records of his attempts to amuse and distract the invalids in their easier moments.

"Bertie is still occasionally able to look at stamps," he writes,¹ "could you send him some? He says there are small changes lately in some common ones. He also wants high English values of the new stamps, and wonders if any of the old P.Cs. we once looked at and thought we could not spare could be got now. I think he might have some. It may be only a *loan*, for he can't need them long, poor boy."

In the same letter there is an interesting reference to *Encyclopædia* work which he had taken to Aberdeen "to steady him"; one or two difficult questions had arisen, on which he expressed himself with his usual decision. The subject of Totemism, and the connection with it of his distinguished friend Mr. Frazer, make the following passage of more than passing interest.

"I hope that Messrs. Black clearly understand that Totemism is a subject of growing importance, daily mentioned in magazines and papers, but of which there is no good account anywhere—precisely one of those cases where we have an opportunity of being ahead of every one and getting some reputation. There is no

¹ To Dr. Black.

article in the volume for which I am more solicitous. I have taken much personal pains with it, guiding Frazer carefully in his treatment; and he has put about seven months' hard work on it to make it the standard article on the subject. We must make room for it, whatever else goes. 'Torture,' though a nice paper, is not at all so necessary, for people can learn about torture elsewhere, and the subject is one of decaying and not of rising interest."

The other subject which at that time specially exercised the editorial mind, was that of vaccination. It is one the treatment of which in a publication like the *Encyclopædia Britannica* may raise delicate and difficult questions of scientific soundness and even of good citizenship—the slightest deviation from accepted views being likely not only to arouse the hostility of the medical profession, but also to propagate opinions that may have serious consequences among the public at large. Smith had entrusted the article to his friend Dr. Charles Creighton, who had recently held the post of Demonstrator of Anatomy in the University of Cambridge, and whose views on the subject were independent if not original. The ability of his performance was undoubted, but it was open to a reproach of heterodoxy, which was likely to shock the writer's professional brethren. This was duly represented to the Editor, who was peculiarly qualified to judge of the dangers incidental to any suspicion of heretical pravity. But though he was willing to take, and did take, the opinion of the best accessible authorities, Smith decided to accept the responsibility of standing by his contributor, and, in spite of the doubts expressed by some of the experts consulted, the article appeared very much as it had been written.

The long vacation and the Michaelmas term were fully occupied with these and other learned occupations. "Things are very smooth in Cambridge this term," he wrote, "and I am very well . . . very much better than I was in spring, and I think as well as I have been for

years: for which I am very thankful considering what an autumn I had." In the same letter he announces his election to a senior fellowship of his college, and about this time the Hibbert Trustees invited him to give a course of lectures on the religion of the Hebrews, to be delivered in London and Oxford. The engagement into which he had already entered for the course of Burnett Lectures prevented him from accepting this invitation. There is reason to think that it would have been renewed and accepted at a later period, but tragic circumstances were destined to prevent his embarking on any new undertakings of this kind.

Meanwhile the news from Aberdeen was growing steadily worse. His father's health was better, and now gave cause for no urgent anxiety, but his brother grew steadily weaker. Smith reached Aberdeen about the middle of December, and the end came almost immediately after his arrival. On the night of December 17 he wrote to Miss Lucy Smith:

"The post card which I was able to send this morning must have prepared you so far for what I now write. Poor Bertie has passed away into the eternal rest. . . . I can't say yet how they all are. There is still bustle: but he had suffered so much that I think even mother's feeling is in great measure one of thankfulness that God has given him rest by taking him to Himself. Father is a good deal agitated, but composes himself as much as he can."

After his return to Cambridge a little later, he writes again: "I trust you are not allowing yourself to brood over things. It is far better for Bertie that he was taken home where we shall all hope, through God's goodness, to meet him again. And at home, as mother writes to-day, they are quiet and not unhappy."

Early in 1888 he bought a house in Aberdeen and settled his parents in it. It was also arranged that the first series of the Burnett Lectures should be delivered in the Hall of Marischal College towards the end of the



PROFESSOR SMITH IN HIS ROOMS.

From a Photograph by C. M. Smith, Esq.

year. Another important event was at hand. In the course of March he wrote to his sister: "There are only 200 pages of the *E.B.* to print. I have been reading proofs very diligently, and I don't think I have a month's work left." Meanwhile he took advantage of the interval in the troubles of his family to make a short tour in Spain—a longer excursion than had for some time been possible.

This tour, of which he wrote shortly after his return, that it had left many pleasant memories which he hoped would be very lasting, and that it had invigorated him for the encounter with various troubles that then lay before him, was made in the company of Sheriff Æneas Mackay of Edinburgh, Mr. Shipley, now Master of Christ's, and Mr. J. S. Black. It had been decided to take the eastern entrance from France, and on the way the party spent a day at Blois. In Spain the first halt was made at Barcelona, where the fine architecture of the Gothic cathedral was pronounced to be by far the most interesting feature. A projected visit to Monserrat having been reluctantly given up, two days were next given to the Cyclopean walls and the Roman and Gothic remains at Tarragona, in the neighbourhood of which the great Roman viaduct ("the Devil's Bridge") was also explored. At Valencia the travellers found the Holy Week functions less striking than the descriptions they had read of them; but the walks in the neighbourhood, with the fine views of the Moorish walls and gateways, as well as the excursion to Murviedro (Saguntum), repaid their curiosity.

A long night journey, made further tedious by heavy floods which had produced landslips and threatened complete interruption of railway communications, next brought the party to Cordova with its labyrinth of narrow oriental streets, and its great Moorish mosque, only very imperfectly transformed by Charles V. into a Christian Church. Next in the itinerary came Granada, with the Alhambra and its time-consuming Arabic in-

scriptions; after that Seville, where the party much enjoyed the hospitality of the vice-consul, Mr. Johnston. The excursion to Italica was made for the sake of Seneca but was pronounced less remarkable than that to Carmona. There the recently excavated Roman Necropolis with its rich and almost unique traces of the arrangements for funeral triclinia and banquets with the dead was expounded by Mr. Bonsor, to whose energy and enterprise the discovery and elucidation of these important antiquities had been chiefly due. To Madrid was given only one day—devoted chiefly to the treasures of the Prado. On the way home Burgos and Avila could only be admired from afar.

The rest of the year 1888 was on the whole uneventful. In Aberdeen Dr. Pirie Smith remained a hopeless invalid, his condition showing only the unmeaning alternation of good and bad days which is usual in such cases. At Cambridge Smith worked steadily at the Burnett Lectures and at the exhausting routine of library business. That he found this trying and wearisome at times, and that he was often oppressed by the multiplicity of his labours and the melancholy condition of his father, is clear from the extant correspondence. Sir Henry Yule, whose acquaintance with him had begun, as we have seen, in connection with the Encyclopædia and the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, and who had now become an intimate friend, wrote: "It seems a great boon to have father and mother still, even to be anxious about—though I know you have had great sorrows. I did not remember that you had to do with Burnett Lectures. *Don't you think* of leaving the Library. It seems an ideal position for you, and surely will give leisure bye and bye. . . ."

But the very energy and success with which he conducted the affairs of the Library—he was, one remembers, "zum Bibliothekar prädestinirt"—made leisure seem an ever receding prospect, though he never intermitted his oriental studies, and, as will be seen from the biblio-

graphy attached to this book, frequently published short contributions on his subject in the learned periodicals. He spent most of the summer and part of the autumn in Scotland in order to be near his family, and on his return to Cambridge for the winter received the news that he had been elected a member of the " Société Asiatique de Paris " on the proposition of Ernest Renan.

The most interesting incident in the last months of the year was, however, the celebration of the conclusion of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which took the form of a dinner given on December 11, in the Hall of Christ's College, by Messrs. A. & C. Black, to a distinguished company drawn almost wholly from the principal contributors, a precedent which, under different auspices, has been recently followed with enhanced magnificence in connection with the publication of the eleventh edition of the same great work. The arrangements for the festivities were left very much to the editor, who, however, had the assistance of Mr. J. S. Black, and the cordial co-operation of the publishers and the Master and Fellows of the College. The success of the dinner was complete, and the guests, as was to be expected, formed a very notable gathering of representatives of a brilliant scientific and literary generation. The oratory proper to the occasion was of a high quality and repays the curious reader even now; but a *résumé* of a series of after-dinner speeches delivered more than twenty years ago would probably be wanting in zest for the general public of to-day. It will therefore be best to give the impression of a friendly foreign observer who was himself a contributor, especially as it contains yet another example of the high esteem in which Smith was held by the best European scholars. Professor Wellhausen wrote in January 1889:

" It was a veritable triumph you celebrated last month, and, thanks to your kindness in sending me the menu and toasts, I have been able even after the event to take part in it in the spirit—though in such a case no

doubt the body is better than the spirit! Not one of the speeches has bored me—which, honestly, is meant as saying much—but none has pleased me better than the truly touching one of the veteran Richard Garnett.¹ I believe it is no mere *façon de parler* to say that you really have reached what might be called a leadership in the corps of English scholars, and I congratulate you on the fact. By endowment and interest you were predestined to hold together literature and science in combination, and I look upon it as a high merit of your own, and of the Encyclopædia, that this has actually been accomplished. I doubt if anything of the same kind could be achieved anywhere else than in England.”

Such was the verdict of a friend: it is fitting for the sake of historic truth, that the voice of detraction should also be heard. Some time after the Encyclopædia dinner, an article on Smith appeared in the *Scots Observer*,² then conducted by Mr. W. E. Henley, a distinguished but in many respects unlucky man of letters. So far as the present writers are aware, there is nothing which directly proves that the article was written by Mr. Henley himself. But, whether he or another was the author, it displayed much of the literary hooliganism which was his favourite affectation. The article commenced, in a vein of pleasantry now happily obsolete, by attributing Smith's origin to a chance visit of the Wandering Jew to Aberdeen, and, after some sarcastic observations on the persistency and success of his early studies, approached the subject of the article “Bible,” which it treated in a most superior manner.

“It contains nothing new, for it is but a summary of the rationalistic theories of the more moderate German critics; the style too is flat and commonplace even for an Encyclopædia article. The callow theologian conned it with a fearful joy. In the worldling it moved a seemly mirth, so calmly and confidently were the old views

¹ Mr. Garnett replied to the toast of Literature.

² See *Scots Observer*, May 25, 1889. “Modern Men—Mr. Robertson Smith.”

knocked on the head. . . . In defending orthodox opinion the writer is still more amusing, or exasperating ; at least one,—nay, probably two—Psalms are Davidic.”

The “ case, a strange compound of Jerusalem, Geneva, and Aberdeen,” as might be expected, lent itself to this method of treatment, and the following impression of Smith’s theological notoriety is perhaps worth preserving :

“ All Scotland held him in flattering respect, or still more flattering horror. His pulpit ministrations were marked by a form of orthodoxy of peculiar and abnormal woodenness. They were very tedious, but very evangelical. How could he be so desperately wicked (it was urged) when he was so desperately dull ? Or was he a theological hybrid, part Voltaire without wit, and part Spurgeon without eloquence ? The Presbytery of Aberdeen fell to considering in Mr. Robertson Smith the potentialities of a new but unreadable author of *Candide*.”

Mr. Henley himself had been, and had ceased to be, a member of the staff of the Encyclopædia ; it would perhaps, therefore, be unfair to quote his contributor’s unfavourable estimate of Smith’s editorial work as a specimen of the *Observer*’s unbiassed and impartial literary criticism. The description of the dinner, which was not attended by any representative of the paper, is not an unfair sample of Mr. Henley’s controversial manners.

“ . . . The most eminent men in science and literature were invited to do him honour. None of them came. The result was singularly happy. . . . There was nothing to distract the mind from the contemplation of the central figure. ‘ In Blindman’s Land ’—the saying is of the mustiest.”

It is not altogether pleasing to have to record that this production, which may more justly be ascribed to ill-breeding than to malice, gave Smith more pain than its importance warranted. It caused great annoyance and even indignation in Cambridge, and the general feeling that Mr. Henley had made himself responsible for some-

thing like a gross abuse of public criticism was so strong that Mr. A. Constable, on behalf of the printers of the *Scots Observer*, thought proper to write to Smith a letter recalling their friendship, which dated from the days of the Evening Club, and expressing sincere regret that anything should have been printed by his firm which could have caused him annoyance.

The completion of the Encyclopædia relieved him of much work and a great deal of worry. The first series of the Burnett Lectures was finished in the early months of 1889, and, other circumstances being favourable, he was free to renew his acquaintance with the East.

The spring vacation was devoted to a short but peculiarly interesting tour in North Africa. The party, consisting of Smith himself, Mr. J. S. Black, Mr. R. A. Neil of Pembroke College, and Mr. J. A. Sharkey of Christ's, met at Marseilles and took steamer in the first instance to Tunis where some days were spent, one of which was devoted to the ruins of Carthage, and particularly to the comparatively scanty remains from the pre-Roman period. Smith, who was astonished to find within thirty-six hours of Marseilles, a town where the Arab civilisation was in his opinion less contaminated by European influences than in Cairo or even in Damascus, took great delight in visiting the native bazaars of Tunis, and conversing and bargaining with the traders there. Various purchases were made, but others were only unsuccessfully attempted. In one case, when a member of the party had expressed a desire to acquire a copy of the Koran as a souvenir, he was met by the conscientious objection of the dealer against selling a copy of the sacred book to one who was an unbeliever, and the difficulty proved insuperable. Plans were soon made for an excursion into the interior, including a visit to Cairwan, second only to Mecca in its sanctity, and until 1881 very jealously guarded against the approach of the infidel. The first step was to get permission from the British

Consul, who shortly before this had found it necessary to request intending travellers to abandon their project, judging the risk too great. Lately, however, matters had greatly improved, and ultimately the party were provided with recommendations to the unfailing courtesy of the French officials at Cairwan, who in turn gave letters to the native Kaid. The proposed route for the most part followed tracks where wheeled traffic was unknown, and where the halting-places offered nothing more than mere shelter, not even the luxury of beds. Saddle and pack horses had therefore to be hired for the occasion with the necessary attendants, and it was understood that except at Cairwan itself the party would have to depend entirely on their own forethought for provisions. Smith entered into the arrangements for this little adventure with characteristic zest, and, scorning all European intermediaries, conducted the negotiations at first hand in Arabic in every case. He was fortunate enough at the outset to be able to engage the services of a very capable and experienced Nubian, Mohammed, of whom the company had frequently occasion to say that he fully deserved his cognomen—"ed-Dhabi" meaning "the Golden one." With his advice and assistance the requisite purchases of *quincaillerie* and *épicerie* were completed, and it was possible to set out on the morning of April 2. For some miles of the way there was reported to be a good road, and beyond that a practicable sandy track as far as Cairwan; it was therefore decided—there were horses enough—that these first stages should be taken by carriage. Lodgings were found on the evening of the first day in the house of a Maltese shoemaker at Enfida. The drive next morning was impeded by bridgeless water-channels, and some of the party had their first experience of the African wilderness with its scanty vegetation, its occasional Bedouin encampment, its camels, and its mirage. Cairwan was reached in seven hours, at 1 P.M., and the party spent the afternoon in visiting the authorities, completing arrange-

ments for the rest of the excursion, visiting the bazaars and surveying the environs, including the great Aghlabite reservoir. The travellers were not allowed to remain altogether unaware of the jealousy with which the European invasion was regarded by many of the orthodox inhabitants of this ancient Mohammedan Zion, and somewhat vividly realised what was intended and accomplished by the presence of a French military force of some two thousand men encamped in the immediate vicinity. The muezzin's clear and fervent call, proclaiming in the stillness of the night the greatness and graciousness of God and the uniqueness of His Prophet, fell with singular impressiveness on unaccustomed ears. The whole of the following day was devoted to visiting the mosques, with careful attention to local etiquette, and under the guidance of a most efficient consular cawass, Hasan by name. Smith found the great Mosque, with its forest of pillars and low over-arching roof, to compare not unfavourably with that of Cordova, which he had visited and admired in the preceding spring, or even with the best that Cairo and Damascus had to show.

The travellers regretfully left Cairwan with its mosques and minarets and muezzins early on the morning of April 5, and the next six laborious but delightful days as far as Tebessa¹ were spent in the saddle. The route was very nearly the same as that now taken by the railway, and recommended to lovers of all that is picturesque and health-giving by the Automobile Touring Club of France. It is now, therefore, but a few hours of easy motoring, but in those days the conditions were much more primitive. True, there were *fonduks*, though at somewhat distant intervals, and it was never necessary to sleep in the open. But the sole accommodation afforded by these wayside inns was the shelter of their single room; the traveller spread his rugs and slept sound on the straw-matted floor. Landlord or hospitable board

¹ Augustine's Theveste.

there was none. Yet, small as the accommodation was, there was no overcrowding. The only occasion when any risk of such a thing seemed imminent, was on the first evening at Al A'la, where, on arriving, the travellers discovered that the quarters they had been looking forward to, had already been taken possession of by a band of chained Arab prisoners under a police guard. Their khalifa, however, was courteous and prompt, and the unfortunate pilgrims under his charge were ordered to sleep in the open. With great good-humour accordingly they betook themselves to the sheltered side of the hovel, and wrapped themselves up in their white burnouses, where it is hoped and believed that they slept soundly and even with easy consciences, although there was no attempt to conceal the fact that the charges against them—rebellion and treasonable practices against the existing government—were likely to involve most direful consequences.

There was a pleasing regularity in the events of these charming days. The *réveille* was before sunrise, and little more than an hour was needed for the morning meal and the operations of striking camp. Towards noon a halt of an hour or two was made, if possible under shade and near some spring or scanty stream, for a simple alfresco lunch of bread with onions or cheese or some such relish. It was always arranged that the party should arrive at the night's resting-place before sundown; the preparations for dinner were not very elaborate, and after dinner there was little to detain the travellers from their well-earned repose.

The stages were: Al A'la, Sbeba,¹ Sbeitla,² Kasrein,³ En el-Hameima, Tebessa. Here and there were a few meagre patches of starved wheat or barley, which showed that the Bedouins had some thoughts of settling to a sedentary life, but on the whole the route lay through thickets of barberry or juniper, varied with occasional groves of wild olive and long flat stretches given up to

¹ Sufes.

² Sufetula.

³ Colonia Scillitana.

esparto grass. All the more impressive were the evidences of a former population, much denser and more highly civilised, furnished by the frequent ruins of sumptuous Roman villas, and by the extensive remains of Sbeba and Sufetula with their deserted streets and colonnades, theatres, triumphal arches and temples. Several of the more interesting inscriptions were diligently deciphered and transcribed, but it was afterwards found that they had not escaped the vigilance of the learned editors of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.

One pleasing incident deserves to be recorded. Although the party had been commended to the protection of the local authorities it had been understood that it was to make its own arrangements as regarded food and fodder. Of the latter an unexpected scarcity was discovered at Sbeitla, and "the Golden one" declared himself at his wits' end. Here Smith's diplomacy proved of the utmost service; a courteous epistle in Arabic, written with a stylograph on a sheet taken from a traveller's notebook, was addressed to the Kaid, whose abode in the wilderness lay a mile or two off. The result was a friendly visit, a sufficient temporary supply of barley, and a commendatory note to the Kaid at Kasrein, whose humane and refined civility, ignoring all barriers of language and creed, still lives in the memory of one of the travellers like a supplementary scene from *Nathan der Weise*.

As the party rode through the smiling gardens that encircle Tebessa, the sound of the railway whistle reminded them that they were no longer in the Africa of the Mohammedan Conquest and the Arabian Nights. After examination of the fine Roman ruins, they took train to Suk Ahras and down the valley of the Majerda¹ to Tunis, which was reached on the 11th. The rest of the itinerary may be briefly given. Steamer on the 14th from Goletta past Bizerta² to Bona;³ thence to Hammam Meskutin on the 15th; next a memorable day at the wonderful rock

¹ The classical Bagradas.

² Utica.

³ Hippo.

fortress of Constantina ;¹ the impressive ruins of Setif² on the 17th ; through the Shabt Pass, famed in modern Algerian warfare, on the 18th, to Bougie ; and to Algiers on the 19th.

Our brief sketch of this strenuous but invigorating Numidian excursion may close with the narrative of an incident which, though in itself trifling, well illustrated the address, energy, and determination of Smith as a practised traveller. At Hammam Meskutin, through some unforeseen accident, the party did not arrive at the railway station until the minute at which, by the rules, baggage could no longer be received so as to proceed by the train supposed to be due in less than a quarter of an hour. The said rules, if insisted on, would have cost the party the loss of a day, and insisted on they were. Smith, however, rose to the occasion, and, having sought out the somewhat inaccessible station-master, addressed him in such a flood of earnest and eloquent argument, remonstrance, and appeal (so it seemed to his companions) to all the principles of international courtesy and comity that the stern official not only relented so far as to allow the baggage to pass, but exchanged the severity of his first and official manner for the language and attitude of smiling and cordial politeness.

On his return to Cambridge it was a great grief to Smith to find that his friend and colleague, Professor Wright, was in a precarious condition, and indeed within a few days of his end. On May 24 he wrote to Dr. Black :

“ Wright’s funeral is this afternoon. After a service in Queen’s Chapel he is to be taken to St. Andrews. He sank very rapidly at the end. I had not given up hope ten days ago. The news from home, too, is not good. My mother is very low, and father weaker. Altogether, this has been a very sad time, and I am very thankful that I have come back from Tunis strong in health to bear the burden.”

¹ Jugurtha’s Cirta.

² Sitifis.

Three days later he writes again :

“Wellhausen’s discussion of the Composition of the Pentateuch, together with his work on the historical books, . . . have been republished, together with *Nachträge* bringing the discussion up to date. I got the volume yesterday on my return from poor Wright’s funeral, and found to my surprise that the book is dedicated to me. It is a very friendly thing, and did me good at that sad moment. . . .”

Wright’s death was mourned with unanimity by the Orientalists of Europe, and with equal unanimity they turned to Smith as his obvious successor in the Sir Thomas Adams Chair. Wright himself, at the very outset of Smith’s Cambridge career, had foreshadowed this, and in Cambridge his election as Professor seems to have been a foregone conclusion. This appears from the following letter written to Dr. Black on June 6, 1889 :

“Your previsions were right. There has been great pressure put on me to go in for the Arabic Chair, and that from all quarters ; and, finally, a letter from Bensly last night, saying he will not stand against me, has settled the business.

“I have sent in my name with an explanation that will give the electors the opportunity of going back on Bensly. I have said that in everything except Arabic he is much before me. But I must candidly say that I don’t expect them to pay any attention to this ; and, indeed, from the representations that have already been made to me, I believe there is very little doubt that I shall be elected on June 24. Of course, this is between ourselves. I am not happy about it, for I think Bensly in many ways the better man—but the people who have to settle the thing don’t seem to think so. If I am elected I shall have a hard autumn’s work.”

He was elected as he expected, and we find among the letters of congratulation, one from his old teacher, Professor A. B. Davidson, who said :

“I cannot help writing a line to congratulate you on your appointment to the Arabic chair. Of course, every-

body would admit that no one was so worthy of it as you, but University appointments do not always go by merit. You will find it, I am sure, a great relief, and the advantage will be that even the necessary work will be, as a rule, in the direction of your studies. We will look for some brilliant contributions to Shemitic learning from you now.

“One cannot help feeling, and I daresay the very fact that you have succeeded him will make you feel it all the more, how lamentable Wright’s too early removal was. . . .”

Wellhausen in a laconic postcard, the latinity of which makes it worth preserving as it stands, sums up the position with his customary terseness and common sense :

“*Exspectavi quod evenit, et consentaneum erat. Maxime et tibi et omnibus gratulandum, quod tandem “otium cum dignitate” nactus es. Dolere potes mortem viri amicissimi, sed dubitare num tu in locum eius succedere dignus sis, non debes.—Tuissimus,*

J. W.”

The following months were very fully occupied. His new duties alone kept his hands full, and in addition to them he had to continue the work of the library for some time until a successor could be appointed. In July he wrote to his sister :

“I think I forgot to mention last week that Lord Lothian had written to ask me to sit on the Universities’ commission. I have declined, for I found that I should certainly have to rush backwards and forwards to Edinburgh in term time, which would be too serious an undertaking at present. I am very well and am getting on with my work nicely, but I don’t think there is anything else to record. I have found it unnecessary to spend more than half an hour daily in the Library, but I shall not be sorry to be free on the first of October.”

His desire to be free to give his whole time to the studies of his choice was now realised. Once more his adopted University had raised him to high honour, and

a new future of successful work seemed to be reserved for him. This was not to be. The period that remained to him was to be one of failing energy and maimed activity, and the history of his short tenure of the Arabic Chair—the subject of the next chapter—is also the history of the last years of his life.

CHAPTER XIII

LAST YEARS (1889-1894)

THE chief event of 1889 was the publication of *The Religion of the Semites*, the most original and important of all Smith's books.

The subject of the Burnett Lectureship, as arranged with the Trustees, had been "the primitive religions of the Semitic peoples viewed in relation to other ancient religions and to the spiritual religion of the Old Testament and of Christianity." Smith's original plan had been to deliver, in the course of the three years of his tenure, three series of lectures, of which the first should cover the whole field of the religious institutions of Semitic antiquity,—its holy places, its holy seasons, its holy persons, its sacrificial system and its ritual generally; while the second should discuss the Semitic conception of the nature, origin, and mutual relations of the gods, and the myths concerning them—in a word, the creed and dogma associated with the practical institutions of religion. The third series was to be devoted to a consideration of the part played by Semitic religion in universal history and its influence on the general progress of humanity, "whether in virtue of early contacts with other systems, or in virtue of the influence, both positive and negative, which the common type of Semitic religion had exercised on the formulas and structure of the great monotheistic faiths."

The first series of eight lectures, the preparation of which had absorbed all his spare time since the date of

his appointment, was delivered in the Hall of Marischal College, Aberdeen, in October 1888 and March 1889; three additional lectures were written in the summer of the latter year, and the volume containing the whole of the eleven lectures, with Additional Notes or Dissertations, was published early in the following November, under the title, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. First Series: the Fundamental Institutions.*

The volume did not, however, cover the whole even of the limited field indicated by the title; the lecturer found it necessary to postpone what he had to say about primitive festivals, primitive priesthoods, and primitive prophecy to a later date. The book as issued was in truth but a fragment, and was published avowedly in a somewhat provisional and tentative way. As might be expected in the work of a pioneer who had by no means completed his explorations in a very new field, and who was giving forth his results piecemeal and working against time, the arrangement is not always so methodical and clear as might be wished; the canvas often seems somewhat overcrowded, the argument embarrassed both by repetitions and by digressions. Doubtless, he looked forward to being able after a still more exhaustive survey to focus the subject with greater clearness, and he expected much help—perhaps more than he ultimately received—from his critics. In some sense it is, as it has been called, a torso; a torso, too, which even as such has not received the last strokes of the master's chisel; but no one will dispute the justice of the claim he makes when he says, "On the whole, I trust that the present volume will be found to justify its title and to contain a fairly adequate analysis of the first principles of Semitic worship." In any case, the lapse of time has shown it to be entitled to the first place in the small category of works treating of its subject, and to the epithet "epoch-making."

Indeed, if exception be made of the learned work of Dr. John Spencer, whom Smith characterises as "one of



PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (MAY 1890).

From a Photograph by C. M. Smith, Esq.

the greatest of English theologians," hardly anything had been done before these lectures were written towards "a systematic comparison of the religion of the Hebrews as a whole, with the beliefs and ritual practices of the other Semitic peoples." For this one very sufficient reason was that the whole of the religion of the Old Testament had been regarded as unique and *eo ipso* incomparable; another has been, that until quite recently the historical order of the documents of the Old Testament, and especially of those composing the Pentateuch, was unascertained or wrongly apprehended. Only as the result of the acumen and research of a series of scholars, among whom it is sufficient to name Kuenen and Wellhausen, had it become possible to trace in a way hardly practicable in the case of any other ancient religion, the evolution of that of the Old Testament.

In following the comparative and historical method which had now for the first time been made possible, Smith from the beginning laid down the principle that it is the ritual, and not the myths or the dogmas, of primitive religions that must, in the first instance, be regarded. He set aside the assumption which had hitherto been invariably made, that what is the most important and prominent side of religion to us was equally important in ancient society. When we approach some strange or antique religion, we naturally assume that our first business is to search for a creed and find in it the key to all else. But the antique religions had for the most part no creed; they consisted entirely of institutions and practices. This must be clearly apprehended and kept constantly in view as fundamental.

In tracing "the life history of religious institutions" the next principle he laid down was that the first steps of social and religious development in every case took place in small communities, and that the religious unit was not the single individual, but the community of which he was a member. Religion was a part of the

social order. It was made up of a series of acts and observances, the correct performance of which was necessary or desirable to secure the favour of the gods or to avert their anger; and in these observances every member of society had a share marked out for him, either in virtue of his being born within a certain family in the community, or in virtue of the station within the family and community that he had come to hold in the course of his life. A man did not choose his religion or frame it for himself; it came to him as part of the general scheme of social obligations and ordinances laid upon him as a matter of course by his position in the family and in the nation. Individual men were more or less religious, as men now are more or less patriotic, but there was no such thing as an absolutely irreligious man. A certain amount of religion was required of everybody. Of intolerance, in the modern sense of the word, ancient society knew nothing; it never persecuted a man into particular beliefs for the good of his own soul. Religion did not exist for the saving of souls, but for the preservation and welfare of society, and in all that was necessary to this end every man had to take his part, or break with the domestic and political community to which he belonged.

The third point the student is invited to carry with him in his comparative historical inquiry is that the primitive religious community was based on the principle of kinship, and mainly held together by the tie of blood. But this kinship was not human merely; within its circle certain gods and animals, or, rather, certain gods, which were originally totems, were included. There is good evidence that the fundamental lines of all Semitic religion were laid down, long before the beginnings of authentic history, in that earliest stage of society when kinship was the only recognised type of permanent friendly relation between man and man, and, therefore, the only type on which it was possible to frame the conception of a permanent friendly relation between a group of men and

a supernatural being. That all human societies have been developed from this stage, Smith took as now generally recognised; and the evidence, in his opinion, showed that amongst the Semites the historical forms of religion could be traced back to such a "stage." Some of the most notable and constant features of all nature religions, from the totemism of savages upwards, find their sufficient explanation in the physical kinship that unites the human and superhuman members of the same religious and social community without reference to the special doctrine of divine fatherhood.

On the foundation thus laid rests the leading idea of the book, and that which gives to it its chief claim to originality. It had already been reached by Smith, while preparing his important article on "Sacrifice" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,¹ where it is quite distinctly formulated; but now it was worked out with much greater elaboration. This new view has been described by an eminent living authority² as "a discovery of capital importance in the history of religion. Smith was the first to perceive the true nature of what he has called mystical or sacramental sacrifices," the peculiarity of these being that in them the victim slain is "an animal or a man whom the worshippers regarded as divine, and of whose flesh and blood they sometimes partook, either actually or symbolically, as a solemn form of communion with the deity." The one point that comes out clear and strong in Smith's new view³ is "that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and that all atoning⁴ rites are ultimately to be regarded as

¹ In vol. xxi. This article was completed in the beginning of 1886. The subject was resumed in the lectures Smith delivered as Lord Almoner's Reader in June 1886, "On the Theory of Sacrifice illustrated by Comparison of Semitic and Greek Ritual," and again in a Paper read before the Cambridge Philosophical Society in 1888.

² Dr. J. G. Frazer, in *Fortnightly Review*, May 1894.

³ As we shall see, Dr. Frazer does not regard Smith's theory as a sufficient explanation of every form of sacrifice.

⁴ The etymology of the word ("at one") is worth remembering here.

owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshippers, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their God."

Sacrifice, however, did not long remain in this its primitive and "mystical" or "sacramental" stage. In fact, when its history is carefully traced, it is found to have undergone development in two quite distinct directions, in both of which its original meaning was soon obscured or almost wholly obliterated. On the one hand, the sacramental meal tended to become simply a banquet of a particular kind of food still, indeed, too sacred to be eaten otherwise than under religious sanction and in the presence of the deity; as the use of animal food became more attainable and frequent, the solemn feast gradually became little more than a good meal of animal food over which an adequate grace had to be said.¹ The other development was that of what he calls "extraordinary" or "piacular" sacrifices,² of which the worshippers did not partake, a stage which was reached through a quite different process. Among the steps in this process were the modification of the conception of "taboo" or holiness, which brought with it a more scrupulous shrinking from contact with the deity, and also the introduction of the idea of property in particular objects, as between the deity and his worshippers. "On the whole, the introduction of the idea of property into the relations between men and their gods seems to have been one of the most fatal aberrations in the development of ancient religion." As the idea of taboo developed, the blood in the first instance became too holy to be eaten, and so had to be poured out. Then the fat, also regarded as a seat of life, came to be similarly viewed, and had to be disposed of by burning, thus leading to

¹ The complete arrival of this stage—that of the "ordinary" or "honorific" sacrifice—was marked for the Israelites by the Deuteronomic prohibition of local altars.

² We have numerous and varied examples of these in the Book of Leviticus as well as in the Sacrificial Tables of the Carthaginians.

the introduction for the first time of a fire altar. Lastly, the flesh also was found too sacrosanct for the ordinary worshipper, and was therefore handed over to specially qualified persons—the priests—for consumption, or else was burned.¹

The reception accorded to the book was extremely favourable. All its critics were unanimous in praise of its minute learning, its largeness of grasp, the ingenuity and attractiveness of most of its arguments; and a desire was on all hands expressed for the speedy appearance of the promised second and third series which were to complete the picture. It was recognised that Smith had broken new ground; his claim "to have put forth a considerable number of new ideas" was frankly admitted, and in many points of detail, at least, great readiness was shown on almost all hands to accept his conclusions forthwith. Yet, as regarded his central theory of sacrifice, doubts were more or less firmly expressed, and it was felt that probably he had not yet said all that he had to say, still more, that he had not as yet said enough. To mention in any detail the various criticisms that were made would here be out of place; but at this distance of time it will not be without interest to record the private opinions of the learned author of *The Golden Bough*, who on November 27, 1889, wrote of *The Religion of the Semites* to Dr. Black as follows:

". . . It is beyond doubt a striking and powerful book, full of original thought and abounding in fruitful views. Still, I am inclined to doubt whether simplification has not been carried too far, whether the elements out of which the history of the religion is reconstructed are not too few in number, and too simple and obvious. The latter objection you may think a strange one. What I mean is that primitive man looks at the world from such a totally different point of view from us, that what seems

¹ This burning took place, when originally introduced, "without the camp," but, after the gift theory had established itself, the offering was conveyed to the deity in fragrant smoke by means of the altar hearth within the sanctuary—a comparatively late introduction.

simple and obvious to us almost certainly did not appear so to him ; and, *vice versa*, what seems simple and obvious to him is almost always so entirely remote from our ways of thought that we should never have dreamed of it. Accordingly, any explanations of the origin of religion or society which commend themselves at once to us as entirely agreeable to reason and probability ought always, in my opinion, to be regarded with the greatest distrust. Their inherent probability (from our point of view) is a strong presumption against them. Rousseau's views (to take an extreme example) on the origin of society commended themselves to the most reasonable people last century, just because, if *they* had to reconstruct society from the foundations, they would have proceeded much as Rousseau supposes that primitive man did. But from primitive man to a French Encyclopædist is a very long interval. I do not say that Smith has fallen into the mistake of making the early Semites reason like nineteenth-century people ; all I would say is that the very simplicity and obviousness of the deductions inspire me with a somewhat vague and perhaps unjustifiable distrust. Certainly, on one subject—the original sanctity of domestic cattle—the conclusion which Smith reached, I believe, by examination of the Semitic evidence alone, is brilliantly borne out by the actual facts of pastoral life among primitive peoples elsewhere. This is a very striking proof of the truth of Smith's intuitions, and is enough to make one distrust one's distrust. He certainly may be right throughout ; his insight is very great. . . .”

The same correspondent writes on July 15, 1911 :

“. . . I had quite forgotten the letter I wrote to you about *The Religion of the Semites*. But with the extracts which you give from it I still quite agree, and have nothing to modify or withdraw in them. I may add that it had long seemed to me that Smith, influenced probably by his deeply religious nature, under-estimated the influence of fear, and over-estimated the influence of the benevolent emotions (love, confidence, and gratitude), in moulding early religion. Hence his view of sacrifice as mainly a form of communion with the deity instead of a mode of propitiating him and averting his anger. The latter is the ordinary view of sacrifice, and I believe it on the whole to be substantially correct. Not, of course, that I would

deny sacrifice sometimes to involve a form of communion with the deity, but I believe it to be far oftener purely propitiatory, that is, intended to soothe and please a dreaded being by giving him something that he likes. In short, I believe the old gift theory of sacrifice to hold good in the majority of cases. . . . I incline to agree with you in thinking that, with all its great qualities, Robertson Smith's most mature and important work was probably to some extent provisional and written against time. Had life and strength been prolonged to him, he would probably have modified a good deal in the volume. For example, I hardly think that the hypothesis of a totem sacrament would have occupied the important place it does in his theory, if he had been aware of the extremely scanty evidence for the actual practice of a totem sacrament, at least in a religious, as distinguished from a magical, sense, among totemic peoples."

Generalising, after the lapse of so many years, the criticisms that were passed upon *The Religion of the Semites* at the time of its publication, we may perhaps say that even now Smith's leading propositions—(1) that *all* Semitic (and, indeed, all primitive) religions have actually passed through a totemistic stage, and (2) that all later stages of the ritual of Semitic sacrifice admit of being explained as developments, largely by misunderstanding and misinterpretation from this, are far from commanding universal assent. On the other hand, thanks to Smith's own labours and those of his younger contemporary and friend, Dr. Frazer, the wide diffusion of totemism and its profound influence as a factor in the production of later religious and social institutions are now accepted as proved facts by almost all schools with any claim to rank as in any sense scientific. This is a fact of incalculable importance for all future research. Moreover, that sacrifice was, even from the earliest period, at least sometimes of the mystical or sacramental character attributed to it for the first time by Smith, is nowhere now denied, though in many quarters it is doubted whether he has not applied his theory more extensively than the evidence

even now warrants. In a word, Smith's title to be regarded as a founder of the new science of comparative religion which is based on the study of social anthropology, is everywhere recognised. Of the exponents of this science, there are more schools than one which disagree among themselves as to the prominence to be given to Smith's postulates (1) that ritual is everywhere to be taken as the ultimate fact, and that the explanations or myths attached to ritual are at the best only secondary, and (2) that it is the community and not the individual man that in all cases has to be regarded as the religious unit. On these points the discussion is not yet closed; but the event has shown that those friendly and enthusiastic critics who in 1889 spoke of the work as "brilliant" and "epoch-making" did not exaggerate its value and importance.

The pleasure which Smith derived from the friendly reception of his book was overclouded by news from Aberdeen, which showed only too clearly that the final stage of his father's long illness had begun. It was impossible for him to leave immediately, and grave developments in his own history were destined to take place before circumstances permitted him to rejoin his family. The year ended sadly with the death, at the age of sixty-nine, of his old friend, Sir Henry Yule, whose health had been failing for some time past. Sir Henry had always been much attached to Smith, and a few days earlier than the celebrated message which he sent from his death-bed to the Institute of France, he wrote him a letter which must not be omitted here :

"MY DEAR ROBERTSON SMITH, I think you should know that in my own view, and I think in that of those who are most nearly cognisant, I have been slipping down into the Valley very fast. I have been obliged to move my bed downstairs, and I am threatened with a professional nurse to-morrow. I think you have always had a real friendship for me, and I ought to tell you how things are. I have been an unfaithful servant—but

I throw myself on God's mercy in Christ, and trust that I shall not be without His Light and Staff in the Valley.

"It has always been a comfort to me to believe that, in spite of your deviations from ordinary views of the Old Testament, you have never given up your hold on Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.—I am, affectionately yours,
H. YULE."

The business of the Arabic chair, and the manifold occupations of his Cambridge life, kept Smith very busy in the last months of 1889, and he was also, as one of the syndics of the University Press, much engaged with the new venture, a "Shorter Bible for Schools," which was then being planned, and in regard to which he was acting as "chief counsellor." There are a good many letters among the papers surviving from this time which relate to arrangements regarding this undertaking. Dr. Black had undertaken the books of Joshua and Judges in the series, and Smith was anxious if possible to have the Shorter Bible for Schools adopted by the Free Church in connection with Dr. Whyte's well-known "Welfare of Youth Scheme," then comparatively recently established, which, by a widespread and uniform system of examinations throughout the country, sought to promote the study of scriptural and ecclesiastical history among the younger members of the Free Church.

Other events at this time recalled his attention to Scotland. The embers of ecclesiastical strife had again been stirred. Overtures from Presbyteries, pamphlets, and memorials were being bandied about once again as in the old days. The College Committee was in solemn session, and the statesmanship of Dr. Rainy and Dr. Adam was once more to be put to the proof. The Dods case, which for a moment threatened to distract the Free Church as the Robertson Smith case had done, proved, fortunately, to be a much less serious visitation of Providence. Dr. Dods in his Commentary¹ on First Corinthians, and still more in his sermon entitled, "What is a Christian?"

¹ Published 1889.

preached in the pulpit of St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh before a rival church, had awakened the apprehensions of the orthodox as to his attitude on the grave questions of the bodily Resurrection of Christ, and the finality of the received view of the Atonement. Furthermore, in an article in *The Expositor*, Dr. Dods had referred to the "mistakes" and "immoralities" which he found in the Old Testament, and had not scrupled to denounce the theory of verbal Inspiration in an inaugural lecture to his students at the New College in Edinburgh as "a theory . . . which is dishonouring to God, . . . which should be branded as heretical in every Christian Church." There was also the case of Dr. Bruce, whose name has already been repeatedly mentioned in this book as one of those who ably pleaded for toleration of the exponents of the higher criticism. We have seen in a former chapter how ardent, yet how generous and wise, a defender of the liberal cause he had been in the Assembly which decreed Smith's extrusion from the Aberdeen chair. Early in 1890 he had become obnoxious to the party of reaction by his unsoundness on the Doctrine of Election, for in a work¹ on Christ's teaching published in the previous year he had combated the idea that Jesus regarded "men, all or any of them, as predestined to damnation." He had attributed a literary and selective treatment to the Evangelists in their narratives of the life of the Saviour, and, worse than all, he had recognised with respect "the moral worth of society which in a great and steadily increasing measure lies outside of the Churches."

The new crisis contained elements of the greatest seriousness. The forebodings of those who had said that, if Smith's views on the Old Testament were tolerated, his successors would apply an equally revolutionary method to the New Testament, seemed about to be justified. On the other hand, Dr. Dods and Dr. Bruce were eminent

¹ *The Kingdom of God : or Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels*, 1889.

and respected leaders of Free Church opinion, whose popular gifts as preachers made them much more dangerous than Smith, with his pure scholarship and intensely intellectual attitude, could ever be; and, further, the Church had learned in the years between 1875 and 1881 how exhausting and—all things considered—how unremunerative the sport of hunting a heretic could be. Wise counsels prevailed. Dr. Adam in the Assembly made a dexterously offensive speech minimising, while he condemned, the "indiscretions" of Dr. Dods. Dr. Rainy appeared on the side of the angels, and spoke on behalf of Dr. Bruce. Dr. Bruce himself—more successful on his own defence than when he had spoken for Smith—made a personal appeal to the House of such eloquence and dignity that it practically silenced his accusers.

Dr. Bruce's acquittal was a personal triumph: Dr. Dods's escape had been too highly flavoured with the sarcasms of Dr. Adam to be altogether gratifying to himself or to his friends. It had indeed been qualified by a declaration repudiating on behalf of the Church the views which they hesitated to stigmatise as heretical. Smith, who watched the struggle with the keenest interest from Cambridge, wrote to Dr. Dods urging him "to accept his acquittal and tacitly ignore the impertinent rider." Dr. Dods replied in terms of heartfelt gratitude, thanking Smith for the letter, which had been "a great strength" to him. He went on to express the hope that Smith was sufficiently well to continue his work in some comfort. This somewhat grave phrase is the first indication that the outer circle of Smith's friends had become aware that he was seriously ill.

Those who knew him most intimately had for some time found reason for anxiety in certain symptoms which the event proved to be even more grave than was then realised. Before he left the Library he had been tormented with eczema, and his appearance suggested that the strain of his multifarious labours was at last

proving too much for him. For some time his constitution, though he habitually overtaxed it, still appeared to stand the strain ; but it was not long before more deeply seated mischief appeared, and the breakdown came in January 1890 in a form that could not be ignored. Surgical intervention had become necessary, and on January 15 he wrote to Dr. Black from bed that, though the case " is probably not serious, it is sure to be tedious," and he begins to doubt whether he will do his term's work. His letter is very cheerful ; he describes himself as lounging about his rooms reading the first sheets of *The Golden Bough*, then fresh from the press, but he is unable to work, and even the exertion of writing a letter fatigues him. Further consultation made it decidedly clear that he must for the time give up all thought of lecturing, whether in Cambridge or Aberdeen, and he found himself in a somewhat serious dilemma. A college is never a place in which it is convenient or pleasant to be ill, and his father's serious condition made it impossible for him to go to his family. In the circumstances he determined to go to Edinburgh, and put himself under the care of Professor Chiene. To Edinburgh, accordingly, Smith went on January 18, 1890, in the company of Mr. Frazer, and with all the precautions which his invalid state required. Pending definite arrangements for his reception into a nursing home or private hospital, in case an operation should prove needful, he took up his abode with Dr. Black. Mr. Chiene did not in the event think it desirable to operate, and contented himself with systematic treatment which had to be prolonged through the month of February. During this time Smith remained quietly with his friends ; he was obliged to remain indoors, but was not wholly confined to bed, and he took part in the life of the family with his usual buoyancy and cheerfulness of spirits, in spite not only of his own condition, but of the increasingly melancholy character of the news from Aberdeen, and the depressing consciousness of accumulating arrears of work.

The treatment prescribed by Mr. Chiene was not finished when he was summoned to his father's death-bed. Smith arrived to find the end very near, and on February 24 wrote to Dr. Black, "*Hora decima vespertina pater dilectissimus in requiem aeternam migravit.*" The numerous duties which fall on the survivors in such a case pressed particularly heavily on one in Smith's weak state of health; but his remarkable reserves of nervous energy sustained him, and he wrote to his sister, "I am wonderful for a man who has been in the doctor's hands for a month, and am able to do everything that does not involve exposure to cold." He was of course prevented from accompanying his father's funeral to Keig, but apart from this he appears to have done all that a man in perfect health could have done to make necessary arrangements, and to support and comfort his family in their affliction.

An even heavier task for an invalid remained. The second series of the Burnett Lectures was due, and his preparation for them had of course been sadly interrupted. The Trustees were, as was to be expected, prepared to be helpful. In a letter dated February 25, Smith wrote:

"The arrangements about my lectures have been left in my own hands—either to give them a little later, or to put the whole thing off till next winter. I should prefer the former course, but am not quite sure whether I should try to give them on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, or come south for a fortnight and return to Aberdeen to lecture, and bring mother south for a fortnight's change. Both courses have their advantages and disadvantages."

On consideration, he decided to give the lectures at once, and they were accordingly delivered on March 1, 3, and 4. As will be readily understood, it had not been possible for the lecturer to write out fully what he had to say, and he had to face his audience equipped only with somewhat fragmentary notes. The first lecture was devoted to the subject of "Feasts" in continuation of what had already been said in the first course, and embodied in

an expanded form in *The Religion of the Semites*. It had there been shown that all sacrifice was originally communal; it was now shown that these communal sacrifices began from an early date to be celebrated periodically, as well as on special occasions such as the outbreak of a war. This first appeared at the nomadic stage, and traces of the sanctity of the month of Nisan were shown to exist over a wide area, not only among the Arabs, but also among the northern Semites. The Hebrew Passover was older than the settlement in Canaan, and presented antique features similar to those of the most primitive Arabian sacrifices. In the later forms of Semitic religions, as elsewhere among the civilised peoples of antiquity, there gradually arose an elaborate cycle of annual feasts—a sacred calendar which ultimately was fixed astronomically. The first of these was of course the Passover, which had already existed as a pre-agricultural Feast. The next to come into prominence was the Feast of Tabernacles, essentially agricultural in its character; last to emerge was the Feast of the Ingathering, at the outgoing of the year, essentially a vintage or autumn festival. Considerable space was given to a comparison of the various calendars within the Semitic field. The remainder of the lecture was devoted to a consideration of the different holy days—new moons and Sabbaths—and it was shown that the Sabbath was originally connected with the month.

The subject of the second lecture was "Priests and the Priestly Oracle." The material was largely drawn from the lecturer's elaborate article "Priest" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and his articles on various forms of divination, published in the *Journal of Philology* in 1886.

The third and last of the lectures was on "Prophecy and Divination." Here again Smith was on familiar ground. His early lectures,¹ tracing the development of spiritual prophecy in Israel, delivered to his classes in Aberdeen

¹ Portions of these are given in *Lectures and Essays*.

in the first year of his professoriate, have already been noticed in an earlier chapter. His popular public lectures, published in 1882 as *The Prophets of Israel*, are widely known, and his maturer views are stated in his *Encyclopædia* article "Prophet." His conclusion as expounded to the hearers of the Burnett Lectures was, as it had always been, that all purely "naturalistic" explanations of the development of Hebrew prophecy were doomed to failure, and that the uniqueness of the revelation recorded in the canonical scriptures must be recognised.

The lectures were followed with appreciative interest by large audiences, and in spite of the distressing circumstances in which they were delivered, Smith does not seem to have suffered any harm as the result of the painful effort he had made. On the contrary, the relief he experienced on completing the task he had undertaken to perform seems to have done him good, and he returned to Edinburgh to resume his interrupted treatment, at least not worse in health than when he had left for Aberdeen. It was not considered necessary to keep him long in Edinburgh, and towards the end of March he established himself at Bridge of Allan with his mother in a house which was lent to him by his friend, Principal Miller of Madras. Here he was surprised and gratified to receive the diploma of Doctor of Theology from the University of Strassburg, in a stately document, signed by the orthodox Zoepffel, in which Smith was described not only as "historicæ veritatis indagator indefessus, candidus, felicissimus, . . . in scrutandis hebraicæ antiquitatis documentis exterorum inter suos splendide aemulus," but also as "doctrinæ soliditate nulli secundus." He was naturally much gratified by a compliment which is so rarely conferred by German universities on a foreign scholar, and which came to him at a moment when he was peculiarly in need of consolation and support. His pleasure was increased when he learned that the degree had been conferred at the instance of the veteran

Reuss, and promoted by such other eminent scholars as Nöldeke, Spitta, and Budde.¹

In the comparatively genial climate of Bridge of Allan, his energies distinctly revived, and he was soon able at least to plan new activities.

“It is probable,” he wrote during this period, “that Mackay and I will take a short trip together in the first half of April. We thought of joining Neil in Brittany, but, on the whole, we may think it safer (unless the weather is very tempting) to go to Devonshire. I am still sensitive to chills, and got thrown back by a chill in the end of last week, so that France is a rather doubtful move.

“This is a stupid letter, from which you may infer that my mind is very vacuous. I hope to keep it so for two or three weeks, attending only to my body if the weather will only permit me to become a mere convalescent animal, eating, sleeping, and walking or sunning myself—for there is sun at Bridge of Allan.”

No record survives to show whether in fact Smith proved able to undertake the projected expedition to Devonshire. Those who remember his condition at this time think it unlikely that his strength was then equal to anything in the nature of a tour. But there is no doubt that there was a considerable improvement in his health, for at the beginning of May he wrote once more from Cambridge in high spirits to Dr. Black, who had been travelling in Greece, that he was “keeping wonderfully well and able for his work.” He appears to have passed the summer term in fair comfort, cheered by the continuing success of *The Religion of the Semites*, which sold well, and stimulated the sale of his other books. But there are frequent hints of invalidism and of extreme sensitiveness to changes in the weather. At the beginning of June, indeed, he wrote of a “throw-back, if not some

¹ The second edition of the *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1892) has the following dedication: “Amplissimo Theologorum Argentinensium ordini, quorum munere ad gradum Doctoris Theologiae proventus est, hunc librum sacrum esse voluit auctor.”

new complication," probably the result of some over-exertion, though his doctors assured him that rest and care were all that were needful. He added pathetically, "An occasional letter is a real kindness to me at present. I am sometimes a little low about myself and my work."

He spent the late summer and early autumn in Scotland, where he again saw Mr. Chiene. The rest and the sunshine of a fine summer greatly revived him, and he was able to do a good deal of walking and driving in Inverness-shire in August, from which he derived great benefit. By the beginning of September he was so much stronger that he was able to undertake a short tour in Italy, and several letters to his mother and his friends survive which show all the old vivacity and interest in impressions of travel. He had a pleasant week at Venice with Mr. Shipley, and thereafter a short stay at Florence with Mr. Adami,¹ another member of Christ's. He returned by way of Schaffhausen to Strassburg, where he visited Professor Nöldeke, and to Marburg, where he saw Professor Wellhausen. He describes himself as "quite set up for the winter's work," and repudiates any "invalid feelings."

In this spirit he returned to Cambridge in the early days of October, and plunged into all his old activities again. He wrote a cheerful post card on October 8, in the midst of "pulling things into shape for beginning lectures next week," in which he said, "This climate does not suit me so well as Italy, but I think I shall get through the term comfortably."

This expectation was on the whole realised in spite of "one baddish turn," which passed off after causing him a day or two's renewed alarm, and he seems to have got through a great deal of teaching and an appreciable amount of the learned literary composition with which he was constantly occupied, and of which as complete an account as possible is given in the Bibliography

¹ Afterwards Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and now Professor of Pathology in the McGill University, Montreal.

attached to this volume. At the end of the term he paid a flying visit to Scotland which, as he said in a letter written at this time, "always did for him what the earth did for Antaeus"; and, following the often repeated advice of his doctors, he decided to favour his chances of convalescence by spending the remainder of the winter out of England. It was not difficult to arrange for an extended period of leave of absence, and the choice of his destination was simple. His tastes, his profession, and his previous experiences alike drew him to the East, and by Christmas he was in the Mediterranean on board the *Oroya* journeying by long sea to Ismailia.

He seems to have enjoyed almost every hour of his absence from England, which lasted four months. The voyage out was extremely pleasant, and he wrote in the highest spirits of the contrast between the snow in London and the bright calm weather of the Peninsula, and the perfect stillness of the Bay. His fellow-travellers, who were numerous, amused him as much as ever: he knew none of them, but as usual found "points of contact" with many, and he felt so well and vigorous that he was almost "ashamed of having gone away."

A few damp days in Cairo dispelled the illusion of perfect health, and he was obliged to migrate to the Mena Hotel at the Pyramids, where the climate was more suitable. Here he improved, and soon found energy for many interesting pursuits, though of necessity the chronicle of his third visit to Egypt is much less full and varied than that of his earlier travels. At first he was not fit for sight-seeing, as he found riding trying and had to be careful not to walk too much. But he soon became friendly with Dr. Vollers, the successor of his old friend Spitta at the Khedival Library, and with him he had a certain amount of learned conversation. Apart from this, he read Arabic poetry and busied himself with curio-hunting, and with additions to his collection of coins, which made considerable progress before he returned to Cambridge. All through

the preceding year he had kept in view the third and concluding series of the Burnett Lectures, and much of his daily reading and study had been devoted to special preparation for this work. He carried on this reading in Egypt, and there is reason to think that had his life been prolonged, the period of rest and quiet which he enjoyed during this winter would have been fruitful in developments as important as those which grew out of his journeys in 1879 and 1880. In a letter to Dr. Black he wrote :

“ I have made a good many useful notes for lectures on the Mo'allacat¹ here, and I begin to see that in a couple of years or so I may hope to have all the material for my daily teaching in very good shape. Then I shall be able to direct my work wholly to larger aspects of Arabian history, etc. etc., and do a good deal that may take book shape in the course of time, if I have health and strength.”

As the effect of the benign Egyptian sun began to make itself felt, the circle of his activities widened, and we hear a good deal of social gatherings and of the people he met at the Pyramids. Smith had intended to join Mr. J. G. Frazer and Dr. Black at Athens for the last weeks of his holiday, but owing to circumstances it was impossible to carry out this arrangement, and to his great benefit he decided to spend all his time in Egypt. During the last weeks of his stay he made great progress, and felt that “ a little steady work and a tolerable summer were all that was necessary to set him entirely up.” A letter to his mother on March 21 reads almost like an account of one of his old expeditions.

“ The weather is now quite delightful. It is too hot for much walking in the middle of the day, but the mornings and evenings are cool, and the air always invigorating. On Wednesday I made quite a great excursion. Leaving at eight to catch a train to Wasta, we then rode five or six miles on donkeys to Mēdūm to visit Petrie and see his

¹ A collection of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, on which the reader may consult Nöldeke's interesting article in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

excavations. He has uncovered the oldest temple in the world, quite small and plain, but most solidly built and as perfect as the day it was erected by Seneferu, father of the builder of the Great Pyramid. It has been covered up with chips, the débris of the pyramid tomb to which it was attached since the time of the Hebrew judges, and there are old wasps' nests which must have been built about the time of David at the latest. Besides this temple we saw some very good tombs and other interesting things that I won't describe now. Then we rode on to Riqqa, about three miles or four, and got back by train. I was rather tired next day, but am none the worse of this long excursion, from which you may gather how much I have gained in strength."

Unfortunately, Smith's leave of absence was running out; he was due at Cambridge about the middle of April, and he accordingly returned through Italy by easy stages, reaching Christ's on April 17. On that date he wrote:

"I got to Cambridge this morning very well and fit. I am not satisfied as yet that the local trouble is all over, but my general health is greatly—I am disposed to say completely—re-established, and with some care I hope to do a good stroke of work this summer."

This optimistic view was shared by his colleagues, who all found him looking very well; and, indeed, for a few months Smith enjoyed an approximation to normal health in spite of east winds and a mass of teaching, literary and other activities, greater perhaps than was prudent in the circumstances. In the course of July he gave a good account of his health to Dr. Black in a letter in which he speaks of his work as follows:

"I have settled down to work pretty fairly, but a great deal of my time has been taken up with unprofitable odds and ends—*inter alia*, a review for *Nature*,¹ looking at people's MSS. and proof sheets, and some elementary teaching. I have, however, got the notes for one of my courses of lectures next term in order as far as seems

¹ Of Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*; see *Nature*, July 23, 1891.

necessary for the present, and now I am buckling to the third course of Burnett Lectures. The difficulty there is one of choice."

In the same letter, as in many others of this year, there is an allusion to a larger project—nothing less than the composition of a Dictionary of the Bible which should embody what he deemed to be the secure results of the labours of the Higher Critics. In the Preface to *The Religion of the Semites* he names Kuenen and Wellhausen in particular as "the men whose acumen and research had thrown so much light on the historical order of the Old Testament documents, and especially of the documents of which the Pentateuch is made up, that nothing of vital importance for the study of the Old Testament religion still remains uncertain." The older Dictionaries of the Bible were therefore so far superseded, and it was now "not only possible, but most necessary for further progress," that the subjects of which they treated should be systematically rehandled with the recent discoveries in view. He himself had already made important contributions to this work in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. He hoped in the new dictionary to be able greatly to add to the number of these contributions, and he felt that he could rely on the co-operation not only of those scholars who had already collaborated with him in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, but also of many others as occasion should arise. The scheme was kept steadily in mind down to the end of his life, but its execution had to be deferred for many reasons, and it was ultimately carried out by other hands.

Unauthorised rumours of his intention had been circulated early in the year in the press, and even before he left Egypt he had been overwhelmed by "a flood of letters soliciting work, etc. etc." These applications had been parried, and the work, which of course had not got beyond the merest beginnings, was kept strictly in the hands of himself and Dr. Black. Now and then, as occa-

sion offered, notes were made, but no outside assistance was invoked. Smith, however, had already taken his publishers into his confidence, and had promised that definite proposals would be made at no distant date.

Meanwhile, more immediate duties demanded his attention. He spent an uneventful and fairly prosperous autumn in Scotland, and returned to Cambridge to find a spell of damp weather which did not suit him, and to which he attributed the lumbago or sciatica which about this time became an obstinate and almost permanent symptom. Apart from the necessary preparation for the Burnett Lectures and his ordinary Cambridge work, he had now entered upon a revision of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. The first edition of this book had now been in the market for about ten years, and six thousand copies had been disposed of. The demand continued, and Smith was anxious to improve the book, not only by careful revision, but by incorporating the advances made in Old Testament criticism since the days of the Robertson Smith case. This work he steadily carried on in the intervals of other occupations, and his friends remember that, in spite of the labour it involved, he regarded it as a resource in times when he felt himself unable for more original intellectual efforts.

It was about this time that, in response to a catechism which was much in vogue in the early nineties, he made a rather interesting record of "books which had influenced him."

"Your request about theologians," he wrote to his correspondent, "is rather puzzling. A. B. Davidson, Rothe (*Zur Dogmatik*), Ewald, Ritschl come into my mind at once as leading influences, and I think I should add Dr. John Bruce. Then, of men of past ages, Luther certainly; Calvin, I suppose, had an influence, but I can't *place* it very well in my present resulting state of thought. I don't think any of the Fathers ever did much for me; the influence of Augustine was chiefly negative. I don't think I can count any of the Systematic Theologians—

not even Ames, though I admired his clear dialectic. No Anglican writer comes into my list. I begin to think I never can have been a theologian. *Ecce Homo* impressed me at the time; I don't know that it left any permanent result,—not so much as *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day*. For the Middle Ages, Dante.”

His reflection on the absence of the theological instinct from his intellectual composition comes with a curious appropriateness on the eve of the delivery of the third and last course of the Burnett Lectures, which, as we have seen, had been the subject of much special preparation. These lectures contained the final instalment which he was destined to give to the world of the eminently untheological erudition amassed by him since the days in which he studied the authors mentioned above. They were delivered in Marischal College, Aberdeen, on December 10, 12, and 14, 1891. The general subject was, “The nature and origin of the gods of Semitic Heathenism, their relations to one another, the myths that surround them, and the whole subject of religious belief, so far as is not directly involved in the observances of daily religious life.” It will be remembered that in his original plan Smith had proposed to devote the closing series to “an examination of the part which Semitic religion has played in universal history, and its influence on the general progress of humanity.” As the event proved, he was unable to overtake this large and important part of the task which he had proposed to himself. Of the three lectures now delivered the two first were devoted to mythological matters and the main features of Semitic polytheism, and the third to Semitic views of the creation and government of the world.

As in the case of the second series, nothing of these now survives but the meagre press reports and the somewhat fragmentary notes from which he spoke. Here, therefore, it must suffice to note one or two of the salient points. Comparing the Chaldean cosmogony with

that of the first chapter of Genesis, the lecturer held that the alleged parallel had been much exaggerated. The main point of agreement was that both accounts began with a dark chaos ; but in the Babylonian theory the chaos was "productive," while in the Bible story it was only the raw material of creation, from which the ordered elements of the cosmos were separated by the creative Word of God. The Babylonian theory was not very like that of the Bible, but, on the other hand, was closely akin to the myths of savage nations. In the discussion of the Phoenician cosmogony it was conceded that "the scenery of the Garden of Eden and all its details—which have to be treated allegorically if any spiritual meaning is to be attached to them—is in great part the scenery of a Phoenician sanctuary." Further parallels to Phoenician legend in the Book of Genesis showed that Phoenician and Hebrew legend covered much the same general ground. But similarity in material details only brought out more clearly the entire difference of spirit and meaning. Phoenician legends were bound up with a thoroughly heathen view of God, man, and the world. Destitute as these legends were of ethical motive, no believer in them could rise to any spiritual conception of Deity or any lofty conception of man's chief end. Hebrew stories contained much that was not directly edifying, but they never made religion involve the approbation of a lower morality or a low view of the Deity ; for their God communed with men without ever lowering Himself to their level. He had no human passions or affections, for His love to His chosen people was raised far above the weaknesses of human preference. He was the God of the World before He was Israel's God, while in all the Semitic legends the Demiurge was always and above all the local King. The lecturer concluded with these words :

"The burden of explaining this contrast does not lie with me. It falls on those who are compelled by a false Philosophy of Revelation to see in the Old Testament

nothing more than the highest point of the general tendencies of Semitic religion. This is not the view which that study commends to me. It is a view that is not commended, but condemned by the many parallelisms in detail between Hebrew and heathen story and ritual ; for all these material points of resemblance only make the contrast in spirit the more remarkable."

To the reader who remembers rather the general drift of the arguments contained in *The Religion of the Semites* than the qualifying sentences which the author inserts from time to time, this concluding passage will perhaps appear somewhat surprising. If, however, the authors of this book have had any success in conveying what they believe to have been the leading characteristic of Smith's intellectual constitution, the apparent inconsistency will be readily understood. Smith, as the result of years of patient study and investigation, had built up a monumental contribution to the literature of comparative religion. As we follow his laborious chapters we are rewarded by almost startling intuitions of the origins of Christian ritual and doctrine ; if the book means anything, it means that the process of religious evolution has been continuous. And yet, when the final stage is reached, the author invites us to believe that there is a great gulf fixed ; that the religion of the chosen people differed not only in degree, but in kind from that of their near kindred, and that, quite apart from the miraculous and divine elements of the faith which is founded on the New Testament, the Old Testament Scriptures present a religious system in itself transcendently differentiated from its forerunners.

It is enough here to emphasise the consistency of Smith's last public utterance on this subject with all that he had previously published and contended. He had always been convinced that the religion of the Old Testament possessed this mystic differentia. It was to him a fact so obvious that it hardly seemed to require to be stated,

although many of his readers, still less his opponents, had never been able to reconcile it with his critical positions. We have seen that the exordium of the article "Bible" as originally drafted contained an expression of this belief: it is known how impatient he was even of the praise of persons who did not hold it; and it may be said that his extrusion from the Aberdeen chair was due to his failure to prove to the less intelligent of his ecclesiastical brethren that he himself could consistently and logically profess it. It behoves us to note that the progress of his learning was not accompanied by any change or development in his views on this point; and in a very real sense the strange paradox may be maintained, that he who "destroyed" the Mosaic authenticity of the Pentateuch and "sawed Isaiah asunder," died, as he had lived, a convinced believer in the divine inspiration of the Old Testament.

Professor Bain, who was present at the closing lecture as one of the Burnett Trustees, and who addressed the meeting, may perhaps have been tempted to enlarge on this theme. But either it did not occur to him to trespass so far on a department of knowledge to which he had never given much attention, or he forbore from higher motives to seize an opportunity which might have appealed to a lesser man. At any rate neither he nor Professor Kennedy, who had the special duty of moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, thought it necessary to travel beyond the language of compliment and commendation, and Smith's last theological utterance was received with universal approval.

Immediately after this he left for the Riviera, in the company of his old friend Mr. Archibald M'Donald. He spent some interesting days among the old Provençal towns, and completed a pleasant holiday of about a month by a stay at Cannes and at Valescure, near St. Raphael, where he joined Mr. Bryce. The chief work of the ensuing term was the completion of the revised edition of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, which

had now been in hand for several months. In addition to a thorough textual revision, he had greatly amplified the part of Lecture V. which treats of the Historical Books, and had rewritten the greater part of the lecture on the Psalter, incorporating the main conclusions of his *Encyclopædia* article on this subject, and he had added an entirely new Chapter (Lecture XIII.) on the narrative of the Hexateuch. Originally, the book had concluded with the proof that the three great strata of laws embodied in the so-called Books of Moses are not all of one age. The new lecture was designed to show that the three Pentateuchal codes correspond to three stages in the development of the institutions of Israel, which can still be clearly recognised in the narrative of the Pentateuch. The proof of this he justly characterises as "the most important achievement of Old Testament criticism." The lecture skilfully maintains the tone of popular exposition in which the rest of the book is written, and, while strictly scientific in character, is always appropriate to the audience he had been accustomed to address in his Answers to the various libels, and in his Presbytery and Assembly speeches in former times.

The second edition of the book contains about one-third more matter than the first. It was published in April 1892, and in its enlarged form certainly announced no decline of intellectual power. Grave complications in his physical condition had, however, by this time arisen. Ever since his return from the south of France, he had been suffering from aggravated attacks of the sciatic pain which had troubled him for the first time in the previous October. This made the final stages of the work on *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* very painful, and several disconsolate letters show how much he was suffering about this time. In spite of this, he never seems to have relaxed any of his activities, and, towards the end of February, he speaks of being much the better of a visit to London, where he stayed with his publisher, Mr. A. W.

Black, and went to see Irving in *Henry the Eighth*; but the pain returned again and again with such violence that his friends were sometimes seriously alarmed. About the middle of March it appears that it was already suspected that these distressing symptoms were due to some deep-seated cause, which might call for surgical interference. Professor Chiene was kept fully informed, but it seems to have been decided that nothing could be done until the mischief declared itself more clearly.

There is nothing to show whether the patient himself was informed of these apprehensions; in any case he continued his usual avocations, finishing up the work in connection with the new edition of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, examining in Arabic for the Indian Civil Service, and planning a second volume of *The Religion of the Semites*. The sciatica, however, still proved intractable, and on two vacation visits to Scotland, in April and June, he found himself unable to take any but the gentlest exercise in the open air. But the doctors still advised movement, and towards the end of June he wrote that, in spite of east winds, he is gaining in strength at North Berwick, and that he has been able to play three holes of the golf course, a treatment he describes as even more heroic than the massage he was at this time systematically, and as the event proved superfluously, undergoing.

After his customary visit to his mother in Aberdeen he went to Dublin in order to receive the degree of Doctor of Letters, which had been conferred upon him by Trinity College. There he was the guest of the then Senior Fellow, the late J. K. Ingram, who was one of his admirers, and in spite of the physical discomfort which he continued to suffer, he seems to have enjoyed his visit, and to have been none the worse for it.

On the other hand, there was certainly no improvement in his condition, and as the Long Vacation advanced it became clear that his activities would have to be restricted, for a time at any rate. Very early in August he speaks

of a week-end at Terling with Lord Rayleigh, and of meeting Helmholtz, Professor Henry Sidgwick, and Professor Glazebrook, Mr. A. J. Balfour and Mr. George Wyndham, as well as Miss Margaret Tennant (now Mrs. Asquith), who "was the only Gladstonian of the party, but quite able to hold her own against any odds." "It was very pleasant," he writes, "but I was not very well, and I have had to make up my mind that I must not overdo things. . . ." He accordingly abandoned a projected expedition to Bavaria, where he had planned an inspection of Oriental manuscripts, and made up his mind to take a prolonged holiday in Egypt during the coming winter. Meanwhile, he husbanded his energies for the discharge of an important engagement in the autumn. He had been made President of the Semitic¹ Section of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, which was to hold its quinquennial meeting in London in September. The duties of this position, which usually include the delivery of a presidential address, were likely to make considerable demands on his impaired strength, and, with a view to preparing himself as far as possible for the anticipated exertion, he left Cambridge about the middle of August and went to Lowestoft for a fortnight with Mr. Shipley and Dr. Black. Professor Cowell, another old friend, was then also at Lowestoft, and several other Cambridge colleagues visited him from time to time.

His condition was not reassuring; he was not able to take part in the recreations of the place as much as had been expected, and his chief distraction was conversation with Professor Cowell, with whom he had many long and learned talks on subjects of common interest. Smith himself had by this time been informed by his Cambridge doctor of the possibility of "a small abscess." We have seen that this possibility had been in the minds of his

¹ More strictly of Division A (general). Professor Sayce presided over Division B (Babylonian and Assyrian). The Vice-Presidents of Division A were Professors Karabağek and Kautzsch, and the Secretaries Professor Prym and Mr. (now Professor) Bevan.

advisers as early as March, but it was only during the Lowestoft visit that the signs of this disorder became so marked as to awaken anxiety. The seat of the mischief was in the small of the back, slightly to the right of the spine, and at this time the outward swelling first began to be well marked. Mr. Adami, whose name has already been mentioned in this narrative, joined the Lowestoft party, and as a medical man he agreed that this grave development required consultation and probably surgical intervention. Smith kept his engagement with the Orientalists in London, but was not equal to the task of delivering a formal opening address. He, however, took part in the meetings of the Congress, and took a very active share in the hospitalities usual on such occasions, and in promoting the comfort especially of the foreign guests. A dinner given by him at the Savile Club to twenty or more of his foreign colleagues is still remembered by some who were present as one of the most successful of his many successful parties.

Special interest attaches to a modest communication to the Congress by Mrs. Lewis on "Some ancient manuscripts of the Arabic New Testament," the result of a visit paid by that lady and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, to St. Catherine's Convent, Mount Sinai, in the preceding February. Some photographs were exhibited of such interest as to lead to the return of the two ladies in the following winter, accompanied by Professor and Mrs. Bensly, Mr. Rendel Harris, and Mr. (now Professor) Burkitt. The result of this second expedition was the almost complete restoration of the Palimpsest of the Four Gospels in Syriac, edited and published in 1894 with an introduction by Mrs. Lewis, besides further discoveries of Arabic manuscripts, which were ultimately published under the auspices of Mrs. Gibson. As was natural, Smith took a keen interest from the first in these researches, and the assistance he gave to both these ladies in their labours provided him with much interesting and at times arduous work.

Perhaps the most permanent result of the Congress was the inception at Smith's suggestion of a scheme for an international Encyclopædia of Islam,¹ of which it was hoped that he, in virtue of his unique experience, would be the editor. Of this project Professor De Goeje afterwards wrote, "Of all the world you are the man to do it, and all the collaborators will feel safe under your guidance."

He returned to Cambridge for the decisive consultation of his doctors about September 12, and the story of what passed has been told at least once² in print. It may be given here in the words of the Master of Christ's.

"Half the members of the Conference had been invited to spend the Saturday and Sunday at Cambridge, and as usual Smith was the centre around which they all moved. From the bustle and confusion of tongues he withdrew to meet the doctors, and as usual he insisted on knowing the whole truth. When they left the room he turned to me and said, I know what that means. My brother died of it.' He then returned to his guests, and that evening presided at a banquet given in their honour in the Hall of Christ's, but never by a word or a sign did he let any one suspect what he had learned but an hour or two before from the doctors, and it was with the same magnificent courage that he bore the ceaseless suffering and gradually increasing weakness of the next eighteen months."

What Smith had learned from the doctors was indeed sufficient to try his heroism. It was now ascertained with as much clearness as is possible in such matters that the real cause of the discomfort and illness which had crippled him for so long was deep-seated tuberculosis. The symptoms of this dreaded disease are various, and in Smith's case they had taken more than one form. In September 1892 the mischief was not only diagnosed, but

¹ Hitherto five parts have appeared, in English, French, and German, and the work is in progress. Smith himself was not destined to take any part in it.

² J. Bryce, *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, p. 325.

located, and Mr. Shipley and one or two other friends were dismayed to learn with exactness that tubercular trouble was active in the lower portion of the vertebral column. There was still a doubt whether it was the column itself or only one of the vertebral processes that was affected.

The nature of the evil being now known; it remained to consider what was the best way of dealing with it. This raised many difficult questions, and about a fortnight elapsed before it was decided to attempt an operation. Several letters and post cards written by Smith during this period of painful suspense have been preserved; and, apart from the reassuring allusions to his trouble with which he sought to cheer his friends, there is nothing in them to suggest any slackening of energy or activity. He discusses, points of Arabic grammar and Hebrew topography as usual; and there are several references in his sharpest controversial manner to disputes on points of scholarship in which he was then engaged.

On October 1, in the course of a long letter to Dr. Black, mostly on the subject of the identification of the Meūnīm of the Old Testament with the Minaei of Greek and Latin authors, Smith records the decision arrived at by his doctors.

(October 1.) "Chiene examined me this morning. He recommends free incision and clearing away, but thinks I had better have this done here by Griffiths, as after three weeks I ought to be able, though tied to my couch, to go on with my usual work. As regards the place, etc., of the mischief, he takes a favourable view, and has good hopes of complete cure. The operation cannot take place for three or four days."

The operation was performed accordingly, and it was not long before he rallied. On October 14 he was again writing to Dr. Black about questions of Old Testament scholarship on which several important books had recently appeared. As to his condition he says:



PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (ABOUT 1891).

From a Photograph by the late A. Dew Smith, Esq.

“ I have gained so much strength in the last few days that I must try to resume a regular correspondence,—partly from duty and partly from interest,—as I look to my friends’ letters as one main recreation on which I shall have to depend in the next months. I am still flat on my back, but the doctor promises that in a few days I may be propped up with my back supported. Then I shall have more freedom to read and write.”

The very next day he writes gaily to his sister that he has been promoted to a mutton chop, and by the end of the month there was further progress to record. He seems to have continued his studies to some extent even during the period of total disablement; and he was constantly writing notes for the guidance of other scholars from his bed. The persistent optimism of his temper, which had sustained him in his theological struggles, is even more remarkably displayed in the letters written at this time.

(October 24.) “ There is not much to say except that I am getting on steadily, and am now daily wheeled through to my study. I have also had my feet on the ground, though I have not yet been allowed to try to walk. I fear that as I get stronger I become more restless, while at the same time I am not yet able to face any serious or sustained study to keep me quiet. So I have begun to read St. Simon’s *Mémoires* as a good solid piece of literature—light in the sense that I need not remember more of it than I like.”

(November 11.) “ To-day I have received permission to sit up in an easy-chair or the like, which will make an agreeable variety on my mode of life for the last few weeks. The pains in my legs, especially the right leg, don’t show much sign of disappearing yet; but as the nerve-sheath was involved (lumbar-sacral plexus), I suppose I must expect improvement in this direction to be slow. I am able to walk about a little in my room and find a book for myself, which is a great comfort. I have been amusing myself very well with attempts to emend the text of Kay’s *Omāra*. Some of the results are amusing, *e.g.* Kay writes, ‘ resting his fears upon the praise he rendered unto God,

he departed.' The true reading and rendering is, 'laying his food-sack on a jackass he had, he departed.'"¹

About this time he was able, as Professor Chiene had predicted, to begin receiving his pupils in his room, and to lecture to them from his sofa. This he continued to do until very nearly the end, and he succeeded to a remarkable extent, not only in performing most of his academic duties, but in keeping up many of his other occupations.

He was able to spend part of the Christmas vacation at Torquay with Mr. and Mrs. Bryce and Mr. Shipley; but the weather was unfavourable, and, in spite of the devoted kindness of his friends, he seems to have been less cheerful at this period than at any time since the beginning of his illness. Writing to Dr. Black on January 7, 1893, he says :

"This is a very dull letter and, to tell the truth, I am rather dull. There does not seem to be much good in staying here; but Cambridge will probably be still more trying, and I am a little afraid of the term and its duties. It is obvious that my convalescence is going to be very slow, and still quite uncertain whether I shall ever get beyond the state of semi-invalidism."

His spirits improved, however, when he got back to Cambridge, and the ensuing term passed off on the whole successfully. He was able to give four lectures a week without much difficulty, though the wound in his back caused by the operation still remained open, and he was troubled with a minor manifestation in the shape of a swelling in the wrist which, though not in itself serious, required treatment, and was an additional embarrassment to him in his crippled condition.

His strength was so well maintained, and on previous occasions he had responded so satisfactorily to the in-

¹ See *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, April 1893. It ought to be mentioned that Mr. Kay made a rejoinder, though not on the whole very effectively, in the same number.

fluence of the southern sun, that it was decided to try once more, and as it proved for the last time, the experiment of sending him to a warmer climate. Sicily and Naples were at first considered, but ultimately Madeira was fixed upon as being most suitable. It was hoped that the sea voyage might prove advantageous, and the means of locomotion used by tourists in the island, by ox sledges and by hammock litters, would, it was thought, enable the patient to make extended excursions in the open air in new scenery under favourable conditions. He set out, accordingly, in the *Drummond Castle* with Dr. Black on March 11, 1893, and remained at the Carmo Hotel in Funchal for fully a month. The result of the expedition was on the whole disappointing. He wrote bravely to his family that "he seemed to gain strength," but the local means of transport did not prove so suitable as had been expected, and their use had to be discontinued. For the first time in his history he seemed to lose the power of interesting himself in chance acquaintances, and he was not well enough to find amusement in the society offered by the island. He was, in fact, practically confined to the precincts of the hotel, which had a good garden, and he found himself only just able to walk as far as the English Rooms, where the papers and books provided were a great resource. His main distraction was supplied by the recently discovered and published inscriptions from Zenjirli in North Syria, on the deciphering of which he expended much ingenuity. This led to correspondence with Wellhausen, Nöldeke, and other scholars. Even this, however, could not altogether keep off the occasional depression which was only too natural in the circumstances, and Professor Wellhausen was startled by a hint of growing weakness which Smith seems to have given in one of these letters. The fact was that, in spite of the climate, he was happiest at Cambridge among his books and his ceaseless occupations, and it was not until after his return that he acknowledged any benefit from his absence.

At Cambridge he got on "pretty well," though he writes rather wistfully of an invitation to lecture in America, which his condition compelled him to decline. This invitation came from the American Committee for lectures in the history and comparative study of religions, and was transmitted by its secretary, Mr. Morris Jastrow, now so well known as the author of *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*. The choice of subject was to be left to the lecturer, as also the number and dates of the lectures; the honorarium was to be handsome, and he was assured that he would find in America "hundreds of friends and admirers who would esteem it a privilege to have him in their midst and to listen to his words."

In spite of the limitations which his compulsory refusal of this invitation so painfully emphasised, Smith continued to do a very considerable amount of writing. In addition to the labours connected with the issue of the Sinai manuscripts, on which he described himself in his letters as working for hours at a stretch, he had begun and partly carried out a revision of *The Religion of the Semites*, a second edition of which was now called for; he was deep in the correction of the second edition of Wright's Arabic Grammar—a task which ultimately fell from his hands into those of Professor De Goeje—and he was also occupied with the proofs of General Tweedie's work on the Arab horse. In spite of these exertions, he was able to report to Dr. Black, on the eve of his usual visit to Scotland in May, that he had lost no ground; and he wrote with a quaint dissatisfaction at the meagreness of his industry. "I think I shall be able to spend a good part of the Long in Cambridge and get on with some work. But work goes very slowly."

The summer term passed off much in the same way. He describes himself as having "ups and downs," and speaks as usual of a good deal of pain. The doctors, however, were on the whole optimistic, though "a nasty feverish attack which persisted for some days and left him low with a disordered mucous-membrane" came

on early in August, and put an end to his studious plans for the Long Vacation. He was hurried off to Largs in Ayrshire, where he stayed with his old friends, and frequent hosts in the days of the heresy, Mr. and Mrs. John Stevenson, and hoped to enjoy a great deal of cruising in Mr. James Stevenson's steam yacht, the *Fire Fay*. It was on this occasion, and on board this vessel, that Dr. Carnegie Simpson met Smith, and had with him much interesting conversation of which one note is preserved in *The Life of Principal Rainy*. Smith's parting advice to the student then at the outset of his theological career was, it would appear, that he should "beware of Rainy. He is a Jesuit!"

For a week of his stay at Largs, Smith progressed very favourably, but on August 24 he suffered a serious relapse. The fever returned, and for some days his condition caused much alarm. The attack subsided, however, and he was able, after about a week in bed, to go on to Tulliechewan, where he spent some pleasant days, although the change in him was painfully apparent to those who had not seen him for some time. Principal Lindsay, who had succeeded Dr. Black as a visitor at Tulliechewan to help in cheering the invalid, records his impressions as follows :

"I was in his company almost all his waking hours. He did not care to be alone. I dressed his back for him ; as he did not think it necessary to have the Campbell's doctor for the purpose. He was very weak. He told us that he was ordered to lie in the sun, in the open air, as much as possible. The sunniest spot was the lawn-tennis ground ; but although it was not a hundred yards from the door he was not able to walk so far.

"Mrs. Campbell had a light cane couch provided with plenty of soft cushions, and it was placed near the front door. I had to move it from time to time as the shadow of the house came to cut off the sunlight. He used to revive after dinner, and sometimes conversed with his old vivacity ; but he was too weak for anything like lively conversation during the day. Not that he was quite

silent. He talked to me slowly and in a low voice in quite the old confidential manner. He had no doubt, so far as those talks went, that he had not very long to live. Twice he told me that he wished that he had a few years more to live for two reasons: he desired to outlive his mother, whose grief at his death would be overwhelming, and he longed to spare her that sorrow; and he was very anxious to finish his Burnett Lectures. He recurred to those unfinished Lectures several times, and always with one dominant idea . . . he longed to be able 'to complete his argument.' "

Towards the end of September he returned to Cambridge in good heart about himself, "lying down the whole way," and reading Stevenson's *Catriona*, then a new book, with critical enjoyment.

He was delighted, as always, to find himself in Cambridge, and he speaks with all his old cheerful kindness of the reassembling of his friends and colleagues. The feverish attacks from which he had suffered seemed for the time to have drawn off the violence of his malady, and his Cambridge advisers confirmed a favourable opinion which had been expressed earlier in the year by Professor Chiene.

"I have been improving slowly but steadily since I got back," he wrote on October 8, "especially since L. Humphry has made me take to port! Griffiths wants to slit up my wrist and make a complete cure of it, but Humphry wants that deferred till my digestion and general health are improved a bit. With my back Griffiths is very much pleased. He says that the pains in it are mainly due to atrophy of the right erector of the spine, which can be dealt with by and by, and he thinks the mischief in the back is now absolutely quiescent and not likely to recur."

All went well for some time: the wrist trouble abated so satisfactorily that the proposed operation was deferred *sine die*; his appetite and general condition continued to be "most satisfactory," and he was "again able to enjoy smoking." A few days later (November 3) he writes to

congratulate his brother on his definitive appointment as Government Astronomer for the Presidency of Madras, and "speculates on the possibility that he may be well enough to go with him next summer to some of the Continental observatories." At that moment this possibility did not apparently seem to Smith to be very remote; for he writes in high spirits about his three lectures a week to "five pupils, all fellows of Colleges," and alludes with some glee to the opening of what was to prove the last of the many controversies in which he took an active share:

"There has been some sharp sparring between Sayce and Driver about an antique from Samaria; and I shall have to come into it as I have been able to examine the original very carefully. I am also thinking of having a go for Sayce when his promised book against the critics comes out. A little controversy does one good."

The reference to Professor Sayce will remind the reader of the days of the Revision Committee described in an earlier chapter when, as the reader will remember, Smith, Professor Sayce, and Professor Driver, almost contemporaries in age, were held to represent the most recent developments of progressive Biblical criticism. Both of his allies had expressed sympathy with Smith in his ecclesiastical troubles, rather because to them he represented the principle of independent research than because they were convinced of the soundness of the particular conclusions at which offence had been taken. It is of interest to note that it was not until 1882 that Professor Driver became convinced of the truth of the Graf-Wellhausen view of the dates of the documents of the Pentateuch, while Professor Sayce, as is well known, has consistently rejected that theory. The growing divergence of view between Smith and the latter scholar seems, unfortunately, and surely very unnecessarily, to have resulted in a marked personal estrangement. There had already been various passages of arms, particularly

in connection with Professor Sayce's criticism of *The Religion of the Semites* in the *Academy*, which elicited from Smith a somewhat tart rejoinder. The matter now in dispute was the interpretation of a Semitic inscription on a small hematite weight which had recently been discovered on the site of the ancient city of Samaria, and was believed to date from the eighth century B.C. One of the four words in this inscription reads לֶשׁ. This was taken by Professor Sayce and others to represent the sign of the genitive case usually held by grammarians to belong only to late Hebrew, and, inasmuch as it occurs in the Book of Canticles, considered by the "Higher Critics" to be one of the marks of the late date of that composition. Professor Sayce, in a letter to the *Academy* "on the methods of the Higher Criticism," basing his argument on the appearance of this word in the inscription above referred to, brought charges of prejudice and obstinate disregard of facts against the critics. Professor Driver replied in the following week, and, on November 6, appeared in the same journal Smith's account of the weight in question which had been sent to him by its owner for examination and report.¹

This was Smith's last article. There survives a pathetic fragment, in pencil, of an exordium to a general attack on the position which Professor Sayce had taken up in his book, published in the end of 1893, and entitled *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*. But long before provisional certainty had been reached, even on the more restricted question of the hematite

¹ The essential point in Smith's interpretation was that the letters on which so much was founded were merely an abbreviation of the word לֶשׁ (shekel), the intermediate letter having been omitted by the engraver from considerations of space. The controversy outlived Smith, but in the event even so cautious a critic as Colonel Conder wrote in 1895 that "the weight is of great archæological interest, but seems to me to have no bearing at all on the critical question which has been involved in the controversy." Later, in 1899, M. Clermont-Ganneau indicated his acceptance of the view that the disputed word stood for *she:el*.

weight, Smith had suffered another relapse, and grave anxiety about his condition had again arisen. In a letter to Dr. Black dated December 3, he says that it had been found necessary to reopen the wound in his back, and the surmise that the spine itself was attacked was thereby confirmed. Apart from the gloomy apprehensions which this suggested, it was a keen disappointment to be again compelled to undergo several dressings a week. Moreover, the pain and stiffness caused by the incision were considerable, and Smith found himself quite unequal to making a journey to Scotland in the Christmas vacation. In the same letter he announces the approaching completion of the new edition of *The Religion of the Semites*; and expresses a desire, never to be realised, to move off into the sun by and by. Meanwhile, as he was not able to undertake a longer journey, he went to London for some days to seek distraction, and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Bryce, and with his old Cambridge friends, the Middletons. The weather in London was ungenial, and he was even less fit than he knew for the exertion of seeing company, so that his expedition was not on the whole very successful. He returned to Christ's, where he was almost alone in College, "all pains and aches," and it was not long before his doctors and his friends were compelled to realise that his illness was now entering its final phase.

Whether he realised this himself is doubtful, and can never now be known. We have seen that in the course of his long illness, in spite of the courage with which he fought the depression which was the natural consequence of weakness and pain, there were times when he found it difficult to keep up his heart. During the autumn of 1893 he had confided to Dr. Black, Professor Lindsay, and perhaps to a few others of his most intimate friends, a foreboding that the struggle was nearly over, but in the very last weeks of his life his courage and cheerfulness seemed to rise higher as his case became more clearly desperate. He was still occasionally able to be present in the Com-

bination Room, where Mr. Shipley records that his nervous energy and liveliness were as wonderful as ever. He was still engaged in adding the final touches to the second edition of *The Religion of the Semites*, and, as far as was at all possible, he continued to live his ordinary life. The onset of the final attack was gradual, and at first was not in itself particularly alarming. It began on the last day of January, and he announced it to his sister in the following sentences :

“ In the afternoon I had a threatening of a feverish attack, and was sent to bed by Griffiths, who fortunately happened to come in just half an hour or so after I began to feel queer. This promptness was effective, and to-day my temperature is normal, but I am still kept on slops, chicken tea, and the like. I have been a good deal troubled lately with sciatic pains at night disturbing my sleep but last night I slept well, and on the whole I am no doubt making progress, though with many little ups and downs.”

The fever returned, and it became clear that once more there had arisen some septic complication in the wound in his back. There was no alternative but to make a third incision, and on this occasion it was found impossible to give an anaesthetic. He suffered a good deal of pain, but experienced some temporary relief followed by a series of painful fluctuations. While he was in this condition, there arrived a letter from Professor Cheyne propounding a scheme for a Bible dictionary, which was to be “ not so much for educational purposes and especially not so much for clergymen, as for critical purposes and for the best lay as well as clerical readers.” It was to contain “ none but good articles,” and was to be written by an international company of scholars “ who were able to work without regard to church or theology (at any rate English Church and English theology).”

“ I am very anxious about this,” continued Professor Cheyne ; “ we have to think of the future, and good as the so-called ‘ moderate ’ scholars are, or promise to be,

yet could 'moderate' scholarship exist without a more courageous style of work? And can all students be expected to acquiesce in what must be, more or less, Church criticism? I am even more anxious about the fate of the N.T. than about that of the O.T. . . ."

Dr. Cheyne had received suggestions from another quarter that he should participate in another Bible Dictionary; he was of course only vaguely cognisant of Smith's own project, which we have already mentioned, and which had for many reasons fallen into abeyance; and he was quite unaware that his friend had now passed the stage of planning great undertakings. All that Smith could do was to send his letter to Dr. Black with the following note: "I have written a line to C. to say that you and I had the same scheme with variations I was too ill to describe. If you think you could work with him I should be quite glad. At least you may correspond with him. I am a little *stronger*, but life is very low and painful still." The next day he was able to write at greater length; his letter was the last of any importance that he ever wrote, and was as follows:

COLL. CHRIST., CANT.
February 15, 1894. *Wednesday.*

DEAR B.—Strike the iron while it is hot. If you think you can work with Cheyne instead of me, go right ahead. . . . If I get stronger I will help as I can. I have a letter from C. very friendly to you. Come south, but don't expect me to talk business while this low fever lasts, *i.e.* while this enormous starfish-shaped hole is open and active. When a man has to take food or stimulant every two or three hours even a letter like this is a great indiscretion. I enclose a letter.

I seem to gain strength very gradually, but anything upsets me, *e.g.* a letter to ——— yesterday about publishing his lectures cost me a bad night.

I am kept up mainly by the best wine I have in my cellars or extort from friends like Dew Smith.

Do call on G. Reid and give him my news. He likes you to *call*.

W. R. S.

The suggestion was acted upon, and the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, under the joint direction of Professor Cheyne and Dr. Black, was almost at once begun. With this, however, Smith had no concern. His letter shows that he had no real hope of being able to set his hand to any new work, and, though his spirit was not broken and his mental energy was not abated, the shadows were gathering rapidly. Some weeks later, on March 17, he handed over to Dr. Black the annotated print and a manuscript volume of new material for the second edition of *The Religion of the Semites*, which he had hoped up to the last to be able to finish himself, and with this ended his participation in all human enterprises.

The record of the last days of all begins at this point, and is contained in the letters and telegrams of those of his friends who were able to be near him till the end. Professor Chiene, who saw him at this time, was able to report that there was no evidence of a new abscess, which had apparently been feared; but the ever-increasing weakness of the patient was now accompanied intermittently by delirium, and it was clear that he could not live more than a few weeks. "From what you say," Mr. Bryce wrote to Mr. Shipley on March 24, "I fear the best that can now be wished for is a swift, painless close: but I can hardly bear to think of it, and of what we all lose." The next day Mr. Shipley wrote, "He was weaker this morning, and Griffiths thought he could not last twenty-four hours; however, he has revived a bit and recognises his sister, Black, and myself. He talks all the time, sometimes coherently and brilliantly, but always in an 'external' way. He has no idea of his own condition." He had apparently ceased to suffer any pain, or even, so far as could be judged, any discomfort; but the symptoms were of the gravest. On Friday, March 30, the delirium was succeeded by coma; there was no return of consciousness, and at sunrise on the following morning the end came.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

SMITH was buried in the Keig Churchyard in the family grave, where his father, his two brothers, and his sister were already laid, and where his mother now lies. After a short service at Christ's College in the early morning of April 3, the coffin was conveyed to Aberdeen, accompanied by one or two of his closest friends. It was deposited for that night in the Queen's Cross Church, and there on the following morning Professor James Candlish and Dr. George Adam Smith, now Principal of the University of Aberdeen, conducted an impressive memorial service which was attended by a large company of friends and admirers, not only from Aberdeen itself, but from Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Cambridge. Many members of his old Presbytery were there, and the Senate of his first University was represented by the Principal (then his old teacher, Sir William Geddes) and a deputation of professors. The congregation accompanied the coffin on foot to the station, and a large number there joined the special funeral train to Whitehouse, the station for Keig. One who took part in this journey writes as follows : ¹

“ The railway passes out of Aberdeen in sight of the crown of King's College, where he was an undergraduate, leaves the twin towers of St. Machar's Cathedral to the right, and then strikes inland up the Don Valley. . . .

¹ *British Weekly*, April 12, 1894.

We left the sea-mist behind us, and in the sunshine the whole mass of Bennachie stood out against the north. . . . At every station we picked up friends—old fellow-students, old pupils, old comrades, in the great fight of '76-81. . . . The sunshine grew stronger, and when we came to the Vale of Alford it was a warm summer morning, and the blackbirds were singing."

From Whitehouse the procession, in carriages and on foot, proceeded to the Free Church of Keig, some two miles distant, within which the people of his father's congregation and parish were gathered. The narrative continues :

"The coffin was drawn from the hearse and six of the young men carried it in, with us walking slowly behind, and hearing inside the hymn, 'When our heads are bowed with woe.' It is a bare, oblong kirk, standing north and south, entered by both ends, with the pulpit in the middle of the western wall between the two great windows, and the pews ranged lengthwise and ascending gradually to the back. The coffin was placed just a few feet from where he had been baptized—he was the first child baptized in that church—and we all bowed our heads, while Mr. Currie, his father's colleague and successor, led us in prayer. Then we sang the hymn, 'Peace, perfect peace,' and after the benediction the coffin was again lifted, while the Dead March was played. . . ."¹

The grave is in the parish churchyard, which is two miles from the Free Church. The road runs through the fir-woods past the Manse and the New Farm where Smith was born, with Bennachie and Castle Forbes in sight, and all the Vale of Alford on the left.

". . . This brought us to the Don and the high bridge which crosses it. Immediately beyond are the slopes of the hill which runs west from Bennachie. High up this we had seen, lying in the bright sunshine, the Parish Kirk and the graveyard with the trees. As we climbed the hill the bell began to toll. . . . It was a wonderful company that from its rear one saw straggling up the steep road.

¹ *British Weekly*, April 12, 1894.

. . . Some of the foremost scholars of the time mixed with the farmers and crofters of this rural parish ; ministers of all the Churches, the professors and ministers of the Church that had cast him out, and to which, none the less, he had always been so loyal, and on which he has so indelibly stamped his genius. In such a company, drawn from so many classes and interests in life, we laid this greatest scholar of our generation to sleep, without word spoken, as the Scottish custom is, on the hillside above his birthplace, and the little cottage-manse, where he received from his own father and mother all his schooling."

To these due manifestations of respect for Smith's memory were added many resolutions of public bodies in Scotland with which his ecclesiastical career had been associated. The Free Presbytery of Alford, of which his father had been so long a respected member, placed on record their sense of the greatness of his attainments, " the gentleness and Christian humility of his character," and the tragedy of his untimely death. In terms very similar the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which had helped him so efficiently in the many battles of the case, deplored, " not only the removal of one of the foremost scholars of his generation, but the loss of a Christian brother who for years occupied a distinguished position among them as a professor in the local College, and discharged with faithfulness the duties of an elder in a congregation within their bounds. With deep thankfulness to God they recognise the rare gifts of their departed friend, the eminent services which he rendered to Christian learning, the help that he brought to many earnest and inquiring minds, the strength of his Christian character, the simplicity and constancy of his faith, his profound appreciation of evangelical truth, and the devoted loyalty which he exhibited to the Church of his choice and love through times of controversy and trial and pain."

Similar expressions of regret and appreciation were placed on record by other Presbyteries, and were transmitted to his relatives. The Kirk-Session of the Free High Church of Edinburgh, of which Smith had for some time

been a member after his dismissal from the Hebrew Chair, joined cordially in the chorus of praise of his learning and piety, and some months later the General Assembly discharged with some success the rather difficult duty of framing a suitable resolution. The obituary notice adopted by the Assembly made generous acknowledgment of Smith's intellectual distinction:

“ His brilliant career as a student, distinguished alike in classics, in science, and in philosophy, and the rapid steps by which he advanced to a foremost place among the Biblical scholars of Europe, are still fresh in the memory of the Church and of the community. His intellectual energy and industry, his quick apprehension, his singular command of his varied knowledge, along with a rare power of clear and felicitous expression, combined to rank him among the most remarkable men of his time.

“ The Free Church might well be proud of her gifted son—born and educated in one of her manses, trained in her halls, enrolled in the ranks of her ministry, and holding a distinguished place among her professors.

“ Of the events which led to his removal from the active service of the Church, of which he never ceased to be a minister, nothing more need here be said than that they were accompanied with great regret and sorrow on all sides, and that all alike join in mourning the early death of one with gifts so high, of performance so brilliant, and from whom so much was looked for had his life been prolonged.”

These words of recognition must have been greatly appreciated by many for whom the bitterness of the struggle which ended in 1881 had not entirely passed away; but it was naturally reserved for others who had loved and understood Smith better while he lived to speak the most affectionate praises of his memory.

These tributes were neither few in number nor lacking in intensity. Smith was above all things a man of many friends, and in the many notices which were written of his life and work the sense of personal bereavement is



PROFESSOR WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH (1893).

From a Photograph by the late A. Dew Smith, Esq.

unusually predominant. The attention of the press both in England and America was much occupied with the earlier and more controversial phases of his career, and the historical position which had been thrust upon him secured that his death should receive a much larger share of journalistic notice than is usual in the case of even the most eminent scholars. It may be well, with the aid of a few of those who wrote at the time with the fullest comprehension of his character as a whole, to focus a final impression of Smith as he was.

Smith's personal appearance has often been described. He was short and slight of build, a somewhat undersized, round-shouldered man under five feet four. In early middle life his physical constitution, which had been severely tried by the many illnesses of his youth, seemed to acquire strength and stability, though he never presented the appearance of robust health, and the tremendous fund of nervous energy which he possessed was often unsuspected by those who did not know him well. His complexion was swarthy, though always pallid, and in later life marred by ill-health. His face as a whole had, curiously enough, a certain suggestion of the East in it—a characteristic which Smith himself energetically repudiated, though it incontrovertably suited the character of Abdullah Effendi. His mouth, if not delicately modelled, was expressive, but Smith's finest feature was undoubtedly his eyes, which were of unusual brightness, and shaded by long lashes. It was probably his eyes which lent the singular radiance to a characteristic smile which used to greet the entrance of a friend or the suggestion of a new idea.

What will chiefly be remembered by his intimates as a personal characteristic is the restless activity of mind and body which he displayed when in congenial surroundings. Even in small things he was impetuous, and he was apt to be impatient of the minor ceremonies of life. When he paid a visit he often arrived unexpectedly and in a

hurry ; there were " lights in the court and steps on the stair," and before his host quite realised what had happened, Smith was there, unannounced, but highly welcome. His voice, which a not unfriendly writer described as naturally irreverent,¹ was, in fact, somewhat shrill and strident ; he spoke with a strong Scottish accent which years of residence in England modified but little. His talk had all the characteristics of his mind, for, as all good talk should be, it was the frank, almost irresponsible expression of his train of thought at the moment ; consequently it was many-coloured, wide-ranging, well-nourished with facts, unexpectedly illuminated with striking touches of erudition. The number of subjects which he could handle with real mastery and knowledge has become almost legendary ; it is said that on one occasion, after some conversation, a jute merchant of Dundee accepted him as a follower of his own trade, and that on another, a feminine acquaintance was surprised to find that he possessed an exact knowledge of the amount of material necessary to make a skirt in the fashion of the day. The intense interest he took in everything, however trivial, on which he bent his mind expressed itself in a somewhat masterful conversational manner, but he never spoke with ostentation of learning, and in his most sustained flights he was never dogmatic or overbearing.

The unanimous testimony of those who have recorded their impressions of him is, that as soon as his worldly circumstances permitted he became a social centre from which radiated kindness and hospitality.

" How one remembers," writes Principal Lindsay of very early days, " the large, long room in his house in Crown Street, with its bachelor's order in confusion. Books everywhere—old, rare, and modern—ranged in shelves, in piles in corners, covering the tables, littering the floor. Beautiful etchings on the walls, many of

¹ See above, p. 125.

them gifts from artist friends. Over the fireplace, like a presiding genius, the portrait of his father—three views in one frame of the old man's head with velvet skull-cap, long white hair, and keen, Erasmus-like face, the work of his friend Sir George Reid.¹ How one can recall the friends that met there—literary, theological, scientific, artistic—and the talks as they smoked, sometimes capping each other's stories, every one more humorous than the other, sometimes discussing deep questions in theology or philosophy, or theories of art and art criticism, with recollections of famous pictures, and stories of Israels and the modern Dutch artists; sometimes hearing about the latest discoveries in science and the chances of their application in everyday work; sometimes recollections of the German student-life that the friends had shared together. And through the mist of years I can still see the slight, eager figure, with flashing eyes, restless motions, rapid utterance, the most intense convictions, and the unfailing flow of information on everything under the sun and above it, with glimpses through it all of the heart of a little child."

His surroundings altered and the number of his friends continually increased, but with little variation the passage just quoted might have been written of any period in his literary and academic life. It has already been mentioned in this book how early and how rapidly his taste for beautiful things developed. He was not a professed collector, and even his library, extensive as it was, had been gathered on a strictly utilitarian principle. But by the time he went to Cambridge he had made notable additions to his possessions, and lived surrounded by splendid Eastern rugs and other spoil of his travels. He possessed several good pictures, and prided himself on his engravings; and he was recognised as having excellent taste in most kinds of art. Nor did he neglect the more material elegances; he had overcome an early and purely theoretical disapproval of tobacco, and became an inveterate and fastidious smoker. He had learned the Spanish trick of incessantly and

¹ Reproduced at p. 16.

almost automatically rolling cigarettes, which he made from a selected tobacco specially imported from Constantinople ; and this habit in the later years of his life was a highly characteristic accompaniment of his conversation. The practice did not impair his taste in wine, of which he was esteemed a sure judge ; and he even acquired a special reputation as a connoisseur of claret.

By common consent Smith's intellect was one of unusual power and distinction. It had certain characteristics which are easily defined. His great powers of acquisition have been often referred to in the preceding chapters, and they were sometimes made a reproach to him by ill-informed and unsympathetic critics who received his work with the suspicion which falls on a pretender to universal knowledge. The severest judges could not, however, ignore the astonishing versatility and copiousness of his learning, and most people will agree that there was something singularly appropriate in his connection with an *Encyclopædia*. When rallied about his omniscience he would retort by a reference to the fact that he was among the few men who had read through the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

But the unusual scope and unremitting industry of his studies would not in themselves explain the vividness with which he treated the great variety of topics dealt with in his writings and still more in his talk. His teacher, Professor Davidson, said that his knowledge of Hebrew was superior not only in degree but in kind to that possessed by his contemporaries. Professor Tait noted the "uncouth power" of his earliest mathematical work ; and the same synthetic capacity marked the later and more original researches of his life. This is conspicuously true of his linguistic attainments, the foundation of so many of his most important contributions to knowledge. He had a great linguistic gift, and spoke several modern languages with fluency—

German, one might say, perfectly. This proficiency, however, was no mere *Sprachfertigkeit*, no mere combination of ear and memory, but was solidly based on principles of comparative grammar and philology. "He had a truly religious reverence for the laws of grammar and syntax, nor did he ever allow himself to build a theory upon a loose interpretation of a passage."

Another and not less important aspect of his mental powers was a strong sense of historical perspective.

"He was quite as well fitted to attain historical as he was linguistic excellence," observes Mr. Bryce, "and one could not help feeling that one of the strongest points in his intellectual character was his power of grasping the historical as well as the philological side of every problem. He felt that a comprehension of the history of the Semitic people was just as essential to an appreciation of their literature and language as was a more direct study of the grammar and philological affinities. As an instance of the way in which he brought his knowledge of Semitic matters down to the present day, I may mention that when there was a question some years ago of altering the arrangements under which our student interpreters are trained at Constantinople, I asked him to write a memorandum on the subject. He did so; and those who considered it in the Foreign Office were struck by his complete grasp of the way in which Semitic studies ought to be made available for British interests and the purposes of diplomacy at the present day; and in the same way, when an occasion arose for consulting him regarding the Mecca pilgrimage, and the facilities to be given for bringing Indian pilgrims to the shrines, I was greatly impressed by the great light he was able to throw on those matters."

The same quality is emphasised by Professor Bevan:

"Scarcely any historical writer of modern times has shown greater originality. He combined profundity with a clearness of style, vast information with extraordinary sobriety of judgment. But what pre-eminently distinguished him was his grasp of the concrete realities of ancient history, his power of exhibiting each detail in its relation to the moral, intellectual, and social life of

the period. 'An ancient book,' he said, 'is so to speak a fragment of ancient life,' and he knew that more than half of the delusions which prevail on the subject of antiquity have arisen from the fact that even learned men often unconsciously ascribe to people of remote ages the habits and feelings of modern Europeans. Accordingly, he was averse to all *a priori* speculations about history which proceed upon the assumption that whatever appears obvious to us must have been equally obvious to the ancient world."

These qualities are characteristic of his maturity as a historian and an orientalist. But they were already apparent in the philosophical and particularly in the scientific studies of his earlier years. It has not been possible in this book to attempt a detailed analysis of his contributions to these two departments of knowledge ; but it is hoped that enough has been said to show the balanced judgment and keen insight which he displayed even in the earliest days of his career as an original investigator. The scientific and philosophic turn of his earlier inquiries no doubt profoundly influenced and greatly helped him when he came to perform his chief tasks as a scholar ; and the Royal Society papers were in themselves enough to dispose for ever of Professor Bain's ungracious suspicion that his pupil's mental powers were merely those of memory and acquisition.

It was the combination of incisive criticism with scientific imagination that gave importance to the pioneer work which he did in the science of comparative religion. The leading position which he occupies in the brilliant period in the development of that science which began in the early eighties has always been recognised by those competent to judge, and so eminent an authority as M. Salomon Reinach, writing in *The Quarterly Review* for October 1911, observes :

"Following, with far wider knowledge, M'Lennan's example, and also that of the American scholar Morgan, he conducted his investigations from the standpoint of

sociology, not from that of mere individual psychology. The problems relative to kinships, to the formation of families, clans, and tribes, absorbed him more fully than the explanation of myths and gods. His theory of sacrifice, in which something very like Catholic communion was considered as one of the primitive forms of worship, and was brought into close connection with totemism, is in my opinion (though I know that many scholars disagree) to be ranked with the most brilliant discoveries of modern science. But Smith, in his too short life, did more than the magnificent work to which his name is attached, more still than his illuminative teaching and lecturing in Scotland and in England. *Genuit Frazerum!*"

The learned world will remember Smith chiefly for the work he accomplished in the last ten years of his life. But before it was granted to him to devote himself to the studies of his choice he had done another work of not less abiding importance. His achievement of this work depended not only on his intellectual distinction, but on deeper qualities of character of which we shall have more to say. His *Encyclopædia* articles possessed all the scholarly virtues by which his later books on Semitic religions and social institutions were distinguished, but they were confessedly statements of existing knowledge, and almost ostentatiously free from inventions of his own.

"The theological panic," writes Professor Bevan, "which he produced in Scotland caused him to be regarded as a bold, not to say reckless, speculator about the date of the Pentateuch and the history of Israel. But in reality the views which he then put forth, and which made the clergy of the Free Church of Scotland 'tremble for the Ark of God' (as one of their number expressed it), were neither new nor startling. They were, for the most part, views accepted by all competent Hebrew scholars at least fifty years earlier, and even the theory of the post-exilic date of the Levitical Law, though not universally accepted, was maintained and elaborately defended by many distinguished critics long before Professor Robertson Smith had published a line on the subject. That during the last few years the theory in question has gained a far larger number of adherents,

both in England and on the Continent, hardly requires to be mentioned. It is, therefore, evident that the alarm of the Scotch divines was due, not to the temerity of the late Professor, but solely to their own ignorance."

Smith had realised neither the ignorance nor the sensitiveness of his brethren, and unexpectedly found himself in the position of claiming liberty for a new school of thought within the Church. That liberty, by the deliberate and explicit sentence of the supreme court, was denied to him. The judgment of the Assembly of 1881, secured by the diplomacy of Principal Rainy, was that the Church must not be regarded as giving any sanction to the views expressed by Professor Smith in certain specified writings, and must protest against the Church being implicated in the promulgation of them—must protest by removal from his chair of any one who holds them. The official position was that it is required of a professor, "not to be in collision with declared successive majorities of the General Assemblies of this Church," and these majorities had voted for the proscription of the best results of the Biblical criticism of the preceding half-century.

All the more amazing is the partiality which has led Dr. Carnegie Simpson to claim Principal Rainy as the preserver of a toleration which had been endangered by Smith's temerity.¹

"By whom and in what circumstances was that toleration won for us? Let, at least, those who are within the Church which is heir to the Free Church of Scotland of those days (I mean, of course, heir to her mind and life) be fair-minded enough to remember this—that but for Principal Rainy there would not, in all likelihood, have been room left in the Church for the liberty they now enjoy, and in the very enjoyment of which they may be tempted to condemn the action of the man to whom indispensably [*sic*] it was due. . . . Principal Rainy, acting in a position of peculiar responsibility which he could not decline, and accepting for himself a far

¹ *Life of Principal Rainy*, i. 402.

sharper penalty than any he imposed, was able, in a situation of unequalled complexity, to preserve for criticism a liberty which was nearly lost."

Smith, he adds, "is entitled to admiration for his brilliant gifts and services, and, because he suffered, to sympathy; yet it is not unqualified sympathy, for he suffered, in part at least, through his own defects of mental character." The reader of the preceding pages must be left to judge how far these defects existed, and how far it may justly be said that Smith endangered, or could have endangered, a liberty of speculation which had never even been claimed before his time. It can hardly be contested that the object of Dr. Rainy's endeavours was much more to secure the stability of the old evangelical polity, than to preserve the rights of free inquiry to the more scholarly of the new generation of its adherents. It is true that at an early period in the case he had shown some sympathetic interest in the cause of liberty; but Dr. Rainy was not himself in the strict sense a scholar, and when it was made clear that critical freedom did not command a majority, his abandonment of the progressive position in favour of what he conceived to be the higher interests of the Church is not in the least to be regarded as a personal sacrifice on his part. The interesting question, of course, remains whether his conception of "high moral expediency" was in fact based on a prescient view of the vital problems of the Church. The presence within her borders of a body professing fanatically reactionary opinions made a new schism almost inevitable with the advance of years and knowledge, and Dr. Rainy himself, for all his care, lived to see that body come near to doing irreparable injury to the great institution whose destinies he controlled. Had he maintained the liberal attitude which he adopted, and so powerfully vindicated in the Assembly of 1878, it seems hardly too bold to say that with his gifts of leadership and force of character he would have carried his

point with sufficient majorities in the Assemblies of 1879, 1880, and 1881. Had the Church following his lead freed her hands in this way, it is difficult to believe that any secession could have been made with the slightest hope of success in the civil courts. Dr. Rainy's weakness was that he never really mastered the critical position, and was, therefore, necessarily incapable of appreciating its importance for the future of a Church which must depend for its existence on the support of enlightened lay opinion. The United Free Church may enjoy to-day the liberty of believing that the Pentateuch is of various dates, but if so, it is because Smith wrote the article "Bible," and maintained the right to do so, not because Dr. Rainy abandoned him and joined forces with the enemies of ecclesiastical freedom.

Smith's attitude throughout the long struggle in the Church courts was, at least, clear and consistent. He acted in the "conscientious persuasion that certain views were true" and in the no less conscientious persuasion that they were not inconsistent with the Confession of Faith. In this he was supported by most of the best minds in his Church, and in the questions immediately at issue posterity may be said to have already decided in his favour. It cannot be contended by any conscientious person that in what he did Smith proceeded either without reflection or with the desire to attract public notice. The article "Bible" was the fruit of nine years' study conducted largely under the auspices of the accredited teachers of the Free Church, and was a mere incident in the course of his ordinary literary activity. When he was challenged, and the nature of the attack upon him became clear, it was a manifest duty to resist the aggression of the reactionaries on that living theology through which alone he believed the Church could prosper. This duty he discharged, at great cost to himself, with the thoroughness and the ability which distinguished all his work. If there was any advantage

in the protracted fighting and interminable debates of the Smith case, it was reaped by others.

There remains the problem of the exact nature of Smith's views on the ultimate questions of faith and life. In the corner of his portrait by Sir George Reid, which is reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume, Smith, the day before it left the studio, painted with his own hands, in the presence of the artist and another friend, the Hebrew text which can still be read, *הַמְאִמֵּן לֹא יִחַשׁ*.¹ The words were often on his lips, and they certainly expressed a lifelong attitude of mind. Nothing was more striking in Smith's intellectual history than the slow progress he made towards emancipation as a theologian, the almost obstinate conservatism with which he clung to the forms of thought familiar to him in his youth. The accusations of rashness and headlong haste with which he was so often assailed during the case were perhaps those which tried him most. He believed himself to be, and in some sense he in fact was, a very cautious speculator, and this aspect of his critical work did not escape the attention of another group of his critics. They complained that "he pursued the methods of rationalistic literary analysis while holding the faith of Bibliolatrous superstition,"² and those who knew Smith during his life, and who wish to remember him as he was, will not be concerned to deny the imperfections and inconsistencies of a theological career which was cut short. He began with a profound conviction of the truth of the evangelical system as taught in Scotland in the first half of the nineteenth century. That conviction he never abandoned, though for many years before his death he had ceased to exercise the functions of the ministry. But the researches of his later life led him much farther than he had gone even at the time of his

¹ "He that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16.

² See *The Free Review*, May 1894, "Professor Robertson Smith: a Problem," p. 98.

removal from the Aberdeen chair. He had put questions and stated results which can only with difficulty be reconciled with the Westminster Confession in its literal fulness ; and we have already seen how dissonant is the conclusion of the unpublished series of Burnett lectures with the general trend and tenor of the previous learned and elaborate argument. The enlightened critic already quoted observes on this :

“ A few years' work at the textual problems served to put him in the rational or naturalistic attitude on the strictly textual questions. How then was it that he never got any farther ? How came he, after realising that not only Biblical literature as a whole, but nearly every ostensibly homogeneous section, is a structure of various and divergent hands, plans, times, ideals—how came he still to think that these composites are products of ‘revelation’ and ‘inspiration’ in a sense in which no other or extra-Christian literature is ? . . . But Smith, with all his analysis, was at heart unspotted from the world of reason, and held to the doctrine of the special inspiration of the Judaic and Christian religions, expressly pointing to Mohammed as clearly a ‘false’ prophet, and to Paul as clearly an ‘inspired’ writer. This seems to have been his attitude to the end ; though the results of his latest scrutiny of early Semitic religion make that a ‘natural’ religion or nothing.”¹

It was said of him by another writer, with greater kindness and more insight, that he refused to sacrifice either his faith or his reason ; and this contradiction will disconcert only those who do not perceive that it is the ultimate contradiction inherent in human life. All intellectual experience, when analysed, presents the same antinomy. It is only in intellects of high distinction, such as Smith's, that it is likely to attract attention or cause scandal. It is only in a character of transparent honesty such as his that it is so clearly and ingenuously apparent.

Whatever may have been the peculiarities of his intellectual attitude towards the problems of theology,

¹ *Free Review*, loc. cit. p. 99.

he realised on the practical side a high ideal of the Christian character, if Ritschl was right when he held that Christian perfection consists in simple faith in a wise and loving Providence, and is manifested in a diligent pursuit of one's calling in humility, thankfulness, and patience.

Smith's severest critics would at all times have conceded him the virtues of diligence and patience—patience both under his many sufferings and in the performance of his lifelong and unremitting labours; but exception may possibly be taken to the claim that humility was a conspicuous element in his character. His brusque manner, the habit of sharp and decisive assertion which is characteristic of his countrymen, and, above all, the polemical passages which made his name historical, tended to produce on those who were not in his confidence a false impression of dictatorial self-sufficiency. It would be less than just to say that he did not habitually hold and defend with great confidence, firmness, and persistency the causes and opinions which, after much painstaking inquiry, he had come to regard as right; but it may be denied with perfect truth that he ever did so in any egotistical or vainglorious manner, or without consideration of what was due to other persons and other views. There was another reason why Smith's personality was occasionally misunderstood by those who, from defect of sympathy or of culture, were unable to enjoy his society. Smith was, above all things, an inquirer, and if, even in conversational argument, he was apt to press his point with more than conventional vehemence, it was not because he desired a dialectical victory, or the confusion of his opponent, but because the passion of his life was a sort of universal interest in truth. Such a man cannot go through life without wounding the susceptibilities of the less robust of his contemporaries, and is apt to lay himself open to the criticism of being unable to suffer fools gladly. Yet it is safe to say that Smith, as an embodiment of Christian humility, will at

any rate pass the enlightened standard of that virtue as laid down by Ritschl.

Even if with Hume we more strictly define humility as "a dissatisfaction with ourselves on account of some defect or infirmity," the present writers believe that Smith will not be found wanting in a quality which has so many champions and so few exemplars. It is apposite to recall what he wrote to a friend¹ about his own shortcomings as a scholar, and the superior claims of another candidate for the Sir Thomas Adams chair, or Professor Wellhausen's "dubitare non debes," in the same connection. A reminiscence of Principal Skinner² from a later period is also characteristic :

"He spoke to me once with some impatience of his being unable to trust his memory, and of needing to spend the ten minutes' interval between two lectures in glancing over the section to be read. He said that he had always been handicapped in teaching Arabic by a defective verbal memory ! In another connection he said he did not think he could teach Hebrew as well as when I was with him in Aberdeen ; but he added : ' Of course my career as a teacher was interrupted.' "

Smith, as the reader of this book will have seen, was a devoted son and brother, and a man who throughout his life was consistently loyal and helpful to his friends. As Mr. Norman M'Lean wrote :³

"He was a never failing source of advice, help, and encouragement to any one who sought it. At College meetings and in ordinary conversation he was always eager to give an opinion on any point under discussion : in his rapid manner he would at once express sharp dissent from any view that seemed to him wrong ; but, however he might differ in opinion, he was the same loyal, sympathetic friend to each. And one of the things that will most linger in the memories of those who saw him in

¹ See above, p. 509.

² The Rev. John Skinner, D.D., Principal and Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in Westminster College, Cambridge. Principal Skinner began his theological studies under Smith in his last year of teaching in Aberdeen.

³ *Expositor*, 1894, p. 464.

his last illness is the thought of how, even though he might be suffering great pain, he seemed quite to forget himself and his sufferings in his eagerness to hear about the concerns of his visitor, still ready as of old to help him with advice or suggestion."

Or we may quote the words of the present occupant of the Sir Thomas Adams chair at Cambridge : ¹

" He is gone, our master and our friend, on whose strength, even when he was at his weakest, we were wont to lean ; he who was so wise in counsel, so swift of help, leaving a void among us which none can fill. Often, as he lay stretched on his couch of suffering, did we bring to him our difficulties and our dilemmas, and seldom indeed did we come in vain ! No matter how great his weariness, or how severe his pain, he would make the effort rather than suffer us to go away disappointed. And what knowledge was his ! Every one of the vast number of books which composed his library he seemed to know from end to end. No matter what the question : ' Fetch me such and such a book,' he would say (when he no longer had strength to rise from his couch), ' it stands on such and such a shelf, and is bound and lettered thus and thus.' And when it was brought, with deft, eager hands he would turn over the leaves until the desired passage was found, and the proffered problem solved."

The charm and helpfulness of a man's character depend upon its inward strength and unity. Smith's genius for friendship, his power of attracting and keeping friends, was the outward expression of a fundamental altruism, the fine flower of the high evangelical culture of his impressionable years. One of the most striking and consistent manifestations of this was a constant cheerfulness and optimism which may well be reckoned among the highest forms of consideration for others. The foundation of this was the Christian courage and self-reliance, inculcated by his early teachers, with which he confronted all the trials of life. He wrote once in defence of King David, whose character had been assailed

¹ Prof. E. G. Browne, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 1894, pp. 602-3.

by Ernest Renan,¹ that at least "he maintained that calm and resolute submission to the Divine will which makes the strength of a truly religious character, and raises the servant of God above the fear of man." Those who knew him best in the stormy days of the case, and still more in the tragic time of his last illness, will recognise that these words might have been written of Smith himself.

A stained glass window has been placed in memory of him in the chapel of King's College, Aberdeen, and in the Free Church College from which he was driven out he is commemorated by a posthumous portrait.² These memorials were provided by public subscription, and serve to keep surviving generations in mind of his achievements and his misfortunes.

But the most pious memories of the dead are not so much of what they did as of what they were. When Smith's friends in Cambridge met to promote a memorial of the man they had known, by providing for the due preservation of the books and manuscripts he had left to them, they sought to commemorate not merely the great orientalist, or even the man who, as Dr. Jackson said, had so fully realised the ideal of the scholar's life, but also one the mere thought of whom gave encouragement in moments of perplexity, of failure, and disappointment.

The authors of this narrative have attempted, as was their duty, to present a picture of the time in which he lived, to record as completely as possible his many achievements, and to explain and justify the part he took in events of critical importance in the religious history of his country. But they will have failed in their chief endeavour if they have not succeeded in conveying to their readers something at least of the vivid and happy memory which they cherish of their common friend.

¹ See *Lectures and Essays*, p. 622.

² By Sir George Reid; it is reproduced as frontispiece to *Lectures and Essays*.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DRAFT BY PRINCIPAL RAINY OF A LETTER WHICH HE WISHED
PROFESSOR SMITH TO SEND TO PROFESSOR JAMES CANDLISH
(see p. 207)

“MY DEAR C.,—I have thought much on the subject of your letter. I have nothing to say which I was not equally prepared to say when we first talked on the subject, but I see more clearly the importance of saying it.

“The dates at which and the providential circumstances in which it has pleased God that the books of Scripture should originate are matters in regard to which there has always been room for diversity of judgment. The subject of my article in the *Encyclopædia* called for a discussion of that class of topics and for a statement of the conclusions to which I have been led by the view I take of the evidence. I was aware that some of these conclusions might startle men who have not been under the necessity of closely examining this order of questions. Differences of that kind, more or less, are inevitable. But I am concerned to find that there should be doubt or suspicion with reference to my adherence to the doctrine of our Church—the doctrine which I have publicly and explicitly professed—with reference to Holy Scripture. I think it right to hasten to repudiate those suspicions, without reference to the question whether they have been reasonably entertained or suitably expressed. I believe *ex animo* that God was pleased to reveal Himself and to declare His will in that course of divine transactions which in the Scriptures are recorded for our learning. And I receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Whatever impression may have been made by statements in my article regarding the circumstances in which some of these books originated,

everything I have said was uttered in the belief, well-grounded or not, that what I stated was fully consistent with that great doctrine. And whatever impression may be entertained in any quarter as though the Bible became less trustworthy when its literary history is viewed as I view it, I can say that I do not find it so. My mind becomes not less settled but more in the doctrinal verities of the Gospel which our Church professes, and which, as a minister and professor, I am pledged to proclaim and teach.

“No one, I believe, who knows what I habitually teach—I may add, what I habitually preach, when I have an opportunity of preaching—will question what I now assert. I see that you indicate a feeling of surprise that no adequate expression of these convictions appears in the articles. The view which I took of the duty which fell to me in an article on the Bible in a publication like the *E.B.*, was that the literary history and character of the various books which have a place in the Canon should be stated apart from those doctrines about them which are articles of Christian faith. Perhaps I took for granted too securely that a Professor of the Free Church of Scotland might assume that the known faith of his Church and of the Church of Christ was presupposed in connection with the statements he made. Perhaps this was an error. But if I had been more conscious of varying from the common faith, I might have been more circumspect in stating my opinion on questions of date and authorship.

“However, I will go further. From what you say and from what reaches me from other quarters, I cannot doubt that statements in the article have awakened anxiety and given pain in various quarters in our Church and beyond it. I could not candidly profess to assume that I am alone to blame in the offence taken; but what mainly concerns me is the duty for myself. A member of the Church of Christ, and much more a professor, is bound to have regard to the convictions and feelings of the brethren, not indeed as ruling his faith, but as conveying a weighty admonition. I cannot profess, and you would be the last to wish me to profess, in deference to the feelings or opinions of others, an alteration in my opinion not reached by a process of conviction in my own mind. But I am bound to recognise the possibility of error in the substance of some of my conclusions and, still more obviously, the possibility of imprudence and defective judgment in my manner of stating them and in the care I manifest of those great doctrines which are more vital than any merely critical questions. I

willingly take the anxiety and pain felt by brethren whom I love and respect as an admonition to reconsider carefully the grounds on which, and the manner in which, opinions on this subject should be formed and stated. I suppose your letter was written under the idea that I ought to be impressed and influenced by the state of feeling you describe. I have no difficulty in saying that, in the sense described, I am impressed and influenced and I desire to be.

“At the same time, candour being a primary duty, let me here repeat to you my conviction that, whatever may be the danger of wanton or unbridled criticism, safety is not to be found in unconditionally maintaining traditional opinions about dates and authorship. Whatever particular opinions of mine may prove in the end to have been insufficiently grounded or rashly expressed, this I am convinced remains true and will become increasingly evident—viz. that the divine inspiration of many books of Old Testament Scripture is in no way tied to the traditional or received opinions about their critical history, and that our true wisdom is to hold our minds open to fresh evidence and various alternatives about the latter just in order that we may the more securely and calmly abide by the former.”

APPENDIX B

THE DRAFT FORM OF LIBEL

MR. WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH, Professor of Oriental Languages and Exegesis of the Old Testament at Aberdeen, you are indicted and accused, at the instance of the Free Presbytery of Aberdeen :—

That whereas the publishing and promulgating of opinions which contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or any part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also, the publishing and promulgating of opinions which are in themselves of a dangerous and unsettling tendency in their bearing on the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or any part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and in their bearing on the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also, the publishing and promulgating of writings concerning the books of Holy Scripture, which writings, by their neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and by their rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Scriptures, tend to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of these books, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, are severally offences, especially in a Professor of Divinity, which call for such censure or other judicial sentence as may be found adequate ; and more particularly :—

Primo :—Albeit the opinion that the Aaronic priesthood, and at least a great part of the laws and ordinances of the Levitical system, were not divinely instituted in the time of Moses, and

that those large parts of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, which represent them as having been then instituted by God, were inserted in the inspired records long after the death of Moses :—

Secundo :—Albeit the opinion that the book of inspired Scripture called Deuteronomy, which is professedly an historical record, does not possess that character, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age, who therein, in the name of God, presented in dramatic form, instructions and laws as proceeding from the mouth of Moses, though these never were, and never could have been uttered by him :—

Tertio :—Albeit opinions which lower the character of the inspired writings to the level of uninspired, by ignoring their divine authorship, and by representing the sacred writers as taking freedoms and committing errors like other authors ; as giving explanations that were unnecessary and incorrect ; as putting fictitious speeches into the mouths of their historical characters ; as giving inferences of their own for facts ; as describing arrangements as made use of in their complete form at a certain time which were not completed till long afterwards ; and as writing under the influence of party spirit and for party purposes :—

Quarto :—Albeit the presentation of opinions which discredit the authenticity and canonical standing of books of Scripture by imputing to them a fictitious character ; by attributing to them what is disparaging ; and by stating discrediting opinions of others, without any indication of dissent therefrom :—

Quinto :—Albeit the opinion that the portion of Scripture known as Canticles, although included among the books which in the Confession of Faith are declared to have been immediately inspired by God, is devoid of any spiritual significance, and only presents a high example of virtue in a betrothed maiden, without any recognition of the divine law, and that its deletion from the canon was providentially prevented by the prejudice in favour of an allegorical interpretation, to the effect that “ from verse to verse the song sets forth the history of a spiritual, and not merely of an earthly love ” :—

Sexto :—Albeit opinions which contradict or ignore the testimony given in the Old Testament, and also that of our Lord and His Apostles in the New Testament, to the authorship of Old

Testament Scriptures, upon which authorship most momentous teaching was sometimes based :—

Septimo :—Albeit opinions which disparage prophecy by representing its predictions as arising merely from so-called spiritual insight, based on the certainty of God's righteous purpose, and which exclude prediction in the sense of direct supernatural revelation of events long posterior to the prophet's own age :—

Octavo :—Albeit the opinion that belief in the superhuman reality of the angelic beings of the Bible is matter of assumption rather than of direct teaching ; and that angels are endowed with special goodness and insight analogous to human qualities appears as a popular assumption, not as a doctrine of revelation :—

Albeit that all these opinions, or one or more of them do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also are in themselves of a dangerous and unsettling tendency in their bearing on the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid, and in their bearing on the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also that the writings containing these opinions do exhibit neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Scriptures, tending to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of the books of Holy Scripture, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid :—

Yet, true it is, and of verity, that you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, are guilty of the said offence of publishing and promulgating opinions which do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein also set forth : or otherwise of the said offence of publishing and promulgating opinions which are in themselves of a dangerous and unsettling tendency in their bearing on the doctrine of the immediate

inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and in their bearing on the doctrines of prophecy and angels also therein set forth ; or otherwise of the said offence of publishing and promulgating writings concerning the books of Holy Scripture, which writings, by their neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and by their rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of Holy Scriptures, tend to disparage the divine authority of these books, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, in so far as you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, have published and promulgated or concurred in the publishing and promulgating the following articles and remarks, of which you are the author, *videlicet* : articles " Angel," " Bible," " Canticles," and " Chronicles," in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* ; also, article " The Sixteenth Psalm," in *The Expositor*, number XXIII., of November 1876 ; and article " The Question of Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent," in the *British Quarterly Review* of April 1870 ; also, " Remarks " by Professor W. R. Smith on a memorandum of the sub-committee on the article " Bible " in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published in the College Committee's report to the General Assembly ; all which publications being to be used in evidence against you, are lodged in the hands of the Clerk of the Presbytery, that you may have an opportunity of seeing the same ; of which articles and remarks you have acknowledged yourself to be the author, to the said Free Presbytery of Aberdeen, at its meeting held there on the twelfth day of April, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven ; in which articles and remarks you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, express opinions which do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels also therein set forth : or otherwise you express opinions which are in themselves of a dangerous and unsettling tendency in their bearing on the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and in their bearing on the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein also set forth : or otherwise the said articles and remarks, of which you are the author, exhibit neutrality of

attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Holy Scriptures, tending to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of the books of Scripture, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith. More particularly and without prejudice to the said generality :—

Primo :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the article “ Bible,” published in the foresaid edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and at the pages thereof aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 638a : ¶ “ If then the Deuteronomic legislation is not earlier than the prophetic period of the 8th and 7th centuries, and, accordingly, is subsequent to the elements of the Pentateuchal history which we have seen to be known to Hosea, it is plain that the chronology of the composition of the Pentateuch may be said to centre in the question whether the Levitico-Elohistic document, which embraces most of the laws in Leviticus with large parts of Exodus and Numbers, is earlier or later than Deuteronomy. The answer to this question turns almost wholly on archæological inquiries, for there is, perhaps, no *quite* conclusive reference to the Elohist record in the Prophets before the Exile, or in Deuteronomy itself. And here arises the great dispute which divides critics, and makes our whole construction of the origin of the historical books uncertain. The Levitical laws give a graduated hierarchy of priests and Levites ; Deuteronomy regards all Levites as at least possible priests. Round this difference, and points allied to it, the whole discussion turns. We know, mainly from Ezekiel xlv., that before the Exile the strict hierarchical law was not in force, apparently never had been in force. But can we suppose that the very idea of such a hierarchy is the latest point of liturgical development ? If so, the Levitical element is the latest thing in the Pentateuch, or, in truth, in the historical series to which the Pentateuch belongs ; or, on the opposite view, the hierarchic theory existed as a legal programme long before the Exile, though it was fully carried out only after Ezra. As all the more elaborate symbolic observances of the ritual law are bound up with the hierarchical ordinances, the solution of this problem has issues of the greatest importance for the theology as well as for the literary history of the Old Testament ” : Pages 634b and 635a : ¶ “ A just insight into the work of the prophetic party in Israel was long rendered difficult by

traditional prejudices. On the one hand the predictive element in prophecy received undue prominence, and withdrew attention from the influence of the prophets on the religious life of their own time ; while, on the other hand, it was assumed, in accordance with Jewish notions, that all the ordinances, and almost, if not quite, all the doctrines of the Jewish church in the post-canonical period, existed from the earliest days of the theocracy. The prophets, therefore, were conceived partly as inspired preachers of old truths, partly as predicting future events, but not as leaders of a great development, in which the religious ordinances as well as the religious beliefs of the Old Covenant advanced from a relatively crude and imperfect to a relatively mature and adequate form. ¶ The proof that this latter view, and not the traditional conception, is alone true to history depends on a variety of arguments which cannot here be reproduced. That the religious ideas of the Old Testament were in a state of growth during the whole prophetic period became manifest as soon as the laws of grammatico-historical exegesis were fairly applied to the Hebrew Scriptures. That the sacred ordinances were subject to variation was less readily admitted, because the admission involved a change of view as to the authorship of the Pentateuch ; but here also the facts are decisive. . . . But perhaps the clearest proof that, during the period of prophetic inspiration, there was no doctrine of finality with regard to ritual law any more than with regard to religious ideas and doctrines, lies in the last chapters of Ezekiel, which sketch at the very era of the Captivity an outline of sacred ordinances for the future restoration. From these and similar facts it follows indisputably, that the true and spiritual religion which the prophets and like-minded priests maintained at once against heathenism and against unspiritual worship of Jehovah as a mere national deity without moral attributes, was not a finished but a growing system, not finally embodied in authoritative documents, but propagated mainly by direct personal efforts. At the same time these personal efforts were accompanied and supported by the gradual rise of a sacred literature. Though the priestly ordinances were mainly published by oral decisions of the priests, which are, in fact, what is usually meant by the word *law* (Torah), in writings earlier than the Captivity, there can be no reasonable doubt that the priests possessed written legal collections of greater or less extent from the time of Moses downwards. Again, the example of Ezekiel, and the obvious fact that the law-book found at the time of Josiah

contained provisions which were not up to that time an acknowledged part of the law of the land, makes it probable that legal provisions, which the prophets and their priestly allies felt to be necessary for the maintenance of the truth, were often embodied in legislative programmes, by which previous legal tradition was gradually modified": Page 635b: ¶ "Previous reformers had been statesmen or prophets. Ezra is a scribe who comes to Jerusalem armed, not with a fresh message from the Lord, but with 'the book of the law of Moses.' This law-book was the Pentateuch, and the public recognition of it as the rule of the theocracy was the declaration that the religious ordinances of Israel had ceased to admit of development, and the first step towards the substitution of a *canon* or authoritative collection of Scriptures for the living guidance of the prophetic voice": Page 636b: ¶ "But in its present shape the Pentateuch is certainly subsequent to the occupation, for it uses geographical names which arose after that time (Hebron, Dan), refers to the conquest as already accomplished (Deut. ii. 12; *cf.* Num. xv. 32; Gen. xii. 6), and even presupposes the existence of a kingship in Israel (Gen. xxxvi. 31). And with this it agrees, that though there are marked differences of style and language within the book of Joshua, each style finds its counterpart in some section of the Pentateuch. In the subsequent books we find quite similar phenomena. The last chapters of Judges cannot be separated from the book of Samuel, and the earlier chapters of Kings are obviously one with the foregoing narrative; while all three books contain passages strikingly akin to parts of the Pentateuch and Joshua (*cf.*, for example, the book of Deuteronomy with Josh. xxiii., 1 Sam. xii., 1 Kings viii.) Such phenomena not only prove the futility of any attempt to base a theory of authorship on the present division into books, but suggest that the history as we have it is not one narrative carried on from age to age by successive additions, but a fusion of several narratives which partly covered the same ground and were combined into unity by an editor."

Secundo :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the foresaid article "Bible," published in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, expressed yourself, at page 637b, as follows, *videlicet* : ¶ "Now the book of Deuteronomy presents a quite distinct type of style which, as has been already mentioned, recurs from time to time in passages of the later books, and that in such a connection

as to suggest to many critics since Graf the idea that the Deuteronomic hand is the hand of the last editor of the whole history from Genesis to Kings, or, at least, of the non-Levitical parts thereof. This conclusion is not stringent, for a good deal may be said in favour of the view that the Deuteronomic style, which is very capable of imitation, was adopted by writers of different periods. But even so it is difficult to suppose that the legislative part of Deuteronomy is as old as Moses. If the law of the kingdom in Deuteronomy xvii. was known in the time of the Judges, it is impossible to comprehend Judges viii. 23, and above all 1 Samuel viii. 7. That the law of high places given in this part of the Pentateuch was not acknowledged till the time of Josiah, and was not dreamed of by Samuel and Elijah, we have already seen. The Deuteronomic law is familiar to Jeremiah, the younger contemporary of Josiah, but is referred to by no prophet of earlier date. And the whole theological stand-point of the book agrees exactly with the period of prophetic literature, and gives the highest and most spiritual view of the law, to which our Lord himself directly attaches his teaching, and which cannot be placed at the beginning of the theocratic development without making the whole history unintelligible. Beyond doubt the book is, as already hinted, a prophetic legislative programme; and if the author put his work in the mouth of Moses, instead of giving it, with Ezekiel, a directly prophetic form, he did so not in pious fraud, but simply because his object was not to give a new law, but to expound and develop Mosaic principles in relation to new needs. And as ancient writers are not accustomed to distinguish historical data from historical deductions, he naturally presents his views in dramatic form in the mouth of Moses." As also, in your said "Remarks on Memorandum of the Sub-Committee on the article Bible," expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 20: ¶ "When my position is thus discriminated from the theories of those who like Kuenen ascribe the origin of Deuteronomy to a pious fraud, I do not think that it will be found to involve any more serious innovation in our conception of the method of revelation than this—that the written record of the revelation of God's will which is necessary unto salvation makes use of certain forms of literary presentation which have always been thought legitimate in ordinary composition, but which were not always understood to be used in the Bible." And at page 21 of the said Remarks you expressed yourself thus: ¶ "It is asked whether our Lord does not bear

witness to the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. If this were so, I should feel myself to be on very dangerous and untenable ground. But it appears to me that only a very strained exegesis can draw any inference of authorship from the recorded words of our Saviour."

Tertio :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the article "Chronicles," in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and at the pages aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, pages 708b-709a : ¶ " In general, then, it seems safe to conclude with Ewald, Bertheau, and other cautious critics, that there is no foundation for the accusation that the Chronicler invented history in the interest of his parenetic and practical purposes. But on the other hand it is not to be doubted that in shaping his narrative he allowed himself the same freedoms as were taken by other ancient historians, and even by early copyists, and it is the business of historical criticism to form a clear conception of the nature and limits of these freedoms with a view to distinguish in individual passages between the facts derived by the Chronicler from his written sources and the literary additions, explanations, and inferences which are his own. In particular : ¶ 1. His explanations of verbal and material difficulties must be critically considered. Thus even Keil admits an error in 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37, where the Tharshish-ships, that is ships fit for a long voyage, which Jehoshaphat built on the Red Sea (1 Kings xxii. 48), are explained as ships voyaging to Tartessus in Spain. Such criticism is especially necessary where remarks are introduced tending to explain away the differences in religious observances between early times and the period of the Chronicler. Thus in 1 Chron. xxi. 28, sqq., an explanation is given of the reasons which led David to sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Ornan instead of going to the brazen altar at Gibeon. But it is certain that at the time of David the principle of a single altar was not acknowledged, and therefore no explanation was required. In 1 Kings iii. 3, 4, Gibeon appears only as the chief of many high-places, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Chronicler has simply *inferred* from the importance of this sanctuary that it must have possessed a special legitimation, which could only consist in the presence of the old brazen altar. ¶ 2. A certain freedom of literary form was always allowed to ancient historians, and need not perplex anyone who does not apply a false standard to the narrative. To this head belongs especially the introduction of speeches like that of Abijah in 2 Chron. xiii.

This speech is no doubt a free composition, and would be so understood by the author's contemporaries. By such literary devices the author was enabled to point a lesson without interrupting the thread of his narrative by reflections of his own. Similar remarks apply to the psalm in 1 Chron. xvi., which is made up of extracts from Psalms cv., xcvi., cvi. ¶ 3. A usage not peculiar to the Chronicler among Old Testament writers, and which must be carefully taken into account by the historical critic, is that of giving statistical information in a narrative form. . . . A different application of the same principle seems to lie in the account of the institutions of Levitical service which is introduced in connection with the transference of the ark to Jerusalem by David. The author is not concerned to distinguish the gradual steps by which the Levitical organization attained its full development. But he wishes to describe the system in its complete form, especially as regards the service of the singers, and he does this under the reign of David, who was the father of Hebrew psalmody, and the restorer of the sanctuary of the ark": Pages 706b-707a: ¶ "What seems to be certain and important for a right estimate of the book is that the author lived a considerable time after Ezra, and stood entirely under the influence of the religious institutions of the new theocracy. This standpoint determined the nature of his interest in the early history of his people. ¶ The true importance of Hebrew history had always centred in the fact that this petty nation was the people of Jehovah, the spiritual God. The tragic interest which distinguishes the annals of Israel from the forgotten history of Moab or Damascus lies wholly in that long contest which finally vindicated the reality of spiritual things and the supremacy of Jehovah's purpose, in the political ruin of the nation which was the faithless depositary of these sacred truths. After the captivity it was impossible to write the history of Israel's fortunes otherwise than in a spirit of religious pragmatism. But within the limits of the religious conception of the plan and purpose of the Hebrew history more than one point of view might be taken up. The book of Kings looks upon the history in the spirit of the Prophets—in that spirit which is still echoed by Zechariah (i. 5, 6): 'Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, could they live for ever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? so that they turned and said, Like as Jehovah of Hosts thought to do unto us . . . so hath he dealt with us.' But long before the

Chronicler wrote, the last spark of prophecy was extinct. The New Jerusalem of Ezra was organised as a municipality and a Church, not as a nation. The centre of religious life was no longer the living prophetic word but the ordinances of the Pentateuch and the liturgical service of the sanctuary. The religious vocation of Israel was no longer national but ecclesiastical or municipal, and the historical continuity of the nation was vividly realized only within the walls of Jerusalem and the courts of the Temple, in the solemn assembly and stately ceremonial of a feast day. These influences naturally operated most strongly on those who were officially attached to the sanctuary. To a Levite, even more than to other Jews, the history of Israel meant above all things the history of Jerusalem, of the Temple, and of the Temple ordinances. Now the author of Chronicles betrays on every page his essentially Levitical habit of mind. It even seems possible from a close attention to his descriptions of sacred ordinances to conclude that his special interests are those of a common Levite rather than of a priest, and that of all Levitical functions he is most partial to those of the singers, a member of whose guild Ewald conjectures him to have been. To such a man the older delineation of the history of Israel, especially in the books of Samuel and Kings, could not but appear to be deficient in some directions, while in other respects its narrative seemed superfluous or open to misunderstanding, as for example by recording, and that without condemnation, things inconsistent with the Pentateuchal law. The history of the ordinances of worship holds a very small place in the older record. Jerusalem and the Temple have not that central place in the book of Kings which they occupied in the mind of the Jewish community after the Exile. Large sections of the old history are devoted to the religion and politics of the ten tribes, which are altogether unintelligible and uninteresting when measured by a strictly Levitical standard ; and in general the whole problems and struggles of the prophetic period turn on points which had ceased to be cardinal in the life of the New Jerusalem, which was no longer called to decide between the claims of the Word of Jehovah and the exigencies of political affairs and social customs, and which could not comprehend that men absorbed in deeper spiritual contests had no leisure for the niceties of Levitical legislation. Thus there seemed to be room for a new history, which should confine itself to matters still interesting to the theocracy of Zion, keeping Jerusalem and the Temple in the foreground, and de-

veloping the divine pragmatism of the history, not so much with reference to the prophetic word as to the fixed legislation of the Pentateuch, so that the whole narrative might be made to teach that the glory of Israel lies in the observance of the divine law and ritual": Page 707b: ¶ "In the later history the ten tribes are quite neglected, and political affairs in Judah receive attention, not in proportion to their intrinsic importance, but according as they serve to exemplify God's help to the obedient and His chastisement of the rebellious. That the author is always unwilling to speak of the misfortunes of good rulers is not to be ascribed with some critics to a deliberate suppression of truth, but shows that the book was throughout composed not in purely historical interests, but with a view to inculcate a single practical lesson. The more important additions which the Chronicler makes to the old narrative consist partly of statistical lists (1 Chron. xii.), partly of full details on points connected with the history of the sanctuary and the great feasts or the archæology of the Levitical ministry . . . and partly of narratives of victories and defeats, of sins and punishments, of obedience and its reward, which could be made to point a plain religious lesson in favour of the faithful observance of the law. . . . The minor variations of Chronicles from the books of Samuel and Kings are analogous in principle to the larger additions and omissions, so that the whole work has a consistent and well-marked character, presenting the history in quite a different perspective from that of the old narrative. ¶ Here, then, a critical question arises. Is the change of perspective wholly due to a different selection of items from authentic historical tradition? May we assume that everything which is new in the Chronicles has been taken exactly from older sources, or must we judge that the standpoint of the author has not only governed the selection, but coloured the statement of historical facts? Are all his novelties new data, or are some of them inferences of his own from the same data as lie before us in other books of the Bible?"

Quarto:—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the said article "Bible," published in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and at the pages aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 639b: ¶ "In the book of Job we find poetical invention of incidents, attached for didactic purposes to a name apparently derived from old tradition. There is no valid *a priori* reason for denying that the Old Testament may

contain other examples of the same art. The book of Jonah is generally viewed as a case in point. Esther, too, has been viewed as a fiction by many who are not over sceptical critics ; but on this view a book which finds no recognition in the New Testament, and whose canonicity was long suspected by the Christian as well as by the Jewish Church, must sink to the rank of an apocryphal production. ¶ In the poetical as in the historical books anonymous writing is the rule ; and along with this we observe great freedom on the part of readers and copyists, who not only made verbal changes (*cf.* Psalm xiv. with Psalm liii.), but composed new poems out of fragments of others (Psalm cviii. with lvii. and lx.). In a large part of the Psalter a later hand has systematically substituted Elohim for Jehovah, and an imperfect acrostic, like Ps. ix., x., cannot have proceeded in its present form from the first author. Still more remarkable is the case of the book of Job, in which the speeches of Elihu quite break the connection, and are almost universally assigned to a later hand : Page 64ob : ¶ “ In this sketch of the prophetic writings we find no place for the book of Daniel, which, whether composed in the early years of the Persian empire, or, as modern critics hold, at the time of the Maccabee wars, presents so many points of diversity from ordinary prophecy as to require entirely separate treatment. It is in point of form the precursor of the apocalyptic books of post-canonical Judaism, though in its intrinsic qualities far superior to these, and akin to the prophets proper ” : Pages 635b, 636a : ¶ “ The miscellaneous character of the Ketubim ” [embracing Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles] “ seems, in fact, to show that after the Law and the Prophets were closed, the third part of the canon was open to receive additions, recommended either by their religious and historical value, or by bearing an ancient and venerable name. And this was the more natural because the Hagiographa had not the same place in the synagogue service as was accorded to the Law and the Prophets.”

Quinto :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the aforesaid article “ Canticles,” published in the aforesaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and at the pages aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 32b : ¶ “ To tradition, again, we owe the still powerful prejudice in favour of an allegorical interpretation, that is, of the view that from verse to verse the

Song sets forth the history of a spiritual and not merely of an earthly love. To apply such an exegesis to Canticles is to violate one of the first principles of reasonable interpretation. True allegories are never without internal marks of their allegorical design. The language of symbol is not so perfect that a long chain of spiritual ideas can be developed without the use of a single spiritual word or phrase; and even were this possible it would be false art in the allegorist to hide away his sacred thoughts behind a screen of sensuous and erotic imagery, so complete and beautiful in itself as to give no suggestion that it is only the vehicle of a deeper sense. Apart from tradition no one, in the present state of exegesis, would dream of allegorising poetry which in its natural sense is so full of purpose and meaning, so apt in sentiment, and so perfect in imagery as the lyrics of Canticles. We are not at liberty to seek for allegory except where the natural sense is incomplete. This is not the case in the Song of Solomon. On the contrary, every form of the allegorical interpretation which has been devised carries its own condemnation in the fact that it takes away from the artistic unity of the poem and breaks natural sequences of thought. The allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon had its rise in the very same conditions which forced a deeper sense, now universally discarded, upon so many other parts of Scripture": Page 35a: ¶ "The heroine appears in the opening scene in a difficult and painful situation, from which in the last chapter she is happily extricated. But the dramatic progress which the poem exhibits scarcely involves a plot in the usual sense of that word. The words of viii. 9, 10, clearly indicate that the deliverance of the heroine is due to no combination of favouring circumstances, but to her own inflexible fidelity and virtue. In accordance with this her *rôle* throughout the poem is simply a steadfast adherence to the position which she takes up in the opening scene, where she is represented as concentrating her thoughts upon her absent lover with all that stubborn force of will which is characteristic of the Hebrews, and as frustrating the advances of the king by the mere naïve intensity of pre-occupied affection": Page 35b: ¶ "We learn that she was an inhabitant of Shulem or Shunem in Issachar, whom the king and his train surprised in a garden on the occasion of a royal progress through the north. Her beauty drew from the ladies of the court a cry of admiration": And page 36b: ¶ "A poem in the northern dialect, with a northern heroine and scenery,

contrasting the pure simplicity of Galilee with the corrupt splendour of the court of Solomon, is clearly the embodiment of one phase of the feeling which separated the ten tribes from the house of David. The kingdom of Solomon was an innovation on old traditions partly for good and partly for evil. But novelties of progress and novelties of corruption were alike distasteful to the north, which had long been proud of its loyalty to the principles of the good old times. The conservative revolution of Jeroboam was in great measure the work of the prophets, and must therefore have carried with it the religious and moral convictions of the people. An important element in these convictions, which still claims our fullest sympathy, is powerfully set forth in the Canticles, and the deletion of the book from the canon, providentially averted by the allegorical theory, would leave us without a most necessary complement to the Judean view of the conduct of the ten tribes which we get in the historical books. Written in a spirit of protest against the court of Zion, and probably based on recollections of an actual occurrence, the poem cannot be dated long after the death of Solomon."

Sexto :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the aforesaid article "Bible," published in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* at page 638b, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet* : ¶ "The assertion that no Psalm is certainly David's is hyper-sceptical, and few remains of ancient literature have an authorship so well attested as the 18th or even as the 7th Psalm. These, along with the indubitably Davidic poems in the book of Samuel, give a sufficiently clear image of a very unique genius, and make the ascription of several other poems to David extremely probable. So, too, a very strong argument claims Psalm ii. for Solomon, and in later times we have sure landmarks in the psalms of Habakkuk (Hab. iii.) and Hezekiah (Isaiah xxxviii.). But the greater part of the lyrics of the Old Testament remain anonymous, and we can only group the Psalms in broad masses, distinguished by diversity of historical situation and by varying degrees of freshness and personality. As a rule the older Psalms are the most personal, and are not written for the congregation, but flow from a present necessity of individual (though not individualistic) spiritual life. This current of productive psalmody runs apparently from David down to the Exile, losing in the course of centuries something of its original freshness and fire, but

gaining a more chastened pathos and a wider range of spiritual sympathy. Psalm li., obviously composed during the desolation of the temple, marks, perhaps, the last phase of this development." As also in the same article "Bible," you expressed yourself in the terms already quoted under heads "Primo" and "Secundo." As also in the same article "Bible," page 640b, in the said Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* you expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*: ¶ "In the period of Exile more than one anonymous prophet raised his voice; for not only the 'Great Unnamed' of Isaiah xl.-lxvi., but the authors of other Babylonian prophecies, are probably to be assigned to this time."

Septimo:—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the aforesaid article "The Question of Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent," published in the *British Quarterly Review*, of April 1870, and at the pages aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 326: ¶ "The prophets prophesied into the future, but not directly to the future. Their duties lay with their own age, and only by viewing them as they move amidst their contemporaries does the critic learn to love and to admire them": Page 323: ¶ "True prophecy is always ideal, seeking to grasp, not the immediate future, but the eternal and unchanging principle which Jehovah, the living God, is ever working out more fully among his people. The critical study of prophecy has done no greater service than to point out how small a fraction of the prophetic writings is strictly predictive." As also in the said article "Bible," published in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, at page 640a, you expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*: ¶ "The prophecies contain—1st, reproof of present sin; 2nd, exhortation to present duty; 3rd, encouragement to the godly and threatening to the wicked, based on the certainty of God's righteous purpose. In this last connection prophecy is predictive. It lays hold of the ideal elements of the theocratic conception, and depicts the way in which, by God's grace, they shall be actually realised in a Messianic age, and in a nation purified by judgment and mercy. But in all this the prophet starts from present sin, present needs, present historical situations. There is no reason to think that a prophet ever received a revelation which was not spoken directly and pointedly to his own time." As also in article, "The Sixteenth Psalm," published in *The Expositor*, No. XXIII., of November 1876, at the pages

aftermentioned you expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 369 : ¶ “ That the sixteenth psalm delineates an ideal which throughout the Old Testament dispensation was never realised fully,—that is, in a whole life,—but which only expressed the highest climax of subjective conviction, was not felt to detract from its religious truth. Nay, in religion the ideal *is* the true. The destiny of him who is admitted into full fellowship with God *is* life, and if that fellowship has never yet been perfectly realised, it must be realised in time to come in the consummation of God’s kingdom and righteousness. This, like other glorious promises of God, is deferred because of sin ; but, though deferred, is not cancelled. Thus the Psalm, originally an expression of direct personal persuasion, must necessarily in its place in the Old Testament liturgy, have acquired a prophetic significance, and so must have been accepted as parallel to such highest anticipations of eschatological prophecy as Isaiah xxv. 8—‘ He hath swallowed up death for ever ’ ” : Page 370 : ¶ “ We may say, then, that in the mouth of the Psalmist himself our Psalm did not set forth a remote prophecy or a religious problem, but a truth of direct spiritual intuition. But accepted into the Old Testament liturgy as an expression of the faith of Israel, and so confronted with that experience of sin and imperfect communion with God of which the Old Testament was so sensible, it necessarily became part of a problem which runs through the whole dispensation, while at the same time it was a help towards the solution of the problem. Like other Psalms, in which the ideal is developed in the teeth of the empirical, it came to possess a prophetic value for the Church, and it was felt to set forth truth only in so far as it was transferred from the present to the future ” : Page 371 : ¶ “ The Psalm is fulfilled in Christ, because in Christ the transcendental ideal of fellowship with God which the Psalm sets forth becomes a demonstrated reality. And becoming true of Christ, the Psalm is also true of all who are his, and in the Psalmist’s claim to use it for himself the soundness of his religious insight is vindicated ; for Christ faced death not only for Himself, but as our Surety and Head.”

Octavo :—You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the aforesaid article “ Angel,” published in the foresaid Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* at the pages aftermentioned, expressed yourself as follows, *videlicet*, page 27a :—“ It is indeed certain,—to pass to the second side of the doctrine,—that the angelic figures of

the Bible narrative are not mere allegories of divine providence, but were regarded as possessing a certain superhuman reality. But this reality is matter of assumption rather than of direct teaching. Nowhere do we find a clear statement as to the creation of the angels [Gen. ii. 1 is ambiguous, and it is scarcely legitimate in Psalm cxlviii. to connect ver. 2 with ver. 5]. That they are endowed with special goodness and insight, analogous to human qualities, appears as a popular assumption, not as a doctrine of revelation (1 Sam. xxix. 9; 2 Sam. xiv. 17, xix. 27)”: Page 28a: ¶ “The angelology of the New Testament attaches closely to the notions already developed.” As also in the same article, page 26b: ¶ “The angelophany is a theophany as direct as is possible to man. The idea of a full representation of God to man, in all his revealed character, by means of an angel, comes out most clearly for the angel that leads Israel in the very old passage, Exodus xxiii. 20, ff. This angel is sent before the people to keep them in the way and bring them to Canaan. He speaks with divine authority, and enforces his commands by divine sanctions, ‘for my name [*i.e.* the compass of my revealed qualities] is in him.’ The question naturally arises, how the angel who possesses these high predicates stands related to angels who elsewhere appear not representing the whole self-manifestation of God to his people, but discharging isolated commissions. The Biblical data for the solution of this question are very scanty.”

All which, or part thereof, being found proven against you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, by the said Free Presbytery of Aberdeen, before which you are to be tried, or being admitted by your own judicial confession, you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, ought to be subjected to such sentence as the gravity of the case, the rules and discipline of the Church, and the usage observed in such cases, may require for the glory of God, the edification of the Church, and the deterring of others holding the same sacred office, from committing the like offences in all time coming.

Signed at Aberdeen, in name and presence and by appointment of the Free Presbytery of Aberdeen this day of
Eighteen hundred and seventy-eight years.

APPENDIX C

THE AMENDED LIBEL (1878-79)

MR. WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH, Professor of Oriental Languages and Exegesis of the Old Testament at Aberdeen, you are indicted and accused, at the instance of the Free Presbytery of Aberdeen :—

That whereas the publishing and promulgating of opinions which contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or any part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also, the publishing and promulgating of *writings concerning the books of Scripture which, by their ill-considered and unguarded setting forth of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration, and authority of any of the books of Scripture, and on the doctrines of angels and prophecy, as the said truth, inspiration, and authority, and doctrines of angels and prophecy, are set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith* ; as also the publishing and promulgating of writings concerning the books of Holy Scripture, which writings, by their neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and by their rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Scriptures, tend to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of these books, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, are severally offences, especially in a Professor of Divinity, which call for such censure or other judicial sentence as may be found adequate ; and more particularly :—

Primo :—Albeit the opinion that the Aaronic priesthood, and at least a great part of the laws and ordinances of the Levitical system,

were not divinely instituted in the time of Moses, and that those large parts of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, which represent them as having been then instituted by God, were inserted in the inspired records long after the death of Moses :—

Secundo :—Albeit the opinion that the book of inspired Scripture called Deuteronomy, which is professedly an historical record, does not possess that character, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age, who therein, in the name of God, presented in dramatic form, instruction and laws as proceeding from the mouth of Moses, though these never were, and never could have been uttered by him :—

Tertio :—Albeit opinions which lower the character of the inspired writings to the level of uninspired, by ignoring their divine authorship, and by representing the sacred writers as taking freedoms and committing errors like other authors ; as giving explanations that were unnecessary and incorrect ; as putting fictitious speeches into the mouths of their historical characters ; as giving inferences of their own for facts ; as describing arrangements as made use of in their complete form at a certain time which were not completed till long afterwards ; and as writing under the influence of party spirit and for party purposes :—

Quarto :—Albeit the presentation of opinions which discredit the authenticity and canonical standing of books of Scripture by imputing to them a fictitious character ; by attributing to them what is disparaging ; and by stating discrediting opinions of others, without any indication of dissent therefrom :—

Quinto :—Albeit the opinion that the portion of Scripture known as Canticles, although included among the books which in the Confession of Faith are declared to have been immediately inspired by God, is devoid of any spiritual significance, and only presents a high example of virtue in a betrothed maiden, without any recognition of the divine law, and that its deletion from the canon was providentially prevented by the prejudice in favour of an allegorical interpretation, to the effect that “ from verse to verse the song sets forth the history of a spiritual, and not merely of an earthly love ” :—

Sexto :—Albeit opinions which contradict or ignore the testimony given in the Old Testament, and also that of our Lord and His

Apostles in the New Testament, to the authorship of Old Testament Scriptures, upon which authorship most momentous teaching was sometimes based :—

Septimo :—Albeit opinions which disparage prophecy by representing its predictions as arising merely from so-called spiritual insight, based on the certainty of God's righteous purpose, and which exclude prediction in the sense of direct supernatural revelation of events long posterior to the prophet's own age :—

Octavo :—Albeit the opinion that belief in the superhuman reality of the angelic beings of the Bible is matter of assumption rather than of direct teaching ; and that angels are endowed with special goodness and insight analogous to human qualities appears as a popular assumption, not as a doctrine of revelation :—

Albeit that all these opinions, or one or more of them, do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein set forth ; as also *that the writings containing said opinions, or one or more of them, are in relation to the setting forth of such opinions, or one or more of them, writings which by their ill-considered and unguarded setting forth of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration, and authority of one or more of the books of Scripture, and in the doctrine of angels and prophecy as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith ; as also that the writings containing these opinions do exhibit neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Scriptures, tending to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of the books of Holy Scripture, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid :—*

Yet, true it is, and of verity, that you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, are guilty of the said offence of publishing and promulgating opinions which do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or part, or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels therein also set forth :

or otherwise of the said offence of publishing and promulgating *writings concerning the books of Scripture which, by their ill-considered and unguarded setting forth of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration, and authority of books of Scripture, or one or more of them, and on the doctrines of angels and prophecy as set forth in the Scriptures themselves, and in the Confession of Faith*; or otherwise of the said offence of publishing and promulgating writings concerning the books of Holy Scripture, which writings, by their neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and by their rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of Holy Scripture, tend to disparage the divine authority of these books, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, in so far as you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, have published and promulgated or concurred in the publishing and promulgating the following articles and remarks, of which you are the author, *videlicet*: articles "Angel," "Bible," "Canticles," and "Chronicles," in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; also, article "The Sixteenth Psalm," in *The Expositor*, Number XXIII., of November 1876; and article "The Question of Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent," in the *British Quarterly Review* of April 1870; also, "Remarks" by Professor W. R. Smith on a memorandum of the Sub-Committee on the article "Bible" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published in the College Committee's report to the General Assembly; all which publications being to be used in evidence against you, are lodged in the hands of the Clerk of the Presbytery, that you may have an opportunity of seeing the same; of which articles and remarks you have acknowledged yourself to be the author, to the said Free Presbytery of Aberdeen, at its meeting held there on the twelfth day of April, eighteen hundred and seventy-seven; in which articles and remarks you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, express opinions which do contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith, and to the doctrines of prophecy and angels also therein set forth: or otherwise, *the said articles or remarks, or one or more of them, are writings concerning the books of Scripture which, by their ill-considered and unguarded setting forth of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration, and authority of books of Scripture, or one*

or more of them, and on the doctrines of angels and prophecy as set forth in the Scriptures themselves, and in the Confession of Faith: or otherwise the said articles and remarks, of which you are the author, exhibit neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines, and rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Holy Scriptures, tending to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of the books of Scripture, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith. More particularly and without prejudice to the said generality :—

[The remainder of the document shows no alterations.]

APPENDIX D

THE SHORT LIBEL (1879-80)

MR. WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH, Professor of Oriental Languages and Exegesis of the Old Testament at Aberdeen, you are indicted and accused, at the instance of the Free Presbytery of Aberdeen :—

That whereas the publishing and promulgating of opinions which contradict or are opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or any part or parts thereof, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves, and in the Confession of Faith, is an offence, especially in a Professor of Divinity, which calls for such censure or other judicial sentence as may be found adequate ; and more particularly :—

Albeit the opinion that the book of inspired Scripture, called Deuteronomy, which is professedly an historical record, does not possess that character, but was made to assume it by a writer of a much later age, who therein, in the name of God, presented, in dramatic form, instructions and laws as proceeding from the mouth of Moses, though these never were, and never could have been uttered by him :—

And albeit this opinion contradicts or is opposed to the doctrine of the immediate inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as set forth in the Scriptures themselves, and in the Confession of Faith as aforesaid :—

Yet, true it is, and of verity, that you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, are guilty of the said offence, in so far as you, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, have published and promulgated, or concurred in the publishing and promulgating, the following article and remarks, of which you are the author, *videlicet*,

the article "Bible," in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and also "Remarks by Professor W. R. Smith on a Memorandum of the Sub-Committee on the article 'Bible' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*," published in the College Committee's report to the General Assembly; which publications being to be used in evidence against you, are lodged in the hands of the Clerk of the Presbytery, that you may have an opportunity of seeing the same; of which article and remarks you have acknowledged yourself to be the author to the said Free Presbytery of Aberdeen, at its meeting held there on the twelfth day of April, Eighteen hundred and seventy-seven. More particularly, and without prejudice to the said generality:—

You, the said Mr. William Robertson Smith, in the foresaid article "Bible," published in the foresaid edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, expressed yourself, at page 637b, as follows, *videlicet*: ¶ "Now the Book of Deuteronomy presents a quite distinct type of style, which, as has been already mentioned, recurs from time to time in passages of the later books, and that in such a connection as to suggest to many critics since Graf the idea that the Deuteronomic hand is the hand of the last editor of the whole history from Genesis to Kings, or at least, of the non-Levitical parts thereof. This conclusion is not stringent, for a good deal may be said in favour of the view that the Deuteronomic style, which is very capable of imitation, was adopted by writers of different periods. But even so it is difficult to suppose that the legislative part of Deuteronomy is as old as Moses. If the law of the kingdom in Deuteronomy xvii. was known in the time of the Judges, it is impossible to comprehend Judges viii. 23, and above all 1 Samuel viii. 7. That the law of high places given in this part of the Pentateuch was not acknowledged till the time of Josiah, and was not dreamed of by Samuel and Elijah, we have already seen. The Deuteronomic law is familiar to Jeremiah, the younger contemporary of Josiah, but is referred to by no prophet of earlier date. And the whole theological standpoint of the book agrees exactly with the period of prophetic literature, and gives the highest and most spiritual view of the law, to which our Lord Himself directly attaches His teaching, and which cannot be placed at the beginning of the theocratic development without making the whole history unintelligible. Beyond doubt the book is, as already hinted, a prophetic legislative programme; and if the author put his work in the mouth of Moses instead of giving

APPENDIX E

THE SECOND CASE

I. THE INCRIMINATED ARTICLE

As stated in the text, the Second Case arose chiefly out of the publication, in June 1880, of the article "Hebrew Language and Literature" in vol. xi. of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In that article nearly all the statements to which special attention was ultimately called occur in p. 597 (col. *b*) and in pp. 598 and 599; these portions of the article are accordingly reprinted here, the passages to which public notice was directed by Mr. Macaulay in July being marked by dotted lines down the margin, while those afterwards noted by the Committee of Commission are denoted by continuous lines and by reference numbers.

[p. 597*b*] The fall of the Jewish kingdom accelerated the decay of Hebrew as a spoken language. Not indeed that the captives forgot their own tongue in Babylon, as older scholars supposed on the basis of Jewish tradition. The Exilic and post-Exile prophets do not write in a lifeless tongue, and Hebrew was still the language of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah (ch. xiii.) in the middle of the 5th century B.C. But after the Exile the petty people of the Jews were in daily intercourse with a surrounding Aramaean population, and the Aramaic tongue, which was the official language of the western provinces of the Persian empire, began to take rank as the recognized medium of polite intercourse and letters even among tribes of Arabic blood—the Nabatæans whose inscriptions in the Hauran are written in Aramaic. Thus Hebrew as a spoken language gradually yielded to its more powerful neighbour, and the style of the latest Old Testament writers is not only full of Aramaic

words and forms but largely coloured with Aramaic idioms, while their Hebrew has lost the force and freedom of a living tongue (Ecclesiastes, Esther, some Psalms, Daniel) The Chronicler no longer thoroughly understood the Old Hebrew sources from which he worked, while for the latest part of his history he used a Jewish Aramaic document, part of which he incorporated in the book of Ezra.

ii. 1

[p. 598a]

. . . The forms of the old Semitic alphabet are most suitable to be cut on stone, and indicate a special adaptation for monumental inscriptions (*cf.* the two tables of the Decalogue). Between the beginnings of such inscriptions and the general use of writing for literary purposes a considerable period might intervene. The earliest products of Hebrew authorship seem to have been lyrics and laws, which would circulate in the first instance from mouth to mouth without the use of written copies. We have notice of early written collections of lyrics prior to our present historical books—the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah* (Num. xxi. 14) and the *Book of Jashar* (Josh. x., 2 Sam. i.). We have no clue to the age of the former book, but the lines quoted from it are plainly of great antiquity. The *Book of Jashar* is not earlier than the time of Solomon; for a fragment from it referring to the building of the temple has been recovered from the Septuagint of 1 Kings viii. (Wellhausen in Bleek, *ut supra*, p. 236). The earliest date of written law books is uncertain. It may fairly be made a question whether Moses left in writing any other laws than the commandments on the tables of stone. Even Ex. xxiv. 4 and xxxiv. 27 may in the original context have referred to the ten words alone. And it is certain that ancient law was handed down by oral tradition and local custom to a much later date. The prophets frequently allude to the oral decisions of the priests as a source of law, and the practice of appealing to the local customs of certain towns is alluded to in 2 Sam. xx. 18 (as restored by Ewald from the LXX.)—"Ask at Abel and at Dan whether the genuine old statutes of Israel have lost their force." In like manner the story of the early fortunes of the nation down to the time of David often presents characteristics which point to oral tradition as its original source. Yet written history began comparatively early. A scribe was attached to the royal court from the reign of David downwards; and the older parts of the books of Samuel, which must have been written not long after the time of that king (see DAVID), are framed in a masterly style, which shows that the art of composition in prose was already thoroughly understood. So too the best written and most brilliant

iii. 1

iii. 2

iii. 4
[p. 598b]

iii. 4

part of the narrative of the Pentateuch—the combined history of the Jehovist and the non-Levitical Elohist—appears to be unquestionably earlier than the rise of prophetic literature in the 8th century B.C. In this narrative—itsself the product of more than one writer—are included several collections of old laws, so that we have between the time of David and the age of Amos and Hosea a flourishing historical and legal literature, in which and in lyrical collections like the *Book of Jashar* were embodied many poems, legends, and other remains, transmitted, whether orally or by writing, from a much earlier date. To the same period may be assigned the most interesting and graphic histories in the book of Kings, the splendid episode of Elijah, and other remains of Ephraïtic history; and to these must probably be added the main stock of the Song of Solomon, though this lyric drama has suffered much from interpolation, and presumably was not written down till a comparatively late date and from imperfect recollection, so that its original shape is very much lost. It is mainly

ii. 2

from the admirable prose narratives, to which nothing in later books can be compared, that we must judge of the first bloom of Hebrew literature under the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Ephraïm, before the convulsions that accompanied the advance of Assyria and prior to the influence of written prophecy. It is a literature eminently fresh and vivacious, full of exact observation of nature and of men, always drawing directly from life, and working on the reader not by elaborate description but by dramatic presentation of character and action. The authors are too intent upon the story to interpose their own comments or point a moral, but they tell their tale with sympathy and often with an undercurrent of dry humour. It can hardly be said that the writings of this period have a specifically religious purpose. Reflecting with admirable veracity the actual life of the nation they are full of the relation between Israel and Jehovah, because that relation was constantly present to the people as a very real fact without which the history could not be told. It is to this circumstance that we owe the preservation of so large a mass of early prose, which was taken over and incorporated in their works by later historians who wrote with a distinctly religious purpose; while on the other hand the early lyric collections have disappeared, all but a few fragments, presumably because their tone was prevalingly secular. That the Hebrews once possessed a poetry of high merit drawn from the themes of ordinary life appears, not only from the book of Canticles and such relics as the Song of the Well

(Num. xxi. 17, 18), but from the names of popular airs preserved in the titles of the Psalms. Thus we learn from Isa. lxxv. 8 that the title *Al-Taschith* (Ps. lvii.) is taken from a vintage song of which the first line was "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." These popular songs, then, survived the Exile and long continued to live in the mouths of the people. But they were without interest to the later guardians of Israel's literature, and fell into oblivion when Hebrew ceased to be the vernacular of the nation. A last echo of the festal songs of the Jewish maidens in the Talmud (*Mishna Ta'anit*, iv. 8, and the corresponding Gemara) shows only the total decay of the popular muse.

In this earliest period—the age of popular literature, as we may call it, modelled upon the songs and histories that circulated orally through the country—there is a remarkable preponderance of writings connected with the northern kingdom, and these include the narratives that are fullest of human interest and the poetry richest in colour and imagination, such as the loves of Jacob and Rachel, the history of Joseph, the life of Elijah, the pictures of nature in the Canticles. The political and social superiority of Ephraim before the conflict with Assyria is reflected in the literature. A new epoch begins with the rise of written prophecy in the 8th century. By this time writing and literary knowledge were widely diffused (Isa. viii. 1 ; xxx. 8 ; x. 19).¹ Amos, himself an excellent stylist, in whose book only perverse ingenuity can trace marks of rusticity ("imperitum sermone," says Jerome), was a simple herdsman in the wilderness of Judah. Yet it appears that the origin of written prophecy was due less to the spread of education than to the rise of a new school of men whose whole method and aims were in conflict with the official prophetic societies, the unworthy successors of Samuel and Elijah.

In the terrible struggle with Nineveh, when the kingdom of Ephraim perished and Judea seemed lost beyond hope, the new prophecy, clear of vision when all were blinded, calm in its unshaken faith of ultimate victory, and pursuing with unflinching steadfastness a great purpose of righteousness, established a spiritual and intellectual ascendancy which is stamped on the whole literature of the Assyrian and Chaldean periods. In the book of Deuteronomy the ancient ordinances of Israel were rewritten in the prophetic spirit, and the reformation carried out by Josiah on the

¹ In the 7th century written instruments were used in sales of property (Jer. xxxii. 10), and in divorce cases they are recognised in Deut. xxiv. 1.

i. 3

[p. 599a]

iv. 3

i. 2, iv. 1

basis of this book is the decisive proof of the influence of the written word as the organ of prophetic ideas. The same influence can be traced in other directions,—in Psalms that express the type of individual faith, and in the historical books as they were finally shaped after the fall of Jerusalem, when the old popular narrative was filled out and continued in a spirit of prophetic pragmatism, and with the direct object of enforcing prophetic teaching. The Exile, which robbed Israel of every other inheritance, gave increased value and authority to the written word, and in the author of Isa. xl.-lxvi. we find a prophet who no longer appears in person before his audience but does his whole work by the pen. There are other short prophecies of the Babylonian age, as Isa. xiii., xiv., which seem to have been first published as anonymous broadsides—a characteristic change from the method of the former prophets, who wrote only what they had first spoken to the people. The earliest written prophecy is nervous rhetoric of the old pregnant Hebrew style interspersed with bursts of song. Even before the Exile this style had undergone a change; the prophecies of Jeremiah have lost something of the old force, while they display a subtler habit of reflexion and a pathos which has its origin in the conflict of a sensitive and shrinking temperament with the overpowering sense of prophetic duty. Jeremiah was much occupied with the dark problems of providence and the meaning of the sufferings of the faithful in Israel, a topic which goes beyond the sphere of the earlier prophecy, but forms a chief theme of Isa. xl.-lxvi., and from a different point of view is taken up and discussed in the book of Job. The last-named book is the highest utterance of another characteristic form of Hebrew literature, the Chokma, that is, wisdom or practical philosophy in parabolic, epigrammatic, and poetic form. The earliest distinct trace of literary cultivation of this philosophy, which from its nature must at first have passed unwritten from mouth to mouth, is the collection of ancient proverbs by scholars in the service of Hezekiah (Prov. xxv. 1). Along with the simple epigrammatic proverbs which continued to be a favourite vehicle of Jewish thought long after Hebrew had given way to Aramaic, the earliest form of Hebrew wisdom seems to have been the fable about plants and trees (Judges xi., 2 Kings xiv. 9, *cf.* 1 Kings iv. 33), so different from the animal fables of Kalilag and Damnag or Sindbân, which the later Semitic literature borrowed from India. The further development of the Chokma ran parallel with the progress of prophecy, and though it is generally maintained that Jeremiah quotes the

[p. 599b]

i. 4 | book of Job, it is perhaps more likely that the contrary is the case, and that the latest and most meditative phase of prophecy was absorbed into the poetry of the Chokma. The brief revival of spoken prophecy after the Exile lacks the old fire, and presents no notable literary feature except the use of somewhat fantastic symbolic imagery, the prototype of the later apocalyptic literature.

iii. 5 | The decadence of prophecy and the synchronous systematisation of the ceremonial law on lines first drawn by Ezekiel, mark the commencement of the third and last period of Hebrew literature. The age of religious productivity was past, and the narrow limits and political nullity of the new Jewish settlement under the Persians presented no favourable conditions for a fresh development of truly national literature. The scribes took the place of the prophets, and the growth of traditionalism imposed increasing restrictions on original thought. The freshest and best products of this period are the post-Exile Psalms, the hymns of the second temple, which occupy a large part of the Psalter, and, though generally inferior to the older lyrics in the highest poetical qualities, are often full of the charm of genuine feeling and sweet utterance, and sometimes rise to a sublime energy of devotion and faith. With these Psalms the graceful prose idyll of Ruth has a natural affinity. The other writings of the last age are on the whole much inferior. As the language decayed, the graces of the older prose style were lost. The memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, the colourless narrative of the Chronicles, and even the book of Esther, are singularly destitute of literary merit.

i. 1 |

iii. 5 | Yet letters were sedulously cultivated. The *Midrash*, or sermonising treatment of the old history which holds so large a place in later Jewish literature, had come in before the time of the Chronicler, who quotes a work of the kind by name—the Midrash of the Book of Kings (2 Chron. xxiv. 27, cf. xiii. 22). Along with this came the beginnings of Haggada, the formation of parables and tales attached to historical names, of which the book of Jonah is generally taken as an early example, and which attains much greater dimensions in the apocryphal additions to the Hagiographa. And so at the close of the Old Testament period the author of Ecclesiastes could speak of the weariness of much study and the endless sterility of bookmaking. His judgment was confirmed by posterity, for of these many books scarcely a trace remains.

The Cultivation of Hebrew as a Dead Language.—We have seen that when the latest books of the Old Testament

iv. 2 | were written Aramaic had already supplanted Hebrew as the language of common life. But the knowledge of the ancient idiom was kept alive not merely by the study of the sacred books but by the continued use of Hebrew for literary purposes. Several books of the Apocrypha appear to be translated from Hebrew originals—Sirach, Judith, 1 Mac.—the last according to the express testimony of Jerome. It is even probable that the Old Testament canon contains elements as late as the epoch of national revival under the Maccabees (Daniel, certain Psalms), for Hebrew was the language of religion as well as of scholarship.

2. REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF AUGUST COMMISSION

This Report, laid before the October Commission, was as follows :—

THE COMMITTEE have acted under the following deliverance of the Commission of the General Assembly—

“ That the Commission, having respect to the letter of Professor Smith transmitted by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and to the representations made to them by so many Presbyteries as to the writings of Professor Smith, to which attention has been called since last General Assembly, and considering the widespread uneasiness and alarm as to the character of these writings, resolve to appoint a Committee maturely to examine them and the letter of Professor Smith, and to consider their bearing upon the accepted belief and teaching of the Church ; to report their opinion and advice to an *in hunc effectum* meeting of Commission, which is hereby appointed to be held on 27th October next, at eleven o'clock, that they may be prepared to take such action in this matter as may appear requisite ; and the Commission hereby cite Professor Smith to appear for his interest at this *in hunc effectum* meeting, and instruct the clerks to see that a citation is served upon him in due form.”

The writings of Professor Robertson Smith which the Committee have examined, and to which reference is made in the following Report, were :—

1. Article on “ Haggai ” in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xi.
2. Article on “ Hebrew Language and Literature ” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xi.
3. Article on “ Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament,” *Journal of Philology*, vol. ix. 75-100.
4. Letter by Professor Smith to the Clerk of the Presbytery of Aberdeen.

In discharging the duties entrusted to them by the Commission of the General Assembly, the Committee deem it of the utmost importance to

call attention to the fact that there are questions specially raised in the writings of Professor R. Smith which are quite new in cases occurring in the history of the Church of Scotland. So far as the Committee are aware, in any processes for heresy, the infallible truth of Holy Scripture has been assumed, and the matter to be determined was whether the teaching of the accused individual was in harmony with the truth as exhibited in Scripture and formulated in the Confession of Faith. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contained in the books which are specified in chapter i. section ii. of the Confession of Faith, have always been regarded as the Supreme Standard of truth and duty, and the Confession of Faith only as subordinate to these. The first and fundamental testimony of every office-bearer ordained is that he believes the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners; and Commissioners to the General Assembly are annually pledged to determine in all matters that shall come before them according to the Word of God. Regarding Holy Scripture the Confession of Faith declares that God is "the author thereof"; that it is to be received "because it is the Word of God"; and that "the Supreme Judge by which all controversies in religion are to be determined can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture."

But the questions raised by these writings of Professor R. Smith are questions which affect that authority of the Supreme Standard of the Church which is asserted in and assumed throughout the Confession of Faith. The Committee do not impute to Professor R. Smith the intention of assailing the integrity and authority of Scripture in the writings they have examined, but the statements made by him in many particulars are such as are fitted, and can hardly fail, to produce upon the minds of readers the impression that Scripture does not present a reliable statement of truth, and that God is not the author of it; and it greatly concerns the character and credit of the Free Church to make it clear, in opposition to any such impressions, that she holds firmly, and will maintain, the infallible truth and authority of Scripture as the Word of God.

The particulars referred to are classified under four heads:—

I. Passages in which the Books of Scripture are spoken of in an irreverent manner. They are four in number, and are marked in the reprint given above as i. 1, i. 2, i. 3, and i. 4.

II. Passages in which the Books of Scripture are spoken of in such a way as to render it very difficult for readers to regard God as the author of them. Three in all, two of which are marked above as ii. 1, ii. 2. The third is a passage from the article "Haggai," in which it is suggested that in a specified instance it appears probable that the Chronicles had somewhat dislocated the order of certain events.

III. Passages which naturally suggest that Scripture does not give an authentic narrative of facts or actual occurrences. Seven in all, five of which are marked above as iii. 1, iii. 2, iii. 4, iii. 5, and iii. 7. Of the remaining items the third is taken from the article in the *Journal of Philology*, which says that "the laws of incest, as given in Lev. xviii., xx., belong to a part of the Levitical legislation which presents considerable difficulties to critics; but, at any rate, they are later than the code of Deuteronomy"; the sixth is Smith's statement (*E.B.* xi. 595a) that Eber in Genesis is not to be taken as an actual personage, "thus throwing doubt on the genealogy of Abraham, and therefore on the genealogy of our Lord"; and the seventh is Smith's attributions of Jer. l. 1 to an "anonymous writer."

IV. Passages which discredit prophecy in its predictive aspect. Three in all, marked above as iv. 1, iv. 2, and iv. 3. It is explained that iv. 3 "appears to be at variance with the plain teaching of our Lord, who says (John v. 46) . . . 'Moses . . . wrote of me.'"

The Report then goes on to say:—

The particulars here adduced are not meant to be exhaustive. They are presented as specimens of the manner in which Professor R. Smith handles the books of Scripture. The whole tendency of the writings examined by the Committee is fitted to throw the Old Testament history into confusion, and at least to weaken, if not to destroy, the very foundation on which New Testament doctrine is built.

Moreover, the general method on which he proceeds conveys the impression that the Bible may be accounted for by the same laws which have determined the growth of any other literature, inasmuch as there is no adequate recognition of the Divine element in the production of the Book.

The Committee accordingly recommend the Commission to take steps for making it evident that the Free Church cannot sanction the kind of teaching animadverted upon in this Report, which these writings would justify, and for urging the General Assembly to declare to her people and to other Churches that she cannot sanction the ideas suggested by it.

3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE COMMISSION

This is given above in Chap. IX.

4. THE JUDGMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY

This will be found in Chap. X.

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Paper on "Prophecy and Personality" for New College Theological Society. January.

1869

Paper on "Christianity and the Supernatural" for New College Theological Society. January.

Paper on "Mill's Theory of Geometrical Reasoning." February 1. See *Proc. R.S.E.* vol. vi.

Paper on "Hegel and the Metaphysics of the Fluxional Calculus." May 17. See *Trans. R.S.E.* vol. xxv.

Presidential Address for New College Theological Society on "The Work of a Theological Society" (August 25-October 29). Delivered November.

Letter on "Newton and Hegel" in *Edinburgh Courant* in reply to Dr. Hutchison Stirling. December 29.

1870

Letter in *Edinburgh Courant* on "Newton and Hegel." January 18, 1870.

Letter in *Edinburgh Courant* on "Newton and Hegel." January 21, 1870.

Paper "On the Flow of Electricity in Conducting Surfaces," February 21. See *Proc. R.S.E.* vol. vii.

Article on "The Question of Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent" in *British Quarterly Review*. April 1870.

Paper "On Professor Bain's Theory of Euclid, I. 4." June 6. See *Proc. R.S.E.* vol. vii.

Lecture on Nazarites. June 15-19.

Lectures on Prophets; Prophetic Work of Moses; the Name Jhvh; Place of Prophecy from Moses onwards. August.

What History teaches us to seek in the Bible. November 1870.

Lecture on Habakkuk. December.

1871

- Lectures on Prophecy from Samuel onwards. January.
 General Statement as to Fulfilment of Prophecy (Newman).
 January. Haggai, Joel, Amos.
 Lecture on Moses. March 22.
 Lectures on Select Psalms. April.
 Review of Crawford *On the Atonement* in *Daily Review*. May 19,
 1871.
 Lecture on Micah. May.
 Lectures on Psalm viii. and Heb. ii. 5-9. June.
 Notice of "Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1871.
 Critiques of Williams and Pusey *On the Minor Prophets* (under
 "Old Testament Exegesis") in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1871.
 Communication "On Democritus and Lucretius: a Question of
 Priority in the Kinetical Theory of Matter," by T. M. Lindsay
 and W. R. Smith. Read in Section of Mathematics and
 Physics of British Association, Edinburgh, 1871.
 Paper on "The Place of the Old Testament in Religious Instruction." September 1871.
 Four Lectures on Poetry of Old Testament. September-October.
 Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*. Translator in Preface acknowledges help from Professor Smith.

1872

- Notice of "Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. January.
 Two Lectures on the Psalms. January-March 20.
 Lecture on "The Translation and Use of the Psalms for the Public Worship of the Church." March.
 Books of "Old Testament Exegesis" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. April.
 Review of Roorda's *Micah*, *ibid*.
 Review of Sepp's *Geschiedskundige Nasporingen*, *ibid*.
 Lecture on Antiquities of the Hebrews. September 20.
 Lecture on Sacred Worship of Old Testament and Liturgical Antiquities of Israel. October 7.
 Lecture, "In what Sense is Old Testament Religion not Spiritual?" October 19.
 Lecture on Holiness, Priesthood, Holy Places. November.
 Paper on Jesuits. November 4.
 Lecture on Holiness of Ark. December 15.

1873

- Notice of "German and Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. January 1873.
- Lecture on Ordinances of Great Day of Atonement. February 5.
- On "Dr. Stirling, Hegel, and the Mathematicians" in *Fortnightly Review*. April 1873.
- Letter on "The Hegelian Calculus" in *Fortnightly Review*. April 10.
- Notice of "German and Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. April 1873.
- Notice of "German and Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1873.
- Review of vols. i. and ii. of Ewald's *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* in *Academy*. October 1, 1873.
- Correspondence with G. H. Lewes on "Problems of Life and Mind." Autumn.
- Lectures on Select Psalms. October.
- Rough Notes on Deuteronomy.

1874

- Notice of "Dutch and German Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. January 1874.
- Lectures on Isaiah, 34 ff. February.
- Lectures on Select Psalms.
- Notice of *Studien u. Kritiken* in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. April 1874.
- Review of Davidson's *Grammar and Exercises*, *ibid.*
- Review of Christlieb's *Modern Doubt* in *Daily Review*. May 15.
- On "The Place of Theology in the Work and Growth of the Church" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1874.
- Notice of "German and Dutch Periodicals," *ibid.*
- Letter to *Northern Whig* on Tyndall's British Association Address. August 21, 1874.
- Notice of "German and Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. October.
- Article on "St. Augustine and his English Translators" in *Daily Review*. November 1874.

1875

- Review of Works on "Old Testament Exegesis" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. January 1875.
- Notices of "German Periodicals," *ibid.*
- Review of Græcus Venetus, *ibid.*
- Review of vol. iii. of Ewald's *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* in *Academy*. January 1875.

- Letter on "The Origin of the Jewish Week" in *Nature*. March 11, 1875.
- Notices of "German and Dutch Periodicals" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. April 1875.
- Notices of "German Periodicals"—including a long account of Beyschlag's articles "On the Johannine question" in *Studien u. Kritiken*—in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. October 1875.
- Notice of Kuenen's *Godsdienst Israels*, *ibid.* (?)
- Lecture on Heb. i. 1-ii. 10. November.
- Articles "Angel," "Apostle," "Aramaic Languages," "Ark of the Covenant," "Assidæans" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. ii.
- Articles "Baal" and "Bible" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. iii.
- Proofs of *Unseen Universe*. February-March.

1876

- Lecture on Heb. ii. 10-15. January.
- Article "On the name Jehovah and the Doctrine of Ex. iii. 14" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. January 1876.
- Review of Urwick's *Servant of Jehovah* in *Daily Review*. January 24, 1876.
- Lecture on Heb. ii. 15-18. February.
- Lectures on Hosea.
- Paper on "Psalm xvi." in the *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iv. 341.
- Letter to *Daily Review*. June 13, 1876. Reprinted in Report of College Committee.
- Article on "The Progress of Old Testament Studies" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1876.
- Review of Land's *Principles of Hebrew Grammar* (translated in *Academy* by Poole). September 23, 1876.
- "Remarks on a Memorandum of Sub-committee on the article 'Bible.'" November 8, 1876. Reprinted in Report of College Committee.
- Articles "Canticles" and "Chronicles" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. v.
- Lectures on Prophecy rewritten. From June onwards.

1877

- Lectures on Prophecy rewritten.
- Letter on "Altar Ed" (Josh. xxii. 34) in *Daily Review*. March 7, 1877.
- Review of *The Holy Bible, with various Renderings and Readings* (Cheyne, Driver, etc., 1876) in *Academy*. April 7, 1877.
- Review of Kuenen's *Prophets* in *Aberdeen Daily Free Press*. April 20, 1877.
- Article "On the Study of the Old Testament in 1876" in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. July 1877.
- Article on "Hebrew Poetry" in *British Quarterly Review*. July 1877.

- Article "David" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. vi.
 Article "Decalogue" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. vii.
 Letter on "The Colour Sense of the Greeks" in *Nature*.
 December 6, 1877.
 Review of Curtiss's *Levitical Priests* in the *Scotsman*. December
 29, 1877.

1878

- Answer to the Form of Libel now before the Free Church Presbytery
 of Aberdeen.* Laid before Presbytery on February 12, 1878.
*Additional Answer to the Libel, with some Account of the Evidence
 that Parts of the Pentateuchal Law are later than the Time of
 Moses.* April 16, 1878.
 Articles "Eli," "Eve" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. viii.

1879

- Letters from Egypt and Palestine in *Aberdeen Daily Free Press*.
 January-May.
 Review of Wellhausen's *Geschichte Israels* in *Academy*. May 17,
 1879.
*Answer to the Amended Libel : with an Appendix containing Plea
 in Law.* Laid before Presbytery on July 1, 1879.

1880

- Letters on "A Journey in the Hejâz" in the *Scotsman*. February-
 June.
An Open Letter to Principal Rainy. May 21, 1880.
 On "Animal Worship," etc., in *Journal of Philology*, No. 17
 (vol. ix.). June 1880.
 Review of *A Treatise on the Authorship of Ecclesiastes* in *Academy*.
 July 24, 1880.
Letter to Sir Henry Moncreiff. Printed for Private Circulation.
 October 21, 1880.
 Review of "Professor de Lagarde's Latest Publications" in
Academy. November 20, 1880.
 Communication, through Professor Nöldeke, of some Natural
 History Notes from his Hejâz journey, suggested by Nöldeke's
 Recent Review of Hommel's *Namen der Säugethiere*, etc. The
 notes appear in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen
 Gesellschaft*, 1880, pp. 373-4.
 Articles "Haggai," "Hebrew Language and Literature,"
 "Hebrews (Epistle to)" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xi. June.

1881

- The Old Testament in the Jewish Church : A Course of Lectures
 on Biblical Criticism.* April 1881.

- Review of John F. Keane's *My Journey to Medina* in *Academy*.
June 4, 1881.
- Review of Upton's *Gleanings from the Desert of Arabia* in *Nature*.
June 30, 1881.
- On "Christ and the Angels" (Heb. i.) in the *Expositor*, 2nd
series, i. 25-33.
- On "Christ and the Angels" (Heb. ii. 1-9) in the *Expositor*, 2nd
series, i. 138-147.
- On "Christ and the Angels" (Heb. ii. 10) in the *Expositor*, 2nd
series, ii. 418-427.
- Article on "Arabia" in *Macmillan's Magazine*.
- Article "Hosea" in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xii. March.
- Articles "Japhet," "Jauhary," "Jerusalem," "Jiddah," "Joel,"
"Jonah (Rabbi)," "Jubilee," and "Judges (Book of)" in
Ency. Brit. vol. xiii. November.

1882

- The Prophets of Israel and their Place in History to the Close of the
Eighth Century B.C.* April 1882.
- On "The Chronology of the Books of Kings" in *Journal of Philo-
logy*, No. 20, vol. x., 1882.
- On "Christ and the Angels" (Heb. ii. 11-17) in the *Expositor*,
2nd series, iii. 63-79.
- On "Christ and the Angels" (Heb. ii. 17, 18) in the *Expositor*,
2nd series, iii. 129-139.
- Articles "Kings (Books of)," "Lamech," "Lamentations,"
"Lane, E. W.," "Levites," "Lokman" in *Ency. Brit.*
vol. xiv. July.

1883

- Three Lectures, as Lord Almoner's Professor, on "The Early
Relations of Arabia and Syria, and particularly with Pales-
tine." May 8, 10, and 11.
- Review of Besant's *Life of Palmer* in *Nature*. July 26, 1883.
- Note "On Ex. ix. 31, 32" in *Journal of Philology*, No. 24, vol. xii.,
1883.
- Articles "Malachi," "Mecca," "Medina," "Melchizedec," and
some twenty others—such as "Lucian (the Martyr),"
"Mahdi," "Makalla," "Makkari," "Makrisi," "Masudi"
—in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xv. March.
- Articles "Messiah," "Micah (Book of)," "Michaelis (J. D.),"
"Moloch," and some ten others—such as "Mennonites,"
"Meroe," "Michmash," "Midian," "Mocha"—in *Ency.*
Brit. vol. xvi. October.
- Interesting letter to *The Scotsman* on "The Theological Chairs."
March 30.

1884

- Three Lectures on "The History of Palmyra," followed by an exposition of the Palmyrene dialect and inscriptions, delivered as Lord Almoner's Professor during Easter Term.
- On "The Attitude of Christians to the Old Testament" in the *Expositor*, 2nd series, vii. 241-251.
 ["Prepared and read to introduce a friendly discussion at a Conference representing very various types of Christian thought." In this year Dr. S. Cox's connection with the *Expositor* came to an end, and Smith also, to his great regret, ceased to be a contributor.]
- On "Mohammedan Mahdis"; two papers in *Good Words*, vol. xxv. pp. 531, 620.
- Articles "Nahum," "Nineveh," "Numerals," "Obadiah," and some twenty others, including "Motanabbi," "Muscat," "Nabataeans," "Nazarite," in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xvii. June.

1885

- Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia.*
 [Originally Easter Term Lectures as Lord Almoner's Professor.]
- "Notes on נַעֲרָה," etc., in *Journal of Philology*, No. 25, vol. xiii., 1885.
- Article "On the Forms of Divination and Magic enumerated in Deut. xviii. 10, 11" in *Journal of Philology*; Part I. in No. 26 (vol. xiii.), and Part II. in No. 27 (vol. xiv.).
- Preface to Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel.*
- Articles "Palmer," "Palmyra," "Paradise," "Passover," "Pellicanus," "Petra," "Philistines," "Phoenix," and others in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xviii. February.
- Articles "Priest," "Prophet," and ten others, including "Pico (of Mirandola)," "Pocock (Edward)," "Polyglot," and "Proselyte," in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xix. June.

1886

- Lectures, as Lord Almoner's Professor, on "The Theory of Sacrifice, illustrated by a comparison of Semitic and Greek Ritual" (Easter Term).
- Note on Judges ix. 28 in *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, pp. 195-8. March 1886.
- Review of M'Lennan's *Studies in Ancient History in Nature.* November 4, 1886.
- Articles "Psalms," "Reuchlin," and twenty others in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xx. April 1886.

Articles "Ruth," "Sabbath," "Sacrifice," "Samaria," "Samaritans," "Samuel," "Salt (Ancient History)," "Semiramis," and twenty-five others in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xxi. November.
 In the Preface (January 5) to *Hobson-Jobson*, published in 1886, Sir Henry Yule mentions that Smith had read a set of proofs "for words of Semitic origin, and to him I owe a variety of interesting references to the words treated of, in regard to their occurrence under some cognate form in the Scriptures."

1887

Article on "Ctesias and the Semiramis Legend" in *English Historical Review*. April 1887.
 Article on "Captain Conder and Modern Critics" in *Contemporary Review*. April 1887.
 Article "On the Hebrew root קצע and the word מִקְצָרֵעַ" in *Journal of Philology*, No. 31, vol. xvi., 1887.
 Letter on Poole's *Archæology and the Date of the Pentateuch* in the *Academy*. October 1, 1887.
 Eighteen articles—including "Shiloh," "Socotra," "Suakim," "Suez," "Sylburg," "Synagogue," "Synedrium"—in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xxii. June.
 Article on *Archæology and the Date of the Pentateuch* in *Contemporary Review*. October 1887.

1888

Paper "On the Sacrifice of a Sheep to the Cyprian Aphrodite." Read before the Cambridge Philological Society on January 26, 1888.
 [A brief abstract was given in the *Cambridge University Reporter* (" . . . The key to all this was sought in primitive totemism. Reference was also made to the *Ency. Brit.* article on 'Sacrifice'"), and the paper was reprinted in full as an Additional Note in *The Religion of the Semites* (Note G in 2nd edition).]
 Review of vol. i. of Renan's *Histoire du peuple d'Israël* in *English Historical Review*. 1888.
 Letter on "The Route from Syria to Egypt" in the *Academy*. February 25, 1888.
 Review of vol. i. of Kittel's *Geschichte der Hebräer* in *English Historical Review*. April 1888.
 Articles "Tabernacle," "Tabernacles," "Tarsus," "Temple," "Tischendorf," "Tithes," "Tobit," and twenty-two others in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xxiii. March.
 Articles "Valle," "Volusenus," "Vow," "Walton," "Zephaniah," and eleven others in *Ency. Brit.* vol. xxiv. November.

1889

- Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, First Series : The Fundamental Institutions.* October 1889.
- Letter on Professor Sayce's critique of *The Religion of the Semites* in the *Academy*. December 2, 1889.
- In Preface to *Arabia Deserta* (1888) the author (C. M. Doughty) says : " Professor Robertson Smith aided me, giving thereto much of his valuable time in nearly 400 pages."
- Professor Wellhausen's *Composition des Hexateuchs, etc.*, published in 1889, was dedicated to W. Robertson Smith.

1890

- Review of Rawlinson's *History of Phœnicia* in *English Historical Review*. January 1890.
- Article on " The Nations round about Israel " for the *Cambridge Companion to the Bible* (1893).
- Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages. From the Papers of the late William Wright, LL.D.* (Cambridge, 1890). Edited, to some extent annotated, and prefaced, by Professor Smith. (See especially the Appendix, pp. 277-285.)
- The Golden Bough*, by J. G. Frazer, is dedicated " in gratitude and admiration " to Professor Robertson Smith. See Author's Preface.
- Note " On the route from Amorion to Melagina as given by Edrisi, but more correctly by Ibn-Khordadbeh " in Sir W. M. Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*.

1891

- Review of Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage in Nature*. July 23, 1891.
- Note " On Θαλατθ in Berosus " in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. September 1891.
- Note " On Ex. xxi. 8 " in *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. September 1891.
- " Notes on Hebrew Words " in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. iv.
- In *The Book of Joshua* in the Smaller Cambridge Bible for Schools the editor expresses indebtedness " for much advice and assistance . . . and for many valuable contributions to both introduction and notes, including what I believe to be a new explanation of Joshua x. 12, 13." July 4, 1891.
- In the Preface to his Commentary on the Book of Daniel Professor A. A. Bevan writes : " Professor Robertson Smith has been so good as to read through the greater part of it, either in manuscript or in proof, and to him I owe many valuable suggestions."

1892

- In Nöldeke's *Sketches from Eastern History* (1892) the translator acknowledges help received from Professor Smith.
 Second Edition of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*.
 March 1892.
- In *The Book of Judges* in the Smaller Cambridge Bible for Schools the editor acknowledges "much advice and assistance . . . very specially in connection with the notes on chaps. v. and ix. Professor Smith's initials have been appended to some hitherto unpublished emendations of the text which have been suggested by him." The booklet was published in November 1892. With pardonable, almost paternal, pride Smith wrote (December 7): "'Judges' looks very well. I daresay it will take people some time to discover that it is the principal commentary on the book in the English language." The modest surmise proved to be correct. [See Professor Burkitt in *English Historical Review*. May 1894.]

1893

- Review of vol. ii. of Kittel's *Geschichte der Hebräer* in *English Historical Review*. April 1893.
- "Remarks on Mr. Kay's edition of Omarah's *History of Yemen*" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. April 1893.
 [Mr. Kay replies in same number.]
- "Report on Hæmatite Weight," etc., in *Academy*. November 6, 1893.

1894

- The Religion of the Semites*, 2nd edition, revised throughout by the author.
 [Left author's hands, March 17.]
- In Preface (March 15, 1894) to *The Arabian Horse: his Country and People*, by Major-General Tweedie, C.S.I., 1894, the author says: ". . . The most grateful acknowledgments are also due to Professor W. Robertson Smith of Cambridge. One of the author's first proceedings after his return from Baghdad was to submit the completed MS. to this most eminent scholar and solicit the favour of his reading it in proof. This request was willingly granted, and the result has been a great many valuable corrections and suggestions . . . on points of Semitic lore and scholarship."
- In *The Four Gospels in Syriac . . . with an Introduction* by Agnes Smith Lewis, Cambridge, 1894, Mrs. Lewis says: "While these sheets are passing through the press, another great Semitic scholar, Professor W. Robertson Smith, a man

distinguished for the wonderful scope, both of his sympathies and of his learning, and who presided over the arrangements for publishing this edition, has been taken from our midst."

In *Studia Semitica*, No. II. : *An Arabic Version of the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, etc., from a Ninth Century MS.*, 1894, the editor, Mrs. M. D. Gibson, in her Introduction acknowledges indebtedness to Dr. Robertson Smith, who had pronounced the MS. to be of the ninth century. On his advice the text had been printed in the modern orthography. She concludes with these words: "I am deeply indebted to Professor W. Robertson Smith, the great scholar who first suggested this publication, who watched it with eager and helpful interest till increasing pain and weakness made work impossible, and who has been called to his rest as the last sheet was going through the press. Many of its words and phrases will always be associated with him in my memory, and I desire to add my voice to the chorus of those who will ever mention his name with gratitude."

German Translation of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, by Professor Rothstein. With Preface and Dedication.

1895

In the Preface to his edition of Deuteronomy in the series of *International Critical Commentaries*, Professor Driver acknowledges the assistance given him by Professor Smith. "Unhappily his strength was already undermined by the fatal malady to which ere long he was destined to succumb; and he was not able to supply me with more than a few isolated notes. . . . This most brilliant and accomplished scholar [in his works] has bequeathed a legacy to posterity which will for long continue to be prized by students, and to stimulate reflexion and research."

1896

A Grammar of the Arabic Language . . . by W. Wright, LL.D. Third edition. Revised by W. Robertson Smith and M. J. de Goeje (2 vols.). Professor de Goeje in his Preface says: ". . . The demand for [a New Edition] having become more and more pressing, Professor W. Robertson Smith, who well deserved the honour of succeeding to Wright's Chair, resolved to undertake the task. He began it with his usual ardour, but the illness which cut short his invaluable life soon interrupted the work. At his death fifty-six pages had been printed, whilst the revision had extended over thirty pages more. . . . I have found but very few notes by R. S. on the portion which he had not definitely revised; almost all these have been marked with his initials."

1899

German Translation of *The Religion of the Semites*, by R. Stube.
With Preface by Professor Kautzsch.

1902

The Prophets of Israel, reprinted with Introduction and Additional Notes by the Rev. Professor T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D. Professor Cheyne writes in his Introduction: "It is not too much to say that the present work, though it only now appears in a second edition, has achieved one of the greatest known literary successes in the department of theology."

1903

Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia. New edition, with Additional Notes by the Author and by Professor Ignaz Goldziher, Budapest; edited by Mr. Stanley A. Cook, M.A. Mr. Cook observes in his Preface: "During the nine years which elapsed between its (first) publication and his lamented death, Robertson Smith had collected additional notes and references in his own interleaved copy, and there were indications that he contemplated the preparation of a second edition and had marked out for himself certain features and lines of argument which he proposed to develop."

1899-1903

The *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vols. i.-iv., 1899-1903, edited by the Rev. Professor T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, M.A., LL.D., is dedicated "to the memory of William Robertson Smith." The editors refer in their Preface to Professor Smith's preparations for this work, which had occupied his mind for at least twelve years, but which had been cut short by his illness and death. (See also above, pp. 533, 554.)

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