

A

# BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

OF

## LANCASTER COUNTY:

BEING A HISTORY OF

EARLY SETTLERS AND EMINENT MEN  
OF THE COUNTY;

AS ALSO MUCH OTHER

UNPUBLISHED HISTORICAL INFORMATION, CHIEFLY  
OF A LOCAL CHARACTER.

BY

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NEVIN, JOHN WILLIAMSON, D.D., was born February 20th, 1803, in Franklin county, Pa. He is descended from Scotch-Irish ancestry, and one conspicuous in statesmanship and literature. His paternal grandmother was a sister of the distinguished Hugh Williamson, LL.D., one of the framers of the United States Constitution, and a man noted in the republic of letters. His parents were strict members of the Presbyterian church, and the subject of this notice was early indoctrinated into the religious principles of this influential and respectable body of Christians. His father was a farmer and a man of strong native ability, who had received a liberal education, having graduated at Dickinson college, Carlisle, Pa., then under the presidency of the celebrated Dr. John Nesbit. The subject of this notice being designed by his father for one of the learned professions, he was early introduced by that parent to the knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, preparatory to his entering upon a college career. In the autumn of 1817 he was matriculated as a student in Union college, New York, then under the presidency of Dr. Nott. Although the youngest in his class, he was able to rival in study any of his classmates, and gradu-

ated with honor in 1821. His college course was a severe ordeal for him. Owing to his youth and the close application he had given to study (for his ambition would not allow him to be outstripped by his classmates), he left his Alma Mater with health prostrated, and for the next two years was sickly and unable to engage in any avocation. When at college, he attended a series of revival meetings conducted by a Mr. Nettleton, and professing a change of heart, he united himself as a member of the visible church of Christ.

The bodily prostration that followed his classic career, was accompanied with dyspeptic ailments, and being advised to take plenty of exercise upon his father's farm in his wanderings amongst the fields and woods, he acquired for a time a taste for botanical pursuits. He was in the habit of perambulating for days upon horseback and upon foot in search of plants and flowers; and of these, in a short time, he acquired quite a collection. This course of life was at the time just what was required; and as health began to return, his thoughts recurred to the fancy scenes of Greece and Rome once more. Gradually the study of Cicero and Homer was again taken up; and the sweet flowing language of Fenelon and Bossuet, for which he had an especial taste, was now prosecuted with greater zeal than ever. Martial arder came in for a share of recognition also from our youthful *ad libitum* student, and having united himself in a military company, he was unanimously chosen orderly sergeant.

After his health was found to be quite well restored, and it was perceived that he was again giving much of his attention to study, he was induced, in conformity with the wish of his father, to take up the study of theology. This had from the first been the wish of his parent, but was abandoned when he returned from college, utterly bankrupt in health, and for a long time showed scarcely any signs of returning strength. Accordingly, in pursuance of this view, he entered the theological seminary at Princeton, in the fall of 1823. Ever impelled with a longing and thirst for knowledge, he felt an inexpressible pleasure as soon as the consecrated walls of the seminary had enclosed him. He thereupon made no haste to prosecute his career with great

celerity through the seminary, feeling that in this institution a more congenial home existed for him as a student, than might be found in any other pursuit of which, as yet, he had any knowledge. In the regular theological course of the seminary, he took a special interest in oriental and biblical literature, and made great progress in the study of Hebrew, outstripping in this branch all his classmates. Before the close of his seminary course, he had read the whole Bible in Hebrew, and secured the flattering distinction of being universally admitted as the best Hebrew scholar in the institution. This distinction in Hebrew scholarship was what formed the turning point in his life, and contributed to mould his whole subsequent career. It was owing to this distinction that he was, in 1826, invited to supply the place of Dr. Hodge, who had gone on a visit of two years to Europe for the benefit of the institution. This occupied his attention for the next two years, at the small salary of \$200 per annum, and it was during this period that he wrote his *Biblical Antiquities*, an excellent hand-book of Bible knowledge, and one which has obtained an extensive circulation, not only in America but also in Europe. Upon the return of Dr. Hodge from Europe in 1828, his duties expired at Princeton, and in October of the same year he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Carlisle Presbytery; and to this he now devoted himself for the next year in a more or less itinerant manner.

Before leaving Princeton, he had been selected as the person who should fill the chair of biblical literature in the new Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny city, which the general assembly of the Presbyterian church were taking steps to establish. During this time he became enlisted in the cause of temperance, and, as a consequence, his sermons breathed more or less frequently denunciations of the sin of manufacturing and selling intoxicating liquors. He became exceedingly ardent and condemnatory at times of the dram-shops, and he was by no means careful to discriminate whether his remarks might occasion offence, should some be present whom his castigation might personally affect. This proved to be the case in fact, and in one instance turned

out to his disadvantage. A call of a large and wealthy congregation was about being extended to him, but because he had preached a sermon which inflicted severe censure upon the liquor-selling members, these feeling themselves personally aggrieved, exerted their influence in preventing the call being made. In the spring of 1829 he set out *au cheval* to see after the theological seminary in Allegheny city, and so shaped his arrangements that he should return in the fall and undertake the duties assigned for him in the new institution. On returning home he became stated supply to the congregation at Big Spring, Cumberland county, for four months, and was strongly urged to become the pastor of this congregation. He also, about this time, received a pressing invitation to return to Princeton and become a writer of books for the Sunday School Union; but his mind was now fully made up to go to Allegheny city.

The father of the subject of our notice died in 1829, and this devolved on him, as the oldest of the family, a weight of responsibility he had not heretofore felt. This necessitated him to give some of his time to business affairs, although up to the present period he had charged himself little with matters of this kind. In consequence of the new relations thus devolved upon him by the death of his father, he was not in condition to set out for Allegheny until the beginning of December of this year. When he entered upon the discharge of his duties as instructor in the Western Seminary, he was in the twenty-seventh year of his age. At the time Dr. Nevin entered upon this field of labor, the Western Seminary was but a feeble institution. It "had no buildings, no endowments, no prestige from the past, and only doubtful and uncertain promise for the future." The movements that had secured the establishment of this seminary had met with great opposition; the affections of the east were wedded to Princeton; and in the west great dissatisfaction was felt in its being thought not sufficiently central to meet western wants. Upon western Pennsylvania, as a consequence, devolved the whole responsibility as to the support of this institution. Prof. Luther Halsey and Dr. Nevin labored in the building up of this seminary, and

their labors were crowned with good success. The Western Theological Seminary, which has now become a power in the Presbyterian church, owes much of its prosperity to the assiduity and ability of the subject of our notice. For the three first years of his life in Allegheny, Dr. Nevin made his home in the house of Dr. Francis Herron, president of the board of trustees, and until his mother and her family removed thither.

In 1835 Dr. Nevin was united in marriage with Martha, the second daughter of Hon. Robert Jenkins, of Windsor Place, in Lancaster county. During his whole ten years connection with the Western Seminary, Dr. Nevin continued to preach in different churches, almost as regularly as if in charge of a congregation. At first he officiated simply as a licentiate, but after some time was ordained in full to the ministry by the Presbytery of Ohio. During part of the time he preached with considerable regularity at a young ladies' seminary, at Braddock's Field, near Pittsburg, and afterwards served as stated supply for the congregation of Hilands, some miles out of Pittsburg. He frequently appeared as contributor to the press during his connection with the Western Seminary, and many sermons, delivered by him on special occasions, were published by request of the congregations before whom they were delivered. In 1833-34 he conducted the editorial management of the *Friend*, a literary and weekly journal in the service of the young men's society of Pittsburg and vicinity. This journal, while under the guidance of Dr. Nevin, was the unreserved opponent of infidelity, fashionable amusements, ladies' fairs, and theatrical entertainments; and the views of the editor upon these topics proved the occasion of considerable offence. On account of the opposition made by this journal to the movement set on foot to get up a theatre in Pittsburg, he was threatened with cowhiding; and on another occasion fears of a mob were apprehended, on account of the supposed incendiarism of the *Friend* upon the subject of slavery. For no other reason than the pro-slavery proclivities of the community at that time, was the journal obliged ultimately to succumb, the last issue appearing March 12th, 1835.

Dr. Nevin was ever the staunch and outspoken opponent of slavery in every form, and battled in favor of abolitionism in a truly Christian spirit. He, however, never sympathized with the so-called abolition party of the North, and openly condemned Garrison and his followers as irreligious in spirit and unpatriotic. But the system of slavery, as it existed in the southern States, was, in his opinion, a vast moral evil, and one especially deserving criticism and censure. He never spared the institution in his articles in the *Friend*; and on one occasion he was denounced for this cause by a prominent physician of the place, as "the most dangerous man in Pittsburg." That his opinions upon this point may appear, some extracts from the *Friend* are here adduced. In the journal of April 17th, 1834, he speaks as follows: "We trust that the time is not far distant when, what has been rashly spoken by abolitionists and colonizationists may be forgotten, and the friends of humanity will find themselves able to stand on common ground in regard to the great evil of slavery, without denouncing either the one interest or the other. That abolitionism has exhibited, in some cases, a wildly extravagant form, we have no doubt; but we have just as little doubt that great and powerful principles of truth have been all along laboring underneath its action, and struggling to come to clear and consistent development by its means." In the valedictory issue of the *Friend*, Dr. Nevin thus discourses: "Slavery is a sin as it exists in this country, and as such it ought to be abolished. There is no excuse for its being continued a single day. The whole nation is involved in the guilt of it, so long as public sentiment acquiesces in it as a necessary evil. That which is absolutely necessary for its removal, is the formation of such a public sentiment throughout the country as will make slaveholders ashamed of their wickedness, and finally reform the laws under which the evil now holds its power in the different States. Such a sentiment has not heretofore existed, and it is plain that much discussion and thought are needed to call it into being. There is, therefore, just the same reason for the system of action pursued by the abolition society, with reference to this subject, that there is for the system of the temperance

society with regard to the curse of ardent spirits. The institution and the effort are among the noblest forms of benevolent action witnessed in the present age. We glory then in being an abolitionist, and count it all honor to bear the reproach for such a cause. It is the cause of God, and it will prevail."

When the above sentiments were penned by Dr. Nevin, the Presbyterian church, along with the other churches of the country, was fully committed to the southern side of the slavery question, and considered it a religious, as well as a moral wrong, to meddle in the discussion of this question. The leading religious newspapers were, likewise, hostile to the anti-slavery movement in every form. All the ecclesiastical judicatories, as well as the anniversary meetings of all the great national religious societies, made it a point from year to year to ostracise and repress, by all manner of means, every attempt to get the question of slavery before them. The merest whisper of abolitionism was enough to throw a whole general assembly into agitation. In 1837 Dr. Nevin was unqualified in his dissent from the ecclesiastical policy which divided the Presbyterian church. In the struggle between the two great parties in the church, his sympathies were upon the side of the old school; but he nevertheless entertained the opinion, that the controversy on that side was in certain quarters urged forward in an extreme way. He deprecated especially, the idea of the Pittsburg Synod being forced to take part in the eastern quarrel with regard to Mr. Barnes; and he went so far as to urge seriously, through the *Christian Herald*, Dr. Alexander's plan of relatively independent Synodical jurisdiction. It was during Dr. Nevin's connection with the Western Seminary that he began the study of the German language, which he has succeeded in mastering, and now reads with equal ease and satisfaction as his vernacular. This study he undertook in order to reach the contents of the theological and philosophical works of the deep thinkers of Germany, the land of profound erudition and ripe scholastic attainment. The first work read by him in the German, was Neander's "Geist des Tertullianus." Dr. Nevin by this time had become a man



widely reputed for his attainments in biblical science, and as a theologian of rare penetration and deep philosophical mind. His reputation had far passed the boundary of his own religious persuasion. His services, therefore, became a prize in the eyes of many, and he was tendered on the part of the Synod of the German Reformed church, the professorship of theology in the theological seminary at Mercersburg, Pa. In this call Dr. Nevin seemed to recognize the summons of his Divine Master, to a field in which he might be able to perform more effective service than in the one where he then labored. Accordingly, after mature and serious deliberation, he concluded to accept the position tendered him, and entered upon the duties thereof in May, 1840.

This change of position was not considered to be of itself any change of denominational faith. It was simply a transition from one section of the general *Reformed Confession* to another, and took place accordingly with the full approbation and favor of the friends of Dr. Nevin in the Presbyterian church. It was under the advice and recommendation in particular, of his former theological instructor, the late venerable Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton. Still, like change of position in all cases, it exerted a material influence on the subsequent progress of his spiritual life, and became thus a central epoch for his history. Without taking him out of the Reformed church, it widened his view of its proper constitution and history, enlarged the range of his German studies, brought him into new and closer communication with the theological life of the Lutheran Confession, and in this way made room in his mind more and more for a sense of the catholic, the historical, the objective in Christianity, which may be taken as the key to the whole course of his thinking and working in the church afterwards, down to the present time.

In the theological seminary at Mercersburg, he found himself associated with the well-known German scholar, Frederick Augustus Rauch, who was at the same time president of Marshall college in the same place. The death of Dr. Rauch, March 2d, 1841, left Dr. Nevin in sole charge of the seminary, and made it necessary for him besides to

assume the presidency of the college also; a provisional arrangement in the first place which, however, the wants of the infant institution converted into a permanent one; the office being held by Dr. Nevin, in fact, for ten years afterwards without any salary.

In 1843 Dr. Nevin became involved in what has been known as the "anxious bench controversy," through the publication of his tract called the *Anxious Bench*, directed against the use of certain means and methods (new measures), employed extensively at the time among different denominations in the service of religious revivals. This may be looked upon as the beginning of the movement which has since come to be spoken of as the Mercersburg theology; a movement whose ultimate bearings and consequences were not dreamed of at the time by either side in that first controversy, while they can easily be seen since, nevertheless, to lie all in one and the same direction. The controversy, while it lasted, was carried on with great activity, partly within the German Reformed church itself, but mainly in the end, as between this body and surrounding religious communions.

The same view of Christianity which led to the publication of the *Anxious Bench*, appears also in Dr. Nevin's opposition to another new measure, as we have it represented in his tract on *Religious Fairs*, published towards the close of the same year. This, however, was in the main but little more than what he had published on that subject ten years before, in Pittsburg.

In the fall of 1844 Dr. Nevin received as his colleague in the seminary, Dr. Philip Schaff, who had been brought by special call from Germany to fill the place whose name has since become famous throughout the world, and who is now honored as professor of church history in the Presbyterian theological seminary of New York. On the 25th of October this gentleman delivered his inaugural address at Reading, in the German language, a truly able discussion of the distinctive, original and fundamental meaning of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was the first fair attempt to vindicate the historical right of Protestantism in

this country, and went full against the unhistorical spirit which has all along formed the life and strength of our American sectarianism. This work Dr. Nevin translated and published in 1845, under the title, *The True Principle of Protestantism as related to the Present State of the Church*, with an introduction from his own pen, and by Dr. Schaff's particular desire, with the appendage also of a sermon on *Catholic Unity*, preached by Dr. Nevin the previous year, before a convention of the Dutch and German Reformed churches in Harrisburg, the whole forming a volume of more than 200 pages. Here, of course, was new offence to the general sect-spirit of the land. Anti-popery began to take the alarm, and a formal attempt was made in a Synod held at York, to make out a charge of heresy against the Mercersburg professors, particularly Dr. Schaff, but the result was their triumphant vindication.

The following year, 1846, Dr. Nevin published the "*Mystical Presence*; a vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist." This also led to controversy: Strangely enough, Lutheranism, in certain cases, contended against it by openly forsaking Luther, while Presbyterianism did the same thing, by trying grossly to falsify Calvin.

Looking in the same general direction, we have from the pen of Dr. Nevin, in 1846, *The Church*, a sermon preached at the opening of the German Reformed Synod, at Carlisle; in 1847, *The History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism*; and in 1848, a tract, entitled *Antichrist, or the Spirit of Sect and Schism*. From January, 1849, to January, 1853, he edited the *Mercersburg Review*, published by the alumni association of Marshall college, being himself, during all this time, the chief contributor to its pages. And he has written largely since, also, for the same periodical, as well as for the *Reformed Church Messenger*.

At the close of 1851 Dr. Nevin, much against the wish of the church, resigned his situation as professor in the theological seminary, continuing however to act as president of Marshall college until its removal to Lancaster, in 1853, when it became consolidated with Franklin college, under

the title of Franklin and Marshall college. He was offered the presidency of this new institution, and the place was kept vacant for a whole year, with the hope of his being induced to accept it; but in conformity with his previously declared intention he declined the service, and withdrew into private life, being now in truth much worn out, both in body and mind, and not expecting to take upon him again any public charge. He delivered, however, by special request, a baccalaureate address to the first graduating class of the new college, on the 31st of August, 1853, which was published as a tract, under the title of *Man's True Destiny*.

Leaving Mercersburg, after the removal of the college, Dr. Nevin lived for a year in Carlisle, where he stood in close and pleasant social relations with the professors of Dickinson college. He then came to Lancaster county, residing for a year first in the city; in the next place, from the fall of 1856 to the spring of 1858, making his home, for domestic reasons, at Windsor Forge, near Churchtown, the old mansion property of his wife's father; and finally settling himself permanently, where he has since continued to reside, in the immediate neighborhood of Lancaster city, at Cærnarvon Place. Through these years he still continued to preach frequently, and also to perform occasional work with his pen. He had much to do, in particular, with the long and difficult task of bringing to completion the new *Liturgy*, which engaged for so many years the best energies of the Eastern Synod of the German Reformed church.

In the end, as advancing age seemed to bring with it for him a renewal rather than a decline of health and strength, Dr. Nevin yielded to the desire there was to have him back again in the college, and in the fall of 1861 took upon him partial service in its faculty, as professor in particular of History and Æsthetics. Five years later, in 1866, he became once more president of the institution, with full charge, a position which he has continued to occupy since with all the vigor of his best days. In connection with the Sunday services, which devolve upon him as the pastor of the college church, his department of instruction embraces now, mainly by lectures, the Philosophy of History, the Principles of

Mental, Moral and Social Science, and the Science of *Æsthetics* in its modern German character and form.

No biographical account of Dr. Nevin, however brief, can be complete without some notice taken of the so-called Mercersburg system of theology, which it has been common on all sides to associate with his name. This has never claimed to be an original system or rounded whole in any way; neither has it owed its existence to any spirit of philosophical speculation, as has sometimes been imagined. It has grown forth historically from an interest in the felt needs of the Christian life itself. Without going into details, let it suffice here to present the following comprehensive outline of the system, taken from an article on the subject in vol. xii. of the new *American Encyclopædia*, published in 1863.

“The cardinal principle of the Mercersburg system, is the fact of the incarnation. This, viewed not as a doctrine or speculation, but as a real transaction of God in the world, is regarded as being necessarily itself the sphere of Christianity, the sum and substance of the whole Christian redemption. Christ saves the world, not ultimately by what He teaches, or by what He does, but by what He is in the constitution of His person. His person, in its relations to the world, carries in it the power of victory over sin, death, and hell, the force thus of a real atonement or reconciliation between God and man, the triumph of a glorious resurrection from the dead, and all the consequences for faith which are attributed to this in the Apostles' Creed. In the most literal sense, accordingly, Christ is here held to be ‘the way, the truth, and the life,’ ‘the resurrection and the life,’ the principle of ‘life and immortality,’ the ‘light’ of the world, its ‘righteousness,’ and its ‘peace.’ The ‘grace which bringeth salvation,’ in this view, is of course always a real effluence from the new order of existence, which has thus been called into being by the exaltation of the Word made flesh at the right hand of God. It must be supernatural as well as natural, and the agency and organs by which it works, must, in the nature of the case, carry with them objectively something of the same character and force. In this way the

church is an object of faith; the presence of the new creation in the old world of nature; the body of Christ, through which as a medium and organ He reveals Himself and works until the end of time. It mediates with supernatural office, instrumentally, between Christ and His people. Its ministers hold a divine power from Him by apostolic succession. Its sacraments are not signs merely, but the seals of the grace they represent. Baptism is for the remission of sins. The eucharist includes the real presence of Christ's whole glorified life, in a mystery, by the power of the Holy Ghost. The idea of the church, when it is thus held as an object of faith, involves necessarily the attributes which were always ascribed to it in the beginning, unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity. The spirit of sect, as it cleaves to Protestantism at the present time, is a very great evil, which is of itself sufficient to show that if Protestantism had any historical justification in the beginning, its mission thus far has been only half fulfilled, and that it can be rationally approved only as it is taken to be an intermediate preparation for some higher and better form of Christianity hereafter. The distinguishing character of the Mercersburg theology, in one word, is its Christological interest, its way of looking at all things through the person of the crucified and risen Saviour. This, as the world now stands, embraces necessarily all that enters into the conception of the church question, which this system holds to be the great problem for the Christianity of the present time."

These views in the nature of the case, could not be otherwise than distasteful to much of the popular religionism of the country. For years, accordingly, as is well known, it has been the fashion in certain quarters to stigmatize them in the most contradictory terms of reproach, as rationalism, mysticism, pantheism, transcendentalism, Romanism, Irvingism, Swedenborgianism, and much else of like bad sound. By Dr. Nevin himself the system has been maintained all along as being, in his view, neither more nor less than the simple theology of the Apostles' Creed. Among his more important publications relating to it, and not yet named, may be mentioned the following: 1. *The Doctrine of the Re-*

*formed Church on the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper*; an extended answer to Dr. Hodge's review of the "Mystical Presence" in 1848. 2. *The Apostles' Creed: Its Origin, Constitution and Plan*, 1849. 3. *Early Christianity*, 1851. 4. *Cyprian*, 1852. 5. *The Dutch Crusade*, 1854. 6. *Review of Dr. Hodge's Commentary on the Ephesians*, 1857. 7. *The Liturgical Question*, 1862. 8. *Christ, and Him Crucified*; a concio ad clerum, preached at the opening of the first general Synod of the German Reformed church in Pittsburg, 1863. 9. *Vindication of the Revised Liturgy*, 1867. 10. *Answer to Professor Dorner*, of Berlin, Germany, 1868. 11. *Once for All*; based on a sermon preached before the Synod at Danville, Pa., 1869. 12. *Revelation and Redemption*; opening sermon before the Synod at Mechanicsburg, 1870. 13. *The Revelation of God in Christ*; anniversary discourse before the theological seminary at Mercersburg, 1871. 14. *Christ and His Spirit*, 1872. 15. *Baccalaureate Discourse on John iii: 13*, 1872.

Dr. Nevin, as a theologian, is one of no ordinary cast. His strong dialectic acumen has led him far beyond the range of mere theology, and has enabled him to unravel the mazes that metaphysical subtilty has drawn around the Christian faith. His own mind is a deeply metaphysical one, and his profound inquiries into this department have led him to scan the whole range of philosophy, and to investigate it on the metaphysical side from Aristotle to Hegel, as well as on the metaphysico-theological side, from Plato to Schleiermacher. The argumentations and reasonings of an Origen, an Augustine, an Anselm, and an Aquinas, are to him no longer mysteries. The thoughts of these world-renowned thinkers he has made his own. Nor is he unfamiliar with the range and results of modern German metaphysical ratiocination. He has, although an American, after having made himself familiar with ancient forms of thought, and, after grasping the results of the Kantian problems, kept pace with the latest developments of the German mind. Like Jonathan Edwards, unfavored with European university culture, who, by his own innate strength of intellect, could grasp and solve the problems of the philosophers of whom he had

never heard, and who ranks as the first metaphysician of his century, the subject of our notice has also probed the depth of the human understanding; and to his comprehensive mind metaphysical difficulties retire, and faith and reason stand harmonized in gospel revelation. To Dr. Nevin will history also accord, if not the highest niche in the temple of the metaphysical fame of the century, at least a very high one.

It is because he has made the different theological and metaphysical systems so thoroughly his own, and has by long usage and reading acquired their entire terminology, (which has now become a part of his own thinking), that his sermons and writings appear to those unfamiliar with such forms of thought, mazy and unintelligible. Often will his auditors confess that they do not comprehend his ideas. This is not strange. Whoever comprehends in a remote degree the vast revolution that theology has undergone in Germany during the last one hundred years, will not be surprised at this terminology made use of by Dr. Nevin. It is necessary if he be true to the feelings of his own soul, that he use no other manner of expression, for no other language conveys the deep import of evangelical truth as illuminated by the christological and philosophical developments of later ages. Not that any new truth is thereby promulgated, but modern thought is but fully awakening to the full comprehension of the great truths of revelation; those truths that ages ago to the mental eye of a St. Anselm and a Duns Scotus were looming into view. These intellectual giants were simply ages in advance of their times, and the moderns are but beginning to recognize the truths they so fervently attested.

Later ages, as they will come to take up in their conscience-preceptions, the discoveries of those now standing upon the highest pinnacles of mental vision, will see the rectitude of doctrines that are being promulgated and that are now so seemingly obscure. And in the march of ages, instead of Dr. John W. Nevin being found to have been the advocate of pantheistic absorption, he will gradually be elevated upon a pedestal in the Schleiermacherian school along



with the brave leaders who strove to turn aside by the light of scientific and philosophical progress the stream of humanitarian error, and enable the faithful soldiers of the cross to capture the great Babylon of modern infidelity.

Dr. Nevin, as a critical scholar, has but few equals. He reads the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French and German, with ease. Before taking up the study of German, he chiefly read theological works in the Latin; but for many years past, since his mastery of the German, he reads the most theological works in this latter language. In this he has perused the master-pieces of modern composition. He has a fine memory, and therefore retains most that he reads. His articles upon "Cyprian and His Age," published in the *Mercersburg Review*, evince his deep study of ancient christianity, and are of themselves sufficient to give him a high rank in the theological world. They are quoted and cited as standard authority even in Europe.

Dr. Nevin, deservedly, is entitled to rank amongst the first, if not as the very first theologian and metaphysician of America, after Jonathan Edwards. Had circumstances thrown him in a different sphere, where vast libraries would have surrounded him, and should he have chosen the field of history, he might have ranked with Mosheim and Neander. Choosing, however, to keep aloof from great metropolitan centres, he has attained to the merited distinction of being intelligently ranked amongst the first thinkers of his age; and after generations will universally concede to him a place in the category of a De Wette, a Dorner, a Daub, and at Marheineke.

In conversation, he is exceedingly entertaining, especially when the subject turns upon metaphysical questions; for in this department he seems especially at home. Any question propounded in theology or metaphysics will receive a minute and lengthy explanation, which serves more than all else to show the great depth and wonderful profundity of his mind. German, French and English schools of philosophy and theology will be cited, their diverging opinions presented and compared, and the correct conclusions of reason deduced therefrom. In his lectures to the students of his classes, his

breadth of mind and comprehensive grasp of the subject in hand are constantly apparent. In his department no triviality is ever perceptible, but a gravity upon all occasions marks his demeanor.

In personal appearance Dr. Nevin is tall, spare and slender, and in the pulpit is not at once attractive. In his delivery of a sermon no indications of oratory appear. He is by no means fluent, and none but those who can follow an argument are much attracted by his preaching. His sermons, however, are pregnant with thought from beginning to end, showing complete mastery of his subject and great research. He has ever been a close student, and this his appearance indicates. Thought is marked upon every lineament of his countenance.