

The Transcendental Theology of James Marsh

by RALPH J. MASIELLO

The eighteenth century saw the development, in Immanuel Kant and others, of the philosophical view that reason itself is the ground of faith and that one perceives the divine essence through insight into the nature of man as embodied in the reason. No group was farther from this new view than that of the strict Calvinists who followed in the tradition of Jonathan Edwards, a leader of the American Great Awakening who laid stress on original sin, man's fallen nature, and the necessity of faith in a terrifyingly objective God. In this study, Ralph J. Masiello investigates the crucial undermining of the traditional Edwardian outlook by New England's own James Marsh in the early nineteenth century. The study contributes much to an understanding of both the transformation of religious faith in America at the hands of the transcendentalists and the larger problem of the secularization of theology in the Western world.

The contemporary Hegelian insight of Reason as the fount of faith had its first appearance in America when James Marsh published Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, a work inspired by Schelling and Kant. In the scholarly anthology *Transcendentalism*, Perry Miller characterized James Marsh as a faithful Congregationalist who unwittingly contributed to the cause of transcendentalism in editing the reflections of Coleridge: "It is indicative of the total situation in New England that the introduction of Coleridge should be made by an orthodox Calvinist to whom both Unitarianism and Transcendentalism were reprehensible."¹ Miller proceeded to say that Marsh's edition "was of the greatest single importance in the formation of the minds of Emerson, Parker, Alcott and others of this group. This was entirely beside Marsh's intention, but it happened." Contrary to Miller's view, the thesis of this article is that Marsh not only unrelentingly promoted the basic formative ideas of transcendentalism, but it was his ambition to develop them into a complete metaphysical system, a system which militated against Calvinism as well as Unitarianism. The odium prevailing among all three was mutual. Such was the religious climate of New England when, with his *Aids*, Coleridge placed within reach of orthodox divines explosive theological arguments against Edwardian teachings on original sin, as Marsh mentions in a letter to Coleridge:

There has lately risen some discussions among our most able orthodox divines, which seems to me likely to shake the authority of Edwards among them; and I trust your *Aids to Reflection* is, with a few, exerting an influence that will help to place the lovers of truth and righteousness on better philosophical grounds.²

Modern scholars tend to place the ambit of the controversy on original sin during this period at Harvard's Divinity School led by Andrew Norton, Yale's school of theology where Nathaniel William Taylor was the most eloquent spokesman, and the theologate at Andover. All these schools leaned more heavily on Revelation than reason to support their positions. But in this controversy, reason seemed to prevail. The Unitarians rejected the Calvinistic position on original sin which Edwards had so strongly defended. That position was that man's nature is essentially corrupted and is determined to a life of corruption and damnation through the sin of Adam and Eve. After baptism (later called the half-way covenant), he becomes determined to a life of grace and salvation through a profession of faith (the full covenant). Taylor was originally adamant in support of this position, but later made certain concessions which were amenable to the Unitarians at Harvard in his famous address to the Connecticut Congregational clergy, *Concio ad Clerum: A Sermon on Human Nature, Sin and Freedom*.³ These concessions, decisively undermining the Edwardian tradition, were accomplished with the dialectics culled from Coleridge's work. From this time on there was an entirely new and alien tradition which began to have its influence among theological circles in America, a tradition which depended exclusively on reason for guidelines for scriptural interpretations, a tradition which had its origins in Kant,

Schleiermacher, Schelling in Germany, Cousins in France, and finally Marsh in America. This tradition suggested that Reason is the absolute within man: it is God. The hypostatic union is no longer the prerogative of the divine person who is Christ. The divine nature manifested as Reason is united to every man. This is the philosophy which Marsh made available to the transcendentalists. Some, like Parker and Hedge, followed Coleridge's lead in attempting to reconstruct Christianity with this central doctrine of Reason; others, like Emerson and Alcott, found no need for any other revelation than that of Reason within them.

There are several reasons for misleading interpretations of Marsh, such as Miller's. Marsh was a product of Andover Theological Seminary which had recently been founded by Eliphalet Pearson to preserve and perpetuate the purity of Calvinism in the face of Harvard's capitulation to the infidelity of Unitarianism. Another obvious reason can be found in the manner in which J. L. Torrey wrote the *Memoir of the Life of James Marsh, D. D.*, the introduction to *The Remains*. It is replete with affirmations of Marsh's orthodoxy: "It is no part of my design," said Torrey, "to speak at any length of Dr. Marsh's religious creed, which indeed differed in no essential respect from that professed and taught by the early reformers."⁴ Again, he maintained that "it was from the religious point of view, and by the Christian standard, he was accustomed to judge of the character, bearing, and influence of everything that came under his notice, whether in the religious, political or literary world."⁵ However, it is only at the very end of the *Memoir* that he conceded that Marsh's orthodoxy could be questioned, but this is overshadowed by higher qualities. It is true that he did retain the shell of orthodoxy in all his writings. His ambition was to reconcile revelation with reason, under the authority and mystery of reason and not the converse.

The transparency of Marsh's Calvinism was attacked by the Rev. Dr. John McVickar of Columbia College in a new *Preliminary Essay* prefacing a "stereotype edition" of *Aids to Reflection* in 1839. Among the reasons for rejecting Marsh's *Preliminary Essay* and substituting his own is the following: "That such Preface is mainly occupied in justifying Coleridge and his philosophy against objections which have no place except on the Calvinistic scheme of Divinity."⁶ Moreover, McVickar was quick to point out that Marsh's preface was "an unsafe guide for young and enthusiastic minds, and may lead many of its readers, as it certainly tends to lead all, into a dangerous over trust on human and private authority in the interpretation of Divine truth."⁷ In *A History of American Philosophy*, Herbert Schneider captured a rather significant aspect of Marsh's philosophy when he said, "The philosophy of life as a creative process became the dominant interest in Marsh's own exposition of transcendentalism."⁸ However, Schneider concluded that he "in general attempted to revive Puritan idealism," to have him lean on the side of orthodoxy. But later, in an analysis of the writings of Charles Edward Garman, he placed Marsh in proper perspective:

Garman's faith in a Kantian idealism as a power to reform American morals and religion was shared by a notable group of teachers. . . . Almost all of them were theists, but they approached God through criticism rather than through prayer and developed the secular spirituality of which Marsh and Henry had been prophets.⁹

At this time, one is reminded that there was no such thing as a systematic development of transcendentalism in America, Marsh is even unheralded as a metaphysician by his literary executor who said that he left nothing on metaphysics "except scattered hints, on loose scraps of paper, not to be reduced to any form."¹⁰ But many scholars of this era were not prepared to categorize the systematic developments in the tradition of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel as metaphysics; and they did not yet realize that Hegel was vying for philosophical honors with Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. Furthermore, Marsh would not call himself a transcendentalist. It was a term of rebuke which took on something other than a perjorative sense in America only during the latter part of his life. It was imposed on the Transcendentalists in scorn; they in turn gladly adopted the term. As James Elliot Cabot narrated in *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, "The transcendental was whatever lay beyond the stock notions and traditional beliefs . . . and society took its revenge by the nickname Transcendentalists."¹¹

Regardless, no less a transcendentalist than Emerson did make a rather extensive metaphysical note in his *Journal*,¹² but he preferred the title of the traditional synonym for metaphysics, *First Philosophy*. His intention to fully elaborate these ideas was never realized. *First Philosophy* treats of the relationship of Reason to understanding as found in the *Aids to Reflection*, with his own Plotinian insights as in the following:

They [the original laws of the mind] resemble great circles in astronomy; each of which, in what direction soever it be drawn, contains the whole sphere. These laws are ideas of Reason; they astonish the Understanding, and seem to gleam of a world in which we do not live. Our compound nature differences us from God, but our reason is not to be distinguished from the Divine essence.¹³

Cabot maintained that the agreement between Emerson and Kant is a coincidence, and that “New England Transcendentalism had, as Dr. Hedge says, no very direct connection with the transcendental philosophy of Germany, the philosophy of Kant and his successors.”¹⁴ Not to undermine the authority of Cabot and Hedge, it would be just as erroneous to interpret transcendentalism as a purely American phenomenon as it would be to interpret it as a mere reflection of German philosophy. There is a coincidence between Emerson’s philosophy and the philosophy of Reason’s relation to the understanding as borrowed from the Germans via Coleridge’s work because the Germans borrowed the same philosophy from Plotinus;¹⁵ and Emerson was weaned on Plotinus according to Van Wyck Brooks.¹⁶ The German thinkers reformulated Plotinus’ doctrine in a manner that suited the needs of the American transcendentalists’ commitment to a divine participation. And again, it was Marsh who made this available in America through his publication of and discourses on Coleridge’s *Aids to Reflection*.

The arrival of the English edition of *Aids to Reflection* in 1828 and the subsequent edition of Marsh in 1829 with his influential *Preliminary Essay* could well mark the beginnings of the modern secularization of theology in America. Not only was the doctrine of original sin reduced to a purely rational interpretation, but also the doctrines of redemption and grace. To secure a proper perspective on Marsh’s attempt to make these doctrines consistent with his philosophy of Reason, it would be well to trace the development of his philosophical ambitions, which were apparent even while he was a theology student at Andover.

James Marsh was born in Hartford, Vermont, July 19, 1794. He was the grandson of the first Lieutenant Governor of the state, Joseph Marsh, who came from Lebanon, Connecticut, and settled on a farm in the valley of Otta Quechee River about 1772. Here James was destined to become a respectable farmer like his father, except that his older brother elected not to pursue a higher education.

After a year’s preparatory studies at the Academy at Randolph, then, James entered Dartmouth College in 1813, where he concentrated in literature and ancient languages, especially Greek. In 1815 he made a public profession of faith at the Congregational college, and with the completion of his undergraduate studies in 1817 he entered the theological school at Andover, where Professors Moses Stuart and Leonard Woods were deploring in pulpit and press the errors of Harvard’s Andrew Norton and Henry Ware. Before completing his theological studies he was invited to Dartmouth to tutor for two years. After the vacation of 1820, and before returning to Andover to resume his theological studies for the ministry, he decided to visit Cambridge for a couple of months where he intended, as he mentioned in a letter,

to learn how to defend my religious principles (which, I am more and more confident, will never differ essentially from those I have been taught to believe) with more enlarged views, and on more philosophical grounds, than I should be able to do with the advantages offered at Andover.¹⁷

However he returned to Andover after only a brief sojourn at the center of Unitarian jurisdiction. He must have been as surprised as the modern historian sometimes is when he discovered how conservative the Unitarians were and that they were prepared to sacrifice little of theology to philosophy.

In addition to the prescribed courses in theology and Hebrew, he studied Spanish and German. He was dissatisfied with the prevailing Scotch and English philosophers, and he concentrated on the works of Plato, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, the writings of Madame de Stael, and particularly Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. During his final year of studies he overtaxed himself with his literary writings and translations. He wrote an article, *Ancient and Modern Poetry*, published in the *North American Review*, July, 1822, and in collaboration with another seminarian he began the translation of *Geography of the Scriptures* by Bellermand. Temporarily relieved of his studies, he took a short sea voyage from Boston to New York and proceeded to Princeton where he befriended Dr. John H. Rice, president of Hampden Sidney College. His itinerary included Philadelphia and New Hampshire, and he returned to Vermont to complete his studies during the summer. Not caring to be settled as a pastor, he preferred not to be ordained until he established himself as a teacher or editor.

With the retirement of Ashbel Green at Princeton, Dr. Rice was unanimously nominated for the presidency by the board of trustees, and he extended an invitation to Marsh to meet him at Princeton. Marsh arrived at the College of New Jersey only to be informed that Rice was ill at his home in Richmond. Ultimately, he decided to remain at the helm of the college and seminary founded by Princeton's Samuel Stanhope Smith, and the office of president at Princeton remained unfilled with Vice-President Philip Lindsley assuming its authority and duties during the 1822-23 session. Marsh proceeded to Richmond to visit the recovering minister and educator, who induced him to take up residence at Hampden Sidney until an opening occurred. Too restless with an unsettled position that entailed only occasional pulpit duty, he returned home in the summer of 1824 only to be invited back to teach languages at the theological school. This was the signal for ordination and marriage, and on the thirtieth of October he arrived back at Hampden Sidney. During the next three years he divided his time between teaching classical languages at the college and Hebrew at the theological school and translating Herder's *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, which he completed and published in 1833.

Marsh was appointed president of the University of Vermont in October, 1826. Now he was in a position to teach the courses of his choice, and in this respect he followed the traditional pattern of college professors in teaching intellectual and moral philosophy, esteemed then as the capstone of education. His position was more opportune than prestigious. Higher education in New England was sustained by the churches since the foundation of Harvard, and state colleges were inferior and poorly funded. Before Marsh's tenure the faculty had been empowered by the corporation to terminate the courses at Burlington if conditions warranted.

Torrey narrated the conditions of the school as follows:

The students were few in number; the funds not wholly free from embarrassment; the library and apparatus a mere name; and besides, an impression seemed to prevail with many, that the institution doomed to so many strange calamities was never destined to succeed, and had better be given up by its friends.¹⁸

Marsh was the first administrator to admit part-time students, an expedient to increase the enrollment. He deplored 'teaching by terror,' and promoted dialogue between students and faculty. He strove to create an atmosphere that would enable students to develop their native talents. His experimental innovations in higher education were formulated in a pamphlet, *An Exposition of the Course of Instruction and Discipline in the University of Vermont*, which drew favorable comments from New England educators. During his first winter as president he wrote a series of articles on public education for the *Vermont Chronicle*. In the meantime his wife died, August 18, 1828.

In the first issue of the *Christian Spectator*, March, 1829, Marsh wrote a rather extensive review of Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Here he developed a theory of language analysis, in the same epistemological tradition that Wittgenstein explored more fully in his *Tractatus*, with a view of establishing metaphorical or analogical rather than literal interpretations of scriptural passages which deal with such doctrines as the atonement, effects or consequences of the redemption, deliverance from sin, and punishment of sin in the future world, as is evident in the following:

To them [the Jews of Apostolic times] even the remote consequences of redemption, sanctification from sin, and liberation from the inherent penal consequences of sin in the world to come, must be represented in forms and languages derived from the analogy of other objects, and especially of those ritual observances which were ever uppermost in their imagination.¹⁹

Marsh had more to say on this subject than was permitted by the “association of gentlemen” who edited the *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, as it was originally named, and who inserted asterisks between paragraphs towards the end of the article, verifying Marsh’s account in a letter to Coleridge:

. . . I have given a view of the Atonement, or rather Redemption, I believe nearly corresponding with yours, and indeed have made free use of your language. In a note, I had also given you credit for it, but the note was omitted by the publishers, and a few paragraphs of their own remarks added.²⁰

Marsh, like Coleridge, was dedicated to pursue the goals unfolded by Kant, “the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason.”²¹

The first American edition of *Aids to Reflection* appeared in November, 1829, prefaced with Marsh’s famous *Preliminary Essay*. The only other prose work of Coleridge published in this country was the *Biographia Literaria*, appearing in 1817 under its subtitle, *My Literary Life and Opinions*. Unlike the translation of Herder’s work, Marsh’s edition of the *Aids* was a financial success and the *Preliminary Essay* merited honorary D.D. degrees from Columbia and Amherst. Notwithstanding the comment about metaphysics in the preface to his *Memoir*, Torrey said that the essay established for Marsh “his reputation as a good scholar and profound metaphysician, both at home and abroad.”²² In the following May he edited *Selections from the Old English Writers on Practical Theology*.

His second marriage was prosaically narrated by Torrey as though it were another marriage of convenience:

He had also formed a new marriage connection, with the sister of his former wife; and the breach in his domestic circle being thus happily repaired, he would have felt himself more at liberty, than at any previous time, for his favorite pursuits, had it not been for the discouraging conditions of things in the college whose interests were confided to his care.²³

Among the discouraging conditions at the college was a critical decrease in enrollment. Here again, a public airing of unorthodox views took its toll, as surely as it was destined to close the doors of Bronson Alcott’s school at the Masonic Temple in Boston. Thus, in 1833 when Andover was conferring a distinguished degree upon him, he was forced to step down as president, retaining his chair of intellectual and moral philosophy. This was the year in which the translation of Herder appeared. Van Wyck Brooks in *The Flowering of New England* only mentions Marsh as the editor of Coleridge’s work and the translator of Herder; but he does give a key insight into the thrust of Herder’s mission: “He had abolished the distinction between the sacred and the secular, transferring to the credit of human genius all that had been ascribed to the divine.”²⁴

The remainder of Marsh’s life was devoted to the development of a metaphysical system, at once theological, which would achieve a unification of truth according to the illumination of the understanding by Reason. He wrote several treatises devoted to this end: *On the Will*, *On the Relation of Man’s Personal Existence and Immortality to the Understanding and Reason*, *On Conscience*, *On Hypocrisy*, *Ground and Origin of Sin*, and *Man’s Need of Christ*. Due to poor health during the latter part of his life, his *Psychology*, an integral part of his system, was not revised as he had planned. He died of consumption on July 3, 1842, in Colchester at the house of his brother-in-law, David Reed. He never did complete his work on logic. He translated Fries’ *System of Logic* with a view of modelling his own work on it. Dr. Charles Follen mentioned this project in a letter to Marsh: “. . . it was with great pleasure that I heard

from our mutual friend, Mr. Henry, that you had actually announced one on the basis of Fries, whose work I consider the best on the subject.”²⁵

An impartial reader of Marsh’s works may find it difficult to conclude that he was sincere in his efforts to justify certain Calvinistic dogmas according to the higher criticism of transcendental philosophy, wherein Reason is hailed as one with revelation and is the principle of faith itself. Just as revelation could not contradict reason, Calvinism in Marsh’s view must also submit to the orthodoxy of reason. But to an Edwards, a Calvin, an Augustine – indeed, to the whole Christian tradition – reason must assent to revelation and the mysteries of faith. Even the Arabians had to settle for a double standard of truth in this respect. Notwithstanding the barriers that separated Calvinism from transcendentalism, the cause that Marsh championed with respect to original sin prevailed even among certain prominent Edwardians to the complete satisfaction of Emerson, who said in an 1833 sermon at the Second Church:

There is a revolution of religious opinion taking effect around us, as it seems to me the greatest of all revolutions which have ever occurred; that, namely, which has separated the individual from the whole world, and made him demand a faith satisfactory to his own proper nature, whose full extent he now for the first time contemplates. A little while ago men were supposed to be saved or lost as one race. Adam was the federal head, and his sin a federal sin, which cut off the hopes of his posterity. . . . But now . . . man begins to hear a voice that fills the heavens and the earth, saying that God is within him; that *there* is the celestial host. I find this amazing revelation of my immediate relation to God a solution to all the doubts that oppressed me.²⁶

The abandonment of federalist Calvinism was not quite as extensive as Emerson projected. The denial of man’s natural depravity among Congregational and Presbyterian theologians caused a controversial division into the Old School and the New School. The Edwardians had completely lost their hold on strict Calvinistic doctrinal integrity among Congregationalists by mid-century when Horace Bushnell was proclaiming with impunity the theses which Marsh circulated in letters and reserved for his chapel days. According to Orestes Brownson, *The New Englander* – organ of the New Haven School – fully endorsed Bushnell’s views and “Andover, we are told, adopts them as explicitly as it can, without forfeiting its funds.”²⁷ Concerning his *Preliminary Dissertation on the Nature of Language as Related to Thought and Spirit*, a facile and less profound treatment of the relation of language to scriptural doctrine which Marsh had developed in his review of Moses Stuart’s *Commentary*, Brownson said, “This theory he promulgates as if it were original and profound, although it strikes us as an old acquaintance.”²⁸ Almost a quarter of a century later, Brownson referred to Marsh as the founder of a school of philosophy, “of which Dr. Mark Hopkins, ex-president of Williams College, Dr. Noah Porter, president of Yale College and Dr. McCosh, president of Princeton College, are the best known and the most distinguished.”²⁹ But this was one of the many lapses of memory on the part of Brownson who is more noted as a literary critic than as a meticulous scholar. Evidently, he did not adopt any transcendental philosophy from Marsh when he was friendly with Emerson, but he was very much influenced by Cousins, of whom he had much to say in the autobiographical account of his conversion to Catholicism. In this respect, Dagobert Runes writes of Cousins as “the intermediary whereby the transcendentalists acquainted themselves with German idealism,” and he also speaks of Marsh as “the founder of Transcendentalism,”³⁰ a rare appraisal.

If Brownson was once fascinated with Reason as expounded by Cousins, the relation of Reason to understanding was explained to Emerson and Parker in *The Aids to Reflection*, written by Coleridge and published by Marsh. To Coleridge and Marsh, the *I*, as they preferred to call the ego, is something higher than human nature. It is a spiritual energy, something supernatural. It is man’s participation in God’s very nature. Reason is at once one and universal, extending to all mankind. It is distinct from man’s understanding, which can attain the wisdom of the divine oracle of Reason through proper reflection. Reason, said Coleridge, “affirms truths which no sense could perceive, nor experiment verify, nor experience confirm.”³¹ Man’s understanding is capable of attaining the infallibility and also the mysteries of Reason in its highest form of self-affirmation. The soul bearing witness to itself finds the “noblest

object of reflection in the mind itself, by which we reflect.”³² This is akin to the “self thinking thought” of the Hegelians, which Aristotle attributed only to Pure Act, but which now becomes the birthright of all who would but reflect on Reason when “their minds are called off from foreign objects and turned inward upon themselves.”³³ According to Marsh’s treatise *On the Will*, we are in immediate communion with Reason through conscience; and the precepts of Reason are absolute and unconditioned, “enlightening our understanding and empowering our wills.”³⁴ This is the law of our spiritual being: “To be holy, as God is holy.”³⁵ This theology, developed within the bounds of philosophy, dispenses with the doctrine of the Atonement. Original sin and grace, however, can become harmonious with it. The Biblical account of original sin must be interpreted as a more human doctrine in the light of Reason alone.

The arguments that Coleridge and Marsh advanced to explain original sin were based on the premise that sin is not a transient act, but strictly an immanent act. It is not transmissible. It cannot be a genetic factor. *Genesis* must be interpreted according to reason, the exegetic criterion. They never confronted the question of whether it was within the power of God to decree a punishment on Adam and Eve that would affect their offspring. The will of the offspring, they contend, is conditioned only by its own act. The will cannot be conditioned by the antecedent acts of another. Just as the intellect is a blackboard upon which is written nothing at birth, so the will cannot be determined to good or evil until it acts in conformity with conscience or against conscience. At the same time, Coleridge maintained that “man is a fallen creature who is diseased in his will.”³⁶ In an attempt to explain the fallen nature of man, Marsh said that it is a universal principle that every man at one time or another will act contrary to conscience. When man’s will is determined “from within,” when he acts with selfish motives, then he incurs a fallen state. Man has the origin of sin within him when he does not abide according to the law of conscience; and this is precisely what original sin meant to Marsh, as he explained as follows:

The existence of such principles of action in our minds, or rather of a universal principle common to all men, and found in all to be contrary to the law of conscience, is what is asserted by the doctrine of original sin.³⁷

Once original sin is defined in this new light, the complementary teachings on redemption and grace must likewise be impregnated with the new message of Reason. If man has the total origin of his moral acts within himself, grace necessitating human acts according to a salvific covenant can no longer be a viable doctrine in a system which posits the will as “a supernatural power, by which we hold affinity with the spiritual world, and are capable of being made partakers of the divine nature.”³⁸ It is no longer grace, but conscience, an indwelling, inalienable, absolute and unconditional law of duty, which is related to ultimate ends and is applied to the will; and this law is the “controlling purpose of our actions.”³⁹ Thus, the Calvinistic doctrine of grace determining the will is transcendentalized according to a law of reason, the divine light and truth manifested “in the common consciousness of men.”⁴⁰ Marsh created a text parallel to the following one by Calvin: “The salvation of believers depends on the eternal election of God, for which no cause or reason can be rendered but His own gratuitous good pleasure.”⁴¹ Instead of the irresistibility of grace, Marsh posed the irresistibility of Reason:

We cannot assign a reason for that which is in itself the perfection of reason, nor conceive as referable to any other ground of its desirableness, that which is itself an absolute good, and the satisfying portion of the rational soul.⁴²

It was Marsh’s intention in his review of Stuart’s Commentary, as mentioned above, to give an interpretation of the atonement or redemption which corresponded to the following exposition of the mystery by Coleridge:

Whenever by self-subjection to this universal light, the will of the individual, the particular will, has become the will of reason, the man is regenerate; and reason is then the spirit of the regenerated man, whereby the person is capable of a quickening intercommunion with the Divine Spirit.⁴³

Marsh's final Discourse, *The True Ground, in Man's Character, and Condition, of His Need of Christ*, was an elaborate transcendental exegesis of the Scriptural doctrine of redemption in an attempt to eliminate its vicarious feature, and the necessity of the Cross. His transcendental system was completed with the transcendentalization of this central doctrine of Christianity.

The importance of Marsh as an American transcendentalist has been neglected because he lived outside the immediate social circle of Concord and its environs lorded by Emerson. But it was Marsh who made available and explained to the transcendentalists a philosophy of Reason and its relation to the understanding, a philosophy which gave cohesiveness to a movement of intellectuals who had very little else in common.

The philosophy of Reason was integrated into Hegel's metaphysics. As the influence of the transcendentalists waned in New England, Hegel's philosophy spread throughout this country. With a strong base in St. Louis, it was adopted in such institutions as John Hopkins, the University of Michigan, Chicago University, the University of California at Berkeley, and at Harvard under the aegis of Joyce. Today the philosophy of Reason is subtly interwoven into certain existential and phenomenological philosophies and finds increasing expression as a twentieth century evolution of theology.

NOTES:

¹Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 34.

²*Memoir and Remains of Rev. Dr. Marsh*, ed. J. Torrey, Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1843, p. 136. Hereafter referred to as *Remains*.

³Nathaniel William Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum, A Sermon Delivered in the Chapel of Yale College, September 10, 1828*, New Haven: Helekiiah Howe, 1828.

⁴*Remains*, 120.

⁵*Ibid.*, 123.

⁶New York: William Gowans, 1865. (Preface dated Columbia College, Nov. 1, 1839). p. vii.

⁷*Ibid.*, ix.

⁸New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 233.

⁹*Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁰*Remains*, vii.

¹¹2 vol. New York: AMS Press, 1965, vol. 1, p. 249.

¹²James Elliot Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 2 vol. New York: AMS Press, 1965, vol. 1, pp. 246-248.

¹³*Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁵*Cf.* Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 1, 11; VI, 5, 12.

¹⁶*Cf. The Life of Emerson*, New York: The Literary Guild, 1932, p. 10.

¹⁷*Remains*, 29.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁹p. 144.

²⁰*Remains*, 138.

²¹Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, transl. by T. Greene and H. Hudson, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960, p. 113.

²²*Remains*, 99.

²³*Ibid.*, 104.

²⁴Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England*, New York: Dutton, 1952, p. 198.

²⁵*Remains*, 152.

²⁶*The Flowering of New England*, 212.

²⁷*Brownson's Quarterly Review*, 1849, III, IV, p.496.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 497.

²⁹*Ibid.*, Last Series, 1873, I, p. 301.

³⁰Dagobert Runes, *Treasury of World Philosophy*, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, p. 280.

³¹*Aids*, 175f. (see note 4).

³²*Ibid.*, 2.

³³*Ibid.*, 3.

³⁴*Remains*, 386.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 387.

³⁶*Aids*, 102.

³⁷*Remains*, 463.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 472.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 404.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 554.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 407.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Aids*, 161.