

# THE THEOLOGUE.

VOL. 2.—APRIL, 1891.—No. 4.

## Presbyterian College, Halifax.

*A STUDY IN EMERSON.*

IN this study I wish to refer to what seems to me to be the two great truths which the teaching of Emerson has impressed on this age. There is not much space for a biographical sketch, though his life is very interesting, especially that part which shows the course of his views on religion, from the time when he cut away from his early moorings in Unitarianism, till he drifted somewhere into the Absolute. Mr. Holt Hutton, on the other hand, affords us in his essays an instructive contrast, by the history of his change from Unitarianism to a grander spirituality than Emerson's.

We are curious to know the stages of such an uncommon psychological or spiritual development as Emerson's. May it not have been that, as in the case of Matthew Arnold, the germs of his later religious life are to be found in the atmosphere in which he was brought up? Is not the same idealism, which afterwards delighted him, clearly discernible in the youth delighted with Montaigne and Swedenburg, and in the young minister who objects to the symbolism of the sacraments, public prayer, and miracle?

In reading Emerson the question which we have so often asked ourselves again thrusts itself upon us:—How comes it that so many of our greatest thinkers and writers reject Christianity? How is it that a man of Emerson's genius and purity of character misunderstands and will not accept, what is to the average mind the all-sufficient and only solution of the problems of life? The opinion of these leaders of thought is surely of the greatest