
1: *Not the Least Star - John Smith, 1618-1652*

A very glorious Star he was, & shone brighter in our eyes than any that he ever look'd upon when he took his view of the heavenly Bodies: and now he shines as the brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.

Simon Patrick.¹

In the latter part of 1650, John Smith started to deliver a series of discourses in the chapel of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he was the new Dean and Catechist. He was thirty-two years old, and already suffering from the illness which would cause his death in the summer of 1652, at the age of 34. The discourses were intended to form an extended work, dealing with both natural theology and those "Principles of Revealed Truth which tend most of all to advance and cherish true and real Piety." Together with a "chappel-exercise", an unfinished "account of men's mistakes about religion", a discourse on "The Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion", and one of his sermons, these discourses make up the literary remains of a remarkable scholar, writer and divine.

John Smith came from a relatively modest rural background in Achurch, a small Northamptonshire village near Oundle, where his father, also John, was "a small Farmer".² His father had at least one brother nearby, for Edmond Smith, "brother of John Smith a stranger who came

¹"A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mr. John Smith", in John Smith, *Select Discourses* (1660), p.503. alluding to Daniel 12, 3: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." It is not an idle analogy: Smith's extensive interest in astronomy is briefly represented in Saveson, "The Library of John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist".

²A marginal comment in Bishop White Kennet, *A register and chronicle ecclesiastical and civil* (London, 1728), p.127

from Waddenho³ & died at his house”, was buried at Achurch on 28th November, 1600.⁴ Indeed, entries in the Parish Register suggest that the family was well settled in the area, though perhaps beginning to decline. During the period 1592 to 1636, before the registers were severely interrupted, only one marriage within the family was recorded. But there were buried Ann Smith, “maid”; Thomas Smith, “Bachelour”; Robert Smith, “an old Bachelour”; and, only one definite exception to the list of celibates, Robert Smith, “labourer a married man”.⁵ John Smith senior, however, was evidently a man of some standing in the small community, since he testified to the Parish Register’s accuracy five times as Churchwarden in a period of twenty one years (1601-1622). That he consistently did so by means of a mark, however, suggests that he was illiterate.⁶

To speak of Smith’s mother is more problematic. She has been identified with Katherine Smith, “wife of John Smith”, who was buried at Achurch on 4th April, 1616.⁷ Unfortunately, Smith’s will makes this identification impossible to accept, for his bequest clearly implies that his mother was still alive at the time of his death, in 1652.⁸ The corollary, that Smith was born before April 1616, is also difficult: he was baptised only on 15th February, 1617/18, almost two years later.⁹ It seems that Smith’s mother was not the Katherine who appears in the register.¹⁰ Perhaps she was

³Another small village, perhaps a mile and a half from Achurch. In 1662 another Smith from Wadenhoe, Bartholomew, married one Elinor Pope at Achurch.

⁴Achurch Parish Register. Marie Smith, buried on 25th September 1604, is described as “a sojourner with John Smith his brother”. I take this brother to have been the deceased Edmond.

⁵Achurch Parish Register.

⁶Achurch Parish Register. The mark, two parallel vertical lines, was used in 1601, 1602, 1613, 1621 and 1622, beside John Smith’s name written in the elegant hand of Robert Browne.

⁷Achurch Parish Register. F.J. Powicke was the first to make this assumption and to suggest accordingly that Smith was born in 1616, in *The Cambridge Platonists: A Study* (London, 1926), p.88. Powicke’s remains one of the most widely known accounts of Smith’s life and writings.

⁸See Appendix 1 for a transcript of the will.

⁹The fact that no baptisms took place in Achurch in 1616, when the parish was divided by schism, offers no explanation for the delay. F. Ives Cater says that they took place instead at Lilford, where they were not, however, recorded. See his “Robert Browne and the Achurch Parish Register”, *CHST* 3 (1907/8), pp.126-136.

¹⁰It is possible, one might suppose, that, if this were indeed the wife of our John Smith the elder, he re-married another Katherine after the death of his first wife, and that his

the Katherine Smith who was buried in Wadenhoe on 13th December, 1657. No other records of Smith's family are known to exist, though Simon Patrick believed that his parents "had long been childless and were grown aged" when their son was born.¹¹ Neither their births nor their marriage have been dated.

We know nothing of John Smith's childhood, youth or early education¹², and, perhaps because of this, Smith seems to belong characteristically to Cambridge.¹³ On 5th April, 1636, at a rather later age than many of his contemporaries there, he entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a foundation with decidedly Puritan leanings, then flourishing and growing rapidly in size and influence.¹⁴ Simon Patrick's statement that Smith had "great encouragement from divers persons of worth"¹⁵ has been taken to mean that he went up to Cambridge with the aid of local patrons.¹⁶ However, as the remark was made in Patrick's funeral sermon, it may be no more than a tactful reference to the "seasonable provision for his support and maintenance when he was a young Scholar" provided by Benjamin Whichcote¹⁷, Smith's tutor, who was then present. In view of Smith's apparently modest background¹⁸, it seems reasonable to suggest

son was born to the second wife shortly before the date of his baptism.

¹¹John Smith, *Select Discourses*, p.503. This may be the result of conflating two figures in pursuit of an analogy with the parents of John the Baptist.

¹²Powicke speculated that Smith went to the grammar school in Oundle, only three miles from Achurch, and that the Rector of Achurch, Robert Browne, the Separatist, was "a decisive Puritan influence on his childhood" in Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.88.

¹³White Kennet noted, however, that Smith visited Achurch annually, in Kennet, *A register and chronicle ecclesiastical and civil*, p.127; and John Worthington cited his preaching there as proof of the flexibility of his style in John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.xxvi.

¹⁴Complaints were already reaching Laud about the rapid expansion of Emmanuel, claiming that there were admitted "many more into ye coll. than it is able to hold." See C. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge* III, p.315. As for Emmanuel's Puritanism, R.A. Greene and Hugh MacCallum regard it as beginning to decline from 1633, "that precise moment, when, after half a century, the energy of its original foundation was beginning to dissipate, and its strenuous Puritanism to undergo some erosion." See Culverwel, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature*, p. xi.

¹⁵John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.513.

¹⁶This interpretation is from Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.88.

¹⁷John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.vi.

¹⁸However, one should note that not only was Smith able to leave a very substantial library to Queen's, but that his will left both his "smal land" at Achurch to his mother,

that this “seasonable provision” may refer to Smith’s sizarship¹⁹, by which a student was enabled to receive some measure of assistance from his college, sometimes in return for services.²⁰

Whatever his status, Smith quickly attracted the attention of the College, according to John Worthington, who recalled how “his early Piety and the remembering his Creator in the those days of his youth, as also his excellent improvements in the choicest parts of learning, endear’d him to many,” but most especially to his tutor.²¹ The close connection with Whichcote, a tutor of only three years standing, but already a prominent figure in the University, was one of the formative experiences of Smith’s life. Evidently a deeply religious young man, keenly sensitive to the divine benignity, and with a mind ready to learn, it seems that he found no sudden regeneration in Whichcote’s teaching, but was brought under the influence of his attractive personal manner and his intellectual warmth. The ingenuous piety implied by Worthington’s language would have met a sympathetic response in Whichcote, under whose guidance Smith’s religious temperament found more definite form. Whichcote’s preaching, which Smith certainly heard, was intended to reveal just such a connatural aptitude to devotion.²²

It was Whichcote, too, whose “Directions” led Smith into reading “the

and provided her with a substantial annuity (more than twice the average wage of a tradesman) from his “estate at presston”. Smith’s financial status is not necessarily as straightforward as has been assumed. See Appendix 1. Newton, for example, was a subsizar at Trinity in the 1660s, though from an affluent family, as was John Worthington at Emmanuel in the 1630s.

¹⁹Mullinger’s assertion that he was from the very first a “pensioner”, a student receiving no financial assistance from the college, (in his article in *DNB*) is simply incorrect.

²⁰cf. John Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, p.102. Peter Aughton explains: “Sizars were the lowest of the three [fellow commoners, pensioners and sizars]. They had to wait on the fellows to earn their keep, and had to run errands, empty the bedpans and perform other menial tasks” in Aughton, *The Transit of Venus: The Brief, Brilliant Life of Jeremiah Horrocks, Father of British Astronomy*, p.27; cf. Twigg, *A History of Queens’ College, Cambridge 1448-1986*, p.45-6. Horrocks was a sizar at Emmanuel, contemporary with John Worthington and John Wallis.

²¹John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.vi.

²²cf. Whichcote’s many arguments from the nature and constitution of the human mind throughout Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, especially Volume IV, which, Salter claimed, was prepared from Smith’s own transcripts of the sermons. See Benjamin Whichcote, *Moral and religious aphorisms ... to which are added, Eight letters: which passed between dr. Whichcote, and dr. Tuckney*, p. xviii.

antient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully and Plotin” as Bishop Burnet recorded.²³ In this dual operation, of fostering a naturally ingenuous piety and giving it intellectual form, without betraying the specifically Christian experience, one might argue that Whichcote laid the foundations of Cambridge Platonism. But however problematic his position as the “Father of Cambridge Platonism”, Whichcote seems to have been the prime mover of Smith’s intellectual life, and did not subsequently abandon his spiritual progeny. Indeed, Smith was later “wont to say *He lived upon Dr. Whichcote*”, according to John Jeffery.²⁴

During the eight years he spent at Emmanuel, when the germination of Cambridge Platonism took place,²⁵ Smith met others, also tutees of Whichcote, who were of a similar temperament and experience. Three in particular deserve mention: John Worthington, from an established Manchester family, later a diarist and correspondent of Hartlib, and a fine editor; Samuel Cradock, who was to be Smith’s executor, and later the founder of an important non-conformist academy; and perhaps most significantly, Ralph Cudworth, for whom Smith had “alwaies a great affection and respect”, and who, as Hebrew Professor, contributed to Worthington’s editing of Smith’s papers.²⁶ All studied with Whichcote and to some extent experienced a subtle growth of their own religious consciousness similar to Smith’s. These, together with Henry More (at Christ’s), Peter Sterry (who became a Fellow of Emmanuel in 1636) and Nathaniel Culverwel, formed perhaps the most promising group of theological writers in

²³in Burnet, *History of his own Times*, I, p.331. J.B. Mullinger rejected this testimony (based on Burnet’s visit to Cambridge in 1663) as inaccurate in his article in A. Ward and Waller, *Cambridge History of English Literature 8: The Age of Dryden*, pp. 273-292. It found persuasive acceptance in Roberts, *From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England*, pp.204-205.

²⁴Whichcote, *Moral and religious aphorisms*, p.xx; cf. the varying interpretations by Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.95 and Roberts, *From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England*, p.2.

²⁵If, indeed, we should think in these terms. As has recently been observed, “The term ‘Cambridge Platonists’ is always in danger of overstating the social and intellectual uniformity of those to whom it is applied ... and of overstating the place and importance of Platonic traditions in their thought.” Lobis, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-century England*, p.205. This is particularly true when Smith’s writings are set alongside those of Cudworth, More and others from thirty years later.

²⁶John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.xxii.

the University²⁷. In them, as in his tutor, Smith must have found that support which he, in his turn, tried to communicate to his fellows and students in later years.

In 1640/1, John Smith took his B.A., a year later than most of his standing in the University, possibly because of illness,²⁸ and proceeded to his Master's degree in 1644. College statutes prevented his election to any Fellowship which might have fallen vacant,²⁹ but the reorganisation of the University proved timely for him. With the approval of the Earl of Manchester and of the Assembly of Divines, Smith was appointed to a fellowship at Queen's College.³⁰ He was admitted in June 1644,³¹ accompanied by nine other members of Emmanuel, including the mathematician John Wallis, a fact significant not only of the College's high reputation with the Parliamentary authority, but also of its singular energy at this time.³² Smith had almost certainly subscribed to the Covenant like his fellows. Although it was possible to retain a position without doing so, it is unlikely that a new appointment would have been made of one who refused his assent.

Indeed, two further appointments came rapidly to Smith: a Hebrew lectureship on 24th June, and the office of Censor Philosophicus on 10th

²⁷The composition of the group could, of course, be widened considerably, to include less important or later figures

²⁸As was reasonably suggested in Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, pp.89-90.

²⁹The statutes prevented the election of a second Fellow from any county already represented. Northamptonshire had already provided William Dillingham (1617-1689) who entered as a sizar in April 1636 with Smith. He took his B.A. in 1639 and his M.A. in 1644. He was eventually to become Master of the College (1653-1662).

³⁰For an account of Queens' at this period, see Twigg, *A History of Queens' College, Cambridge 1448-1986*, pp.55-63.

³¹cf. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, pp.89-90. John Walker suggested that Smith replaced one "- Appleby A.M. Fellowship. He was turned out April 11, 1644, and John Smith, A.M. of Emmanuel College was, as I guess the Person who succeeded him; who was admitted June 11, the same year." See J. Walker, *An Attempt Towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England*, p.157. Walker, it should be noted, severely censures the Platonists' acceptance of parliamentary appointments. His remarks on Whichcote are a minor classic of unwarranted bigotry.

³²Edmund Carter claimed that Emmanuel "was so plentifully stock'd" with Puritans "as to send out Colonies for filling almost half the University at that time" (1644). cf. Carter, *The History of the University of Cambridge from its Original to the Year 1753*, p.351. See also J.D.Twigg, "The parliamentary visitation of the University of Cambridge, 1644-1645".

September 1644.³³ At the end of the following summer he became Greek Praelector, on 16th September, 1645. By 1648, he may have begun those lectures in mathematics which John Worthington wished to recover and which continued “for some years”.³⁴ The *Queens’ Donor Book* says that he “professed Mathematics” in the University for “three or four years” (p.19). Although Powicke suggested that his work was only “arithmetical”³⁵, this is unlikely to have been the case. In 1673, John Wallis, with whom Smith had been both a student at Emmanuel and a Fellow at Queens,³⁶ recorded that

Mr John Smith fellow of Queens Colledge in Cambridge, and Mathematick Professor in that University writt to me the 1 of November 1648, about some things that seemed difficult to him in Deschartes Geometry. I had not then seen Deschartes Geometry nor had read any other Algebra but Mr Oughtreds Clavis, nor knew any thing of the Contents of it, but on this occasion found out the Booke in a freinds [sic] hands in London, from whome I procured the use of it for a weeke or two, I found there my two first Rules for Cubick aequations [mentioned in the former part of the Letter] to be cited by him as Cardans rules, but without any Demonstration or Reason of them given.³⁷

The original correspondence no longer exists, unfortunately.³⁸ The evidence which remains, however, testifies to Smith’s mathematical proficiency, and his early interest in Descartes as a mathematician as well as a philosopher.³⁹ As well as Descartes’ *Geometry*, he owned works by

³³ John Smith, *Select Discourses* (1859), p.ix. For the election of college officers, see Twigg, *A History of Queens’ College, Cambridge 1448-1986*, p.55.

³⁴ John Smith, *Select Discourses* (1660), p.x.

³⁵ in Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.88.

³⁶ Wallis was a Fellow at Queens from 1644 until his marriage in 1645. He became Savilian professor of geometry at Oxford in 1649.

³⁷ Beeley and Scriba, *Correspondence of John Wallis (1616-1703): Volume IV (1672-April 1675)*, pp. 80, 174. See also pp. 170, 171, 187 for other references to the correspondence.

³⁸ Beeley and Scriba, *Correspondence of John Wallis (1616-1703): Volume 1 (1641-1659)*, pp. 8-10, pp. 9-10. See also Wallis, *A treatise of algebra*, pp. 212, 177, 209.

³⁹ Morgan sees this as “probably the first indication of the serious study of Descartes’ *Geometry* in Cambridge”; see Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge*: p.516.

Frans van Schooten, Jacques de Billy, Kepler, William Oughtred, John Napier, John Wells, John Wilkins, and a wide range of other English and European mathematicians of all persuasions. Geometry was clearly an important interest, particularly as it related to astronomy. Perhaps on the basis of the correspondence with Wallis in November and December 1648, and Wallis's repeated description of Smith as "Mathematick Professor", it has been claimed that Smith lectured on Descartes' *Geometry* in 1648,⁴⁰ as the first incumbent of the lectureship founded in that year by Sir John Wollaston⁴¹ with the encouragement of Thomas Hill, then Master of Trinity.

In 1650, Smith was chosen to fulfil the duties of Dean and Catechist, which he took up on 18th September.⁴² By this time he may have finally entered holy orders, although no record of his ordination is known. According to the college statutes he should have done so by 1646, being otherwise liable to forfeit his Fellowship. But on 19th January, 1646/7, Queen's had issued a College order granting him leave to delay his ordination for a maximum of four years.⁴³ There is no evidence that any extension of this period was either requested or granted. The reasons, physical, spiritual or political, for this delay are unknown, but it seems to have been unusual:⁴⁴ all Smith's associates at Emmanuel had entered the ministry. The extension might well suggest that Smith's sermon preached at All Saints, Huntingdon⁴⁵ was a late work. In some respects, this must be regarded as the high period of Smith's life. He had emerged from one of the most eminent Colleges in the University to find a responsive

⁴⁰in Feingold, *Before Newton: The Life and Times of Isaac Barrow*, p.19; cf. Oates, *Cambridge University Library: A History from the Beginnings to the Copyright Act of Queen Anne*, p. 251, Neal, *From Discrete to Continuous: The Broadening of Number Concepts in Early Modern England*, pp.40, 118 and K. Knox and Noakes, *From Newton to Hawking: A History of Cambridge University's Lucasian Professors of Mathematics*, p.49.

⁴¹Beeley and Scriba, *Correspondence of John Wallis (1616-1703): Volume 1 (1641 - 1659)*, p. 604, and Feingold loc.cit. Feingold also suggests that Barrow may have attended the lectures. The Wollaston lectureship appears to have been the precursor of the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics.

⁴²John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1859), p.ix.

⁴³John Smith, *Select Discourses*, p.ix.

⁴⁴However, another Platonist experienced some spiritual crisis at a similar stage in his life - Henry More. See Brown, "Henry More's 'Deep Retirement': New Material on the Early Years of the Cambridge Platonist".

⁴⁵See below page 563.

welcome and a responsible position in the College of Erasmus. He was currently delivering those lectures which form the bulk of his published work, a recognised mathematician, and had the respect and affection of his associates.

1650 was the year of the Engagement Oath⁴⁶, and in December William Dillingham⁴⁷ wrote to William Sancroft from Emmanuel, giving details of those who acquiesced⁴⁸:

Widdrington, More junior and Nichols did the like (subscribed) and were indeed the first that led; the rest of Christs gave in a paper miserably laughed at, Sir Thomas Martin swearing that they offered more than Parliament required ... You have already the main body, besides which here and there a straggler fell in: Mr. Cudworth, Smith of Queens his emulator, Gooday, Vintner, men of all religions.

The final sentence in Dillingham's account is ambiguous. At first sight it seems that Smith is to be included among the "stragglers", following Cudworth. Yet it may be that Dillingham describes Cudworth as "Smith of Queens emulator". The construction is not the only use of apposition in the letter and reflects seventeenth century usage. As such, it is suggestive evidence of the recognition of Smith's influence among his contemporaries and may throw interesting light on Cudworth himself, whose principal debt is generally thought to have been to Whichcote. Certainly, the sermon which Cudworth preached before the Commons in 1647⁴⁹ not only shares a community of thought with the *Select Discourses*, but shows a richness of vocabulary and rhetorical subtlety of phrasing associated rather with Smith than Whichcote.

With the onset of 1651, the year when the Whichcote-Tuckney correspondence recognised the extent to which Platonist thinking had influ-

⁴⁶See Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge*: pp. 479-80 and Twigg, *A History of Queens' College, Cambridge 1448-1986*, p.60.

⁴⁷Dillingham shared chambers with the future archbishop when they were undergraduates. Sancroft was deprived of a Fellowship for refusing the Engagement, but when Dillingham in turn rejected the Act of Uniformity (1662), he was to replace him as Master of Emmanuel.

⁴⁸quoted in Nicolson, "Christ's College and the Latitude-Men", p.39, n.1. The letter is in Tanner MSS.LVI.242.

⁴⁹*A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Westminster March 21, 1647* (London, 1647).

enced the University,⁵⁰ John Smith's life took another direction. For, as the Platonist movement came to its full vigour, that of Smith began to decline, and he developed, in Simon Patrick's words, "a disease which nobody with us understood. He had a husking cough, and frequently spit up stones. So I call them, for they resembled a cherry stone, and were of that bigness."⁵¹ By the spring of 1652 the serious nature of the illness was apparent and was the subject of disturbed comment by John Worthington, who wrote to Samuel Hartlib on April 6th:⁵²

I have sometimes told you of Mr. Smith of Qu:Coll., a person of such eminency in Religion and in all ingenuous learning. I question whether we shall long enjoy him in this world. He hath for some two years been troubled with a cough, and I fear hath studied himself into a consumption. ... He is now at London consulting with Doctors, to see if there be any hope.

Unable to continue his work for some months, Smith had gone to London in the early part of the year, leaving his pupils in the care of Simon Patrick, then a junior Fellow. His absence was formally recognised on 5th May, 1652, when it was granted "by the Master and Fellows that Mr. Smith being absent by reason of Sicknesse shall have his whole stipend and dividend for this current quarter and likewise his stipend for so much of the last quarter as he was absent upon the same cause of his sicknesse."⁵³ He remained in London "for the most part of the summer under the care of the famous physician Dr. Theodore Mahern, who prescribed a vast number of medicines, none of which did him any good."⁵⁴

⁵⁰The text of the letters was edited by Samuel Salter as *Eight Letters* and appended to Whichcote's *Moral and Religious Aphorisms* (London, 1753). Tuckney's critical sermon was published as *None But Christ* (Cambridge, 1654), two years after its delivery, on 4th July 1652, while Smith was ill.

⁵¹Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.19.

⁵²The letter is quoted in Mullinger, *From the Election of Buckingham to the Chancelorship in 1626 to the Decline of the Platonist Movement*, p.631, n.4.

⁵³John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1859), p.xi.

⁵⁴Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.19. Dr Sir Theodore de Mayerne (1573-1655) was a very eminent physician indeed. He was born in Geneva and educated there, in Heidelberg, Montpellier and Paris. After visiting England in 1606 at the request of James I, he finally settled in London following the death of Henri IV, to whom he had been physician. He was elected to the Royal College of Physicians, and knighted by Charles I, to whose family he became physician. One of the innovators of chemical remedies, De Mayerne

Returning to Cambridge at the end of July, Smith took with him “a long bill” for medical treatment, but no real benefit. He had consulted one of the most renowned and experienced physicians in the country, a man of international reputation, and could expect little help from the Cambridge doctors. So it was. In college once more, Smith’s condition deteriorated, and “he fell into a looseness which brought him very low.” Although Smith himself was “desirous to have his looseness stopt, by which he hoped to gather strength”, his physician declined to prescribe, “telling him it would be dangerous.” Still trying to find a cure, Smith eventually

asked him if he knew how to do it; and he saying very easily, but he durst not, he never left his importunity, till he told him how it might easily be done, by quenching a gad of steel in all his drink; but beseeching him not to use it. He was so weak he resolved to try, and immediately the humour flew up into his head, and never could be got out; but he dosed[sic] perpetually, and rarely spoke anything of sense.⁵⁵

In this way, “by a Lethargic distemper which seized upon his Spirits, he passed the six last daies of his life (if I may call it *a life*) in a kind of sleep.”⁵⁶

During this, the last week of his life, Smith was under the attentive care of Philip Meadows, another Fellow of Queen’s, and Simon Patrick, who procured for him his final lucid interval. The physician finally being persuaded to chafe Smith’s temples with oil of mace, he was “brought to look about him and speak very sensibly.” In great anxiety, those in attendance

took this opportunity to ask him how he would have his library and everything else disposed of, which, by the help of our suggestions, he directed and named his executor. All which we

contributed to medicine principally through his use of calomel and his invention of a “black wash”, a mercuric lotion. He was a close friend of Sir Francis Conway the elder, Van Dyck and Rubens. In 1649 he had withdrawn from active practice and settled in Chelsea. For accounts of Mayerne, see Trevor-Roper, *Europe’s Physician: The Various Life of Sir Theodore de Mayerne* and Nance, *Turquet de Mayerne as Baroque Physician: The Art of Medical Portraiture*

⁵⁵Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.20

⁵⁶John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.518.

took, and read it to him. But before he could put his hand to it, he dropped asleep and never waked more.⁵⁷

In this comatose state John Smith died on 7th August, 1652, aged thirty four, and most probably suffering from tuberculosis.⁵⁸ His nuncupative will, which is now in the University Archives, appointed Samuel Cradock as his executor and bequeathed his land in Achurch to his mother, with the provision for an annuity to be paid to her by cousin named Orton, to whom it would revert after her death. His extensive library he left to his College.

Although the records of John Smith's life may be scant, his closest contemporaries - Simon Patrick and John Worthington - both attempted some account of the man as they knew him. They tried to convey something, at least, of the character which prompted Simon Patrick to claim that "there was something of Divinity enshrined in this Excellent man's Soul, that it made every thing about him to have a kind of sacredness in it. Though we may not extol it with Divine praises, yet let it never be mentioned by us without the addition of the Hebrew manner of speech ... *His memory is blessed*, or the Greek ... *That most Blessed man*."⁵⁹ Patrick's injunction will not be followed here, but it serves as a timely reminder that Smith was pre-eminently "an Interpreter of the Spirit".⁶⁰

Simon Patrick saw one of Smith's characteristic attitudes in his response to his protracted illness, which he suffered with more than philosophical resignation. For, although he made every attempt to obtain a cure, he told Patrick "that he hoped he had learned that for which God sent it, and that he thought God kept him so long in such a case, un-

⁵⁷Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.21. Sir Philip Meadows (1626-1678) left Queen's in 1653 to become Latin Secretary to the Council of State, in order that Milton might be relieved of some of his burden. He was replaced, when he was sent as an envoy to Portugal and Denmark, by a "Mr. Sterry", possibly Peter Sterry. He was knighted in 1658. Not unexpectedly, he retired from public life at the Restoration. Meadows may not have been present during Smith's last moments, for the will was attested by Simon Patrick and William Gore.

⁵⁸Although, as Twigg points out, "it is odd that [Simon Patrick] should not have referred to it by name; consumption was a familiar enough disease in those times." Twigg, *A History of Queens' College, Cambridge 1448-1986*, p.138n.

⁵⁹John Smith, *Select Discourses* (1660), p.501. cf. the similar remark in Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.18.

⁶⁰John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.484, echoing Gregory Nazianzanus' *Fun-bris oratio in laudem Basilii Magni*, 65.

der such a burden and pressures, that *Patience might have its perfect work in him.*⁶¹ Even under such a “lingering and tedious disease” as has been described, he maintained a firm and specifically Christian patience; and “never murmured nor complained, but rested quietly in the Infinite Unbounded Goodness and Tenderness of the his Father, and the Com-miserations of Jesus Christ our mercifull High Priest *who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.*”⁶² Yet the disease, with its debilitating effects, must have been particularly distressing to Smith, who was noted for “his great Industry and indefatigable pains”⁶³ throughout his life. He had made himself a scholar by his own endeavours. Nor was he by nature acquiescent. His patience, commented Simon Patrick, like his benignity, was “the more remarkable in him, because he was if a temper naturally Hot and Cholerick, as the greatest Minds most commonly are.”⁶⁴

Indeed, Simon Patrick relates that Smith was unusually quick to show anger, though it was but “a short passion”, “a sudden flushing his face, and it did as soon vanish as arise.”⁶⁵ Smith’s susceptibility to anger, however, must be distinguished clearly from “the spirit of devouring zeal”⁶⁶ against which the Cambridge Platonists characteristically inveighed. It was a rather and spontaneous and purgative expression of feeling, prompted by an affection to what he considered right.⁶⁷ Smith’s warmth was a part of the “strong, able, Athletick habit and temper” of mind⁶⁸ which showed itself most often in perspicacity, and in a tenacious grasp of his own position. Simon Patrick again tells how Smith “understood things so well as the First sight, that he did not often need any second thoughts, but usually stood to the present resolution and determination of his Mind.”⁶⁹

This quick sense of his own attitude, though it seems akin to obstinacy, apparently made Smith “very full and clear in all his Resolutions at

⁶¹ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.512. echoing James 1,14.

⁶² John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.511. alluding to Hebrews 4, 15.

⁶³ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.505

⁶⁴ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.516-7.

⁶⁵ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp. 510, 517.

⁶⁶ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.516. cf. Cudworth’s comment on zeal as “a most destructive and devouring thing” in Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Westminster March 21, 1647*, p.63.

⁶⁷ Even Whichcote, the most irenic of the group, would allow “a Man to be warm in his argument, and to multiply his reasons Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, IV, p.69.

⁶⁸ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.512

⁶⁹ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.508.

any debates, a most wise Counsellor in any difficulties, dextrous in untying any knot.”⁷⁰ Smith’s agile and powerful intellect was doubtless well exercised in the business of his College, but John Worthington also recalled “how pertinently and freely he would speak to any Matter proposed, how weighty, substantial and clearly expressive of his Sense his private discourse would be.”⁷¹ Simon Patrick recorded an instance of Smith’s dexterity which exactly illustrates Worthington’s comment:

I cannot but here acknowledge one singular blessing which I enjoyed by my conversation with Mr. Smith, which is fresh in my mind to this day, as the very place is where we were discoursing together about the doctrine of absolute Predestination; which I told him had always seemed to me very hard, and I could never answer the objections against it, but was advised by divines to silence carnal reason.

At which he fell a laughing, and told me that were good and sound reasons which I had objected against that doctrine, and made such a representation of the nature of God to me, and of His good-will to men in Christ-Jesus, as quite altered my opinion, and made me take the liberty to read such authors (which were before forbidden me) as settled me in the belief that God would really have all men to be saved, of which I never after made a question, nor looked upon it as a matter of controversy, but presumed it in all my sermons.⁷²

From this rather loosely narrated recollection emerges not only the ready and substantial nature of Smith’s discourse, but also a very sane good humour.

There must have been a predisposition to Smith’s liberal attitude in Patrick’s mind, but it is significant that he emphasised the quality of Smith’s “representation” of God and “His good-will to men in Christ-Jesus”. For Patrick said elsewhere that Smith’s faith “was firmly set and fixed in the Mercy and Goodness of God through Christ”: it was “that also which

⁷⁰John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.508.

⁷¹John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.x.

⁷²Patrick, *Autobiography*, pp.18-19. For a discussion of the Platonists in relation to the doctrine of universalism, see D. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment*.

brought down Christ into his Soul.” Smith’s “cheerful sense of God’s goodness” was “alwaies discernable in him”; he had “a constant feeling of God within him.”⁷³ Simon Patrick’s words are not merely evidence of a personal influence. They exemplify a general attitude on Smith’s part. Patrick claimed that his “Soul was Universaliz’d”, that “he would ever have emptied his Soul into” other men; he was a “Fountain running over”, “free and communicative”; “an exemplar”, indeed, “of true Christian Philosophy and Vertue.”⁷⁴ His was “a love enlarged as God’s love is”, said John Worthington.⁷⁵

It seems that, while remaining confidently fixed in his own sense of God, Smith was pre-eminently a man turned outward, towards his fellows.⁷⁶ Certainly he was not by nature one “disquieted with scruples or doubts of his Salvation.”⁷⁷ This may sound like presumption, but that it is not is shown by the experience of which he once hinted to Simon Patrick, without, however, elaborating on it.

Once I remember speaking of the being of God, he told me that perhaps he had reason to believe that there was a God, above most if not all other men. I have often blamed myself that I was not so bold as to enquire what he meant, but modesty becomes young men, especially to their superiors; and a profound reverence for him, as vastly above, though not in years.⁷⁸

We too may regret Patrick’s bashfulness in the face of this enigmatic re-

⁷³John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660),pp. 514, 518.

⁷⁴John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp. 511, 506, 509. cf. Cudworth’s description of the the man whose “soul is as wide as the whole Universe” in Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Westminster March 21, 1647*, p.78. (a version of which was published in Cudworth, *A Discourse Concerning the True Notion of the Lord’s Supper: To which are Added Two Sermons, on I John Ch.2. Vers. 3,4. I Corinth. 15.57*).

⁷⁵John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp. viii-ix. cf Cudworth’s argument that “No man is truly free, but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God’s own will, by loving whatsoever God loves”, again in Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at Westminster March 21, 1647*, p.78.

⁷⁶cf. Whichcote’s recurrent phrasing in Whichcote, *Several Discourses*, pp.23, 58, 78 and throughout.

⁷⁷John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp.517-8.

⁷⁸Patrick, *Autobiography*, pp.22-23. Smith was eight years the senior.

mark, which at once prompts and rebukes speculation. It may have been due, in some measure, at least, to Smith's somewhat leonine aspect.⁷⁹

Little has been said, as yet, of Smith's learning, in which he was "Eminent",⁸⁰ to use John Worthington's description. It is evident throughout the *Select Discourses*, and accurately shown in the contents of his library.⁸¹ In characteristic Renaissance manner, Smith's interests were many and varied: he might have claimed "To be a great *Philosopher, Mathematician, Historian* or *Hebrician* [sic], (all of which he was in great eminency), To be a *Physitian, Lawyer, General Linguist*; which Names and many more his General skill deserved", according to Simon Patrick.⁸² Of especial importance are his knowledge of Plato, particularly the *Timaeus, Phaedrus, Phaedo* and parts of the *Republic*; Plotinus, of course; and Cicero, whose *Of the Nature of the Gods* and *Offices* are cited frequently.⁸³ But he was also well acquainted with Aristotle, particularly *Of the Soul* and the *Nichomachean Ethics*; Epictetus, with the *Commentary* by Simplicius; Lucretius, and a variety of other classical authors. Nor did the Rabbinical writings escape him: he cites a wide range of Hebrew texts, particularly Maimonides, Joseph Albo, Abravarnel, Nachmanides and Gersonides. His library shows also the presence of Renaissance scholarship, including Descartes and Galileo, Giordano Bruno and Kepler, besides a wide range of contemporary historical, scientific and philosophical works. Besides French and Italian works, Latin works by Catholic theologians from St. Thomas Aquinas to Jacques Sirmond are also significantly in evidence. Smith's learning was not pedantry: "it lay not as an Idle notion in his Head." Besides an "an admirable skill and readiness in the managing of affairs", "the many good scholars that came from under his hand do witness how dextrous he was at the training up of Youth in all good literature."⁸⁴ Smith was, said Simon Patrick, "*A Living Library ... and a walking*

⁷⁹cf. Patrick's description of him John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.520.

⁸⁰John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.ix

⁸¹J.E. Saveson has reconstructed the contents of Smith's library from the *Queens' Donor Book* in Queen's College. The Donor Book is now available online. For its contents, see his doctoral thesis, Saveson, "" Some Aspects of the Thought and Style of John Smith the Cambridge Platonist"" , and the article cited in n.1 above.

⁸²John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.515. Some light may also be thrown on Smith's range of interests by his *Commonplace Book*. See appendix 2.

⁸³cf. Bishop Burnet's comment on Whichcote's direction of his students to these authors, above, n.20.

⁸⁴John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp.508, 520.

Study, that carried his Learning about with him.”⁸⁵

Yet Smith’s contemporaries did not see him only as “a very *Rational* and *Learned* man.” He was also the embodiment of “those Perfections which have most of the Divine worth and excellency in them.”⁸⁶ John Worthington regarded him as one of those “*living Pictures, moving and active Statues*, fair Ideas and lovely Patterns of what is most praise-worthy, lovely and excellent.”⁸⁷ Simon Patrick wrote of him incorporating or “in-souling” the principles of righteousness, of his being “the spiritual Rule, Line or Square” of “Christian Philosophy and Vertue”.⁸⁸ In short, he was a man “like to God the Archetype and First pattern of all Goodnesse.”⁸⁹ The picture of John Smith which emerges from these accounts is that of a Renaissance scholar, able and resolute in debates, well disposed to his fellow men, whose religion, far from engendering painful and scrupulous self-doubts or dogmatic bigotry, gave him a cheerful confidence in the divine mercy. It is that of a man interested in many facets of the world around him, living a rather sedate and scholarly life in their contemplation, but “fit for any imploiment”.⁹⁰

Both Worthington and Patrick, however, saw Smith in even more resonant terms, Worthington through specific parallels with Moses and Abraham, Simon Patrick with Elijah and Origen. Typically, Worthington’s analogy with Moses was based upon

Philosophical accomplishments and knowledge of nature, ...
Political Wisdom, and great abilities in the Conduct and managing of affairs; ... speaking excellent sense, strong and clear Reason in any business and case that was before him;

and the “loveliness of his Disposition and Temper”, which showed itself in “Self-resignation ... even in Trials of the greatest difficulty.”⁹¹ It is a simple matter to relate those qualities to aspects of Smith’s character, but Wor-

⁸⁵ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.506, recalling Eunapius’ description of Longinus in *De philosophorum vitis*.

⁸⁶ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.ix.

⁸⁷ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.xii., alluding to St. Basil, *Epistles*, 2.3.

⁸⁸ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.509.

⁸⁹ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.504, quoting St.Gregory Nazianzanus, *In sororem*.

⁹⁰ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.495.

⁹¹ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.vii.

thington's underlying notion depends on the Jewish theory of prophecy presented by Smith himself. As viewed by Maimonides and Joseph Albo, prophecy is available only to one who has led a pious and moral life, is of a settled and virtuous temper, and has intellectual and imaginative gifts of a high order, cultivated by study. Possession of such qualities does not ensure the gift of prophecy, it merely makes one a suitable recipient. Worthington based his analogy precisely on the theory espoused by Smith himself, with the clear implication that he saw him through Smith's own inherently rational view of the prophets and perceived a correspondence. By the exercise of his intellectual faculties and his moral life, Smith was fitted for the accomplishments of "a truly God-like man."⁹²

Simon Patrick's funeral sermon rests on a similar analogy with Elijah, defended by reference to St. Gregory Nazianzanus' funeral oration for Basil the Great.⁹³ As with Worthington's analogy, there is no sense of rivalry, but Patrick offers a yet more precise view. He suggests Smith's kinship with Elijah as "an *Oracle* among men", possessed of an intellect "more impregnated with Divine notions" and richer in their expression. Smith was

no less happy in *expressing* his Mind, then in *conceiving*; wherein he seems to have excelled the famous Philosopher *Plotin[us]*, of whom Porphyry tells us, that he was something careless of his words. ... He of whom we now speak had such a *copia verborum*, a plenty of words, and those so full, pregnant and significant, join'd with such an active *Phansy*, as is very rarely to be found in company of such a *deep Understanding* and *Judgement* as dwelt in him.⁹⁴

The balance of intellect and judgement on which Patrick comments, in which they co-exist without either eclipsing the other, is precisely the characteristic which Smith finds in the true prophet. The reference to Plotinus, whom Smith was said to excel in being able to "drop *Sentences*" - concise, weighty sayings - "as easily as an ordinary [man] could speak *Sense*",⁹⁵

⁹² John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.ix. cf pp. viii, xii, 504, 510, 515 for similar descriptions of Smith. cf. Plotinus' assertion that "You must become first all godlike (θεοειδής) and all beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty" in *Enneads*, 1,6,9.

⁹³ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), pp.502-3.

⁹⁴ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.507, referring to *Vita Plotini*, 8 and 13.

⁹⁵ John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.507.

enables us to add another refinement. The comparison suggests Smith's description of the "Hagiographical" degree of "inspiration", which prompts a discourse "full of beauty and comeliness, concise, yet withall exceeding accurate." Philosophical and literary in character, and typified by its tranquillity, this was the form of inspiration with which Smith himself had most sympathy.⁹⁶ It was such a man that "spake of God and religion so as [Simon Patrick] never heard man speak."⁹⁷

Comparatively little is known of the reception accorded to the *Select Discourses* when they appeared in 1660, but the response was obviously sufficient to justify a second edition in 1673. With the benefit of hindsight, Bishop White Kennet considered their publication a noteworthy event, and claimed that they helped "to raise new thoughts and a sublime style" in the University.⁹⁸ Samuel Hartlib, who knew of Smith from earlier correspondence, quickly wrote to John Worthington (on 22nd February 1659/60), acclaiming both the work and its author, and anticipating the publication of further manuscripts.⁹⁹ In Ireland, Jeremy Taylor recalled Smith's first discourse when preaching his sermon *Via Intelligentiae* (1662) to the University.¹⁰⁰

Although it has long been recognised that the Latitudinarians owe much to the Cambridge Platonists, precise connections can be elusive. Bishop Burnet provides a singular testimony of his indebtedness. Under the influence of James Nairn, he discovered the seeds of his own religious maturity specifically in the *Select Discourses* and the works of Henry More.¹⁰¹ Perhaps he found in them the same qualities he found in Nairn, of whom he wrote, "his preaching charmed me, there was a beauty of expression, a truth of reasoning and a nobleness of thought in it beyond anything I had formerly heard ... He was a man of warm, but sweet temper, free and communicative."¹⁰² The phrasing here is strikingly akin to descriptions of Smith. Burnet clearly responded more imaginatively to

⁹⁶Smith's tranquillity of soul is emphasised by Patrick in John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.517.

⁹⁷Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.22.

⁹⁸Kennet, *A register and chronicle ecclesiastical and civil*, p.127.

⁹⁹Crossley, *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington*, pp.188-9; cf. pp.131, 162, 181.

¹⁰⁰J. Taylor, *Works*, VI, pp.373-408.

¹⁰¹Burnet, *History of his own Times*, pp.460-1.

¹⁰²*ibid.*; cf. Patrick, *Autobiography*, p.22; John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.506.

Smith's prose than Joseph Glanvil, who association among the Platonists was primarily with Henry More. He saw only that "the learned Mr. *Smith*, in his Discourse of *Prophesie*" had contributed significantly to "modern improvements of useful knowledge."¹⁰³ Glanvil evidently thought of Smith as primarily a psychologist, a partial view to say the least.

As one might expect, others were still less sympathetic. When Edward Fowler used Smith's work to support Latitudinarian arguments in *The Design of Christianity* (London, 1671)¹⁰⁴, he provoked the expression of a hearty abhorrence in John Bunyan. Attacking all that Fowler owed to the Cambridge man, Bunyan argued that, far from beginning from "the holy words of God", as Fowler "feign[ed]", he was indebted to the "words of Mr. John Smith", who in turn took Plato as his original. "Therefore", he concluded, "you [Fowler] proceed with his, as he with Plato's, and so you wrap up the business."¹⁰⁵

John Locke also read the *Select Discourses* closely. He bought his copy of the 1673 edition on 11th February, 1682,¹⁰⁶ perhaps at the suggestion of Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham.¹⁰⁷ Their discussion exists in letters written between February and April 1682,¹⁰⁸ and is reflected in

¹⁰³Glanvil, *Plus ultra, or, The progress and advancement of knowledge since the days of Aristotle in an account of some of the most remarkable late improvements of practical, useful learning, to encourage philosophical endeavours : occasioned by a conference with one of the notional way*, p.135f.

¹⁰⁴Fowler, *The design of Christianity*, pp. 121, 127.

¹⁰⁵Bunyan and Offor, *The Whole Works of John Bunyan ...: Reprinted from the Author's Own Editions II*, pp.278-334, esp., p. 310. Bunyan's criticism of Smith is based on *The Design of Christianity*, p.130.

¹⁰⁶Known as LL2701. See J. Locke, Harrison, and Laslett, *The library of John Locke*, p.284.

¹⁰⁷J. Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke: Letters 462-848*, letter 684, pp. 484-5. See also Hedley and S. Hutton, *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy*, pp. 193-206. On Damaris Cudworth, see Sarah Hutton, "Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, between Platonism and Enlightenment", Broad, "A Woman's Influence? John Locke and Damaris Masham on Moral Accountability", Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* and Warren, *An Unconventional History of Western Philosophy: Conversations Between Men and Women Philosophers*, pp. 223-258. For a bibliography of studies of Damaris Cudworth, see Buickerood, "What is it with Damaris, Lady Masham?" See also Damaris, *Philosophical Works*.

¹⁰⁸Letters 684, 687, 688, 696 and 699 in J. Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke: Letters 462-848*.

Locke's journal for 19th, 20th and 21st February 1682.¹⁰⁹ He was clearly suspicious of Smith's apparent endorsement of Simplicius' "true Metaphysical and Contemplative man, ὃς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ λογικὴν ζωὴν ὑπερτρέχων, ὅλως εἶναι βούλεται τῶν κρειπτόνων, who running and shooting up above his own *Logical or Self-rational* life, pierceth into the *Highest life*"¹¹⁰, "which to deale truly with you seeme to me very much to savour of Enthusiasme and soe will be very little from my Visionarys".¹¹¹ Damaris Cudworth was of another opinion: "but in the number of whom ["reall Enthusiasts"] I did not indeed beleeeve Mr S[mith], looking upon the designe of that whole Discourse in General as no other then to recommend Puritie of Life as the onely true way of attaining to Divine Knowledge in which are made the greater advances by how much the more the Mind is purg'd from all Impuritie, there being a Natural Cohesion of Truth with impolluted Souls, and also, as Dr More says¹¹², a Principle Antecedaneous to Reason which he calls Divine Sagacitie which is onely Competible to Persons of Pure and Unspotted Minds and with which Reason is not successfull in the Contemplation of the Highest matters."¹¹³ Ultimately, Locke and the Platonists hold different views of human reason.

However, Locke approved of some of what Smith had to say: "The next discourse of Superstition is one of the best I ever read, but as to his third I shall talke more particularly with you when we are got over this first."¹¹⁴ By no means all of the correspondence is extant, but enthusiasm, the immortality of the soul, and the knowledge of god were clearly much Locke's thoughts, and the discussion informed Book IV of the *Essay concerning humane understanding*¹¹⁵

Perhaps few, even amongst those favourably disposed really appreciated the strengths of Smith's style in the years after the Restoration. However, at least two writers paid him the compliment of conscious lit-

¹⁰⁹King and J. Locke, *The Life of John Locke: With Extracts from His Correspondence, Journals and Common-place Books*, pp. 234ff.

¹¹⁰John Smith, *Select Discourses*(1660), p.20.

¹¹¹letter to Damaris Cudworth, c. 21 February 1682, no. 687. J. Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke: Letters 462-848*, p.488

¹¹²More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings*, p.ix.

¹¹³Letter 699 in J. Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke: Letters 462-848*, pp. 504-5.

¹¹⁴letter to Damaris Cudworth, no. 687. John Locke, *Selected Correspondence*, p.88.

¹¹⁵John Locke, *An essay concerning humane understanding*. See also Hamon, "Enthusiasme et nature humaine".

erary imitation. Timothy Manlove, the son of the poet Edward Manlove, was a relatively obscure Presbyterian, ministering in Yorkshire, and later in Newcastle. He was the author of two works, *The Immortality of the Soul* (London, 1697) and *Preparatio Evangelica* (London, 1698), in both of which he restated many of the characteristic doctrines of the Cambridge men. Quotations from Smith and from More's poetry and prose confirm Manlove's awareness that the Cambridge Platonists were his immediate predecessors in the "sacred succession" of Christian Platonists.¹¹⁶ Although he occasionally adopted the tone of Whichcote and showed some awareness of Cudworth's work, Manlove wrote mainly in the shadow of Smith. He tried, through the manipulation of characteristic phrases and rhythms, to recreate the depth and power of Smith's prose.

Henry Scougal, the author of *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, "a book which is met with everywhere in eighteenth century England",¹¹⁷ was also influenced by Smith. Although Bishop Burnet described the work in his preface as "a transcript of those Divine Impressions that are upon his own [Scougal's] heart"¹¹⁸, Scougal's prose is heavily indebted to Smith and Cudworth, not only for its language and idiom, but for its patterns of thought and argument. And it was influential. "George Whitefield attributed his conversion to Scougal's work; its most characteristic phrases were constantly upon the lips of Whitefield and the Wesleys."¹¹⁹

In New England, Jonathan Edwards also read the *Select Discourses*

¹¹⁶cf. Manlove, *The Immortality of the Soul Asserted*, pp.39, 122; and 52, 59, 81. The phrase quoted is from p.153. Accounts of Manlove may be found in *DNB* and Freemantle, *A Bibliography of Sheffield and Vicinity. Section 1, to the End of 1700*, p.136f.

¹¹⁷Schmidt, *John Wesley, A Theological Biography*, p.53.

¹¹⁸Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man; or the Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion*, p.33. The title derives from a phrase in Cudworth's 1647 Sermon before the Commons; the subtitle from the title of the ninth discourse in Worthington's edition. See further, Millar, *Scottish Prose of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*; and Butler, *Henry Scougal and the Oxford Methodists or the influence of a Religious Teacher of the Scottish Church*.

¹¹⁹Cragg, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.30. For Wesley's edition of Scougal, see R. Green, *Works of John and Charles Wesley - A Bibliography: Containing an Exact Account of All the Publications Issued by the Brothers Wesley, Arranged in Chronological Order, with a List of the Early Editions, and Descriptive and Illustrative Notes* p.30, and for the severe abridgement of the *Select Discourses* (in two volumes, 1752, 1753), pp. 79, 84. The abridgement was preceded by a note patronising in both tone and attitude. For the importance of Scougal to Wesley, see Schmidt, *John Wesley, A Theological Biography*, pp. 53-7, 12, 60, 78, 83 etc.

with care (possibly the copy contributed by Newton to the Dummer Collection).¹²⁰ Certainly he quoted at length “a remarkable passage” which he could not “forbear transcribing” from pages 370-2 of the 1660 edition, and he recommended Smith’s *Select Discourses* as able to raise “one’s views above the world”.¹²¹ Edwards’ “spiritual sensation” certainly seems to owe something to Smith.¹²², “whose *Select Discourses* in so many places anticipate the terminology, phrasing and concepts” of the *Religious Affections* of 1746.¹²³ However, perceived similarities in belief and attitude are not necessarily proof of indebtedness: common ground with regard to the nature and use of reason, ideas of deification and virtue may be accounted for in other ways.¹²⁴ Indeed, most studies of Edwards’ relations to Smith and his Cambridge contemporaries have been conducted as though they were a homogeneous group, and the precise relations between Smith and Edwards are still to be defined.¹²⁵

In 1711, the anonymous author of “An Account of Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of a Private Gentleman: With Reflections Thereon”, who may have been Defoe, included extracts from Smith’s work, commenting:

Would People peruse such noble and divine Thoughts as this
Author abounds in, ‘twould mightily tend to drive them out of
those refuges of Lies, they foolishly hide their Heads in, and fill

¹²⁰Bombaro, *Jonathan Edwards’s Vision of Reality: The Relationship of God to the World, Redemption History, and the Reprobate*, p. 39.

¹²¹Edwards and J.E. Smith, *Religious Affections*, pp. 217-9, 66.

¹²²Edwards and J.E. Smith, *Religious Affections*, pp. 32, 47, 66. The editor’s summary of Smith on pp. 65-6 is both odd and inaccurate.

¹²³Bombaro, *Jonathan Edwards’s Vision of Reality: The Relationship of God to the World, Redemption History, and the Reprobate*, p. 39.

¹²⁴See, for example, G. R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths*, p. 68, Fiering and O.D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards’s Moral Thought and Its British Context*, pp.123ff., McClymond and G. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, p. 414.

¹²⁵See, for example, Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion* pp. 121-2, Helm and O. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, pp.142ff., Cochran, *Receptive Human Virtues: A New Reading of Jonathan Edwards’s Ethics*, pp.21-39, Wainwright, “Jonathan Edwards and his Puritan predecessors”, pp. 224-40. See also Watts, “Jonathan Edwards and the Cambridge Platonists”.

their Minds with a true Idea of the Christian Religion: 'twould convince there's no getting to Heaven by Tricks and Formalities, but in a way of Purity and Holiness, as being more a State, than a Place: They would see the Folly of trusting to a Pharisical Righteousness, or of resting in any pitch of Attainments; but see the necessity of *perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*; of *pressing towards the Mark, forgetting what's behind*; of endeavouring to be *Perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect*.¹²⁶

At mid-century, in his *Dialogues Concerning Education*, David Fordyce spoke of "the manly and exalted writings of *Cudworth, Smith, and Whichcot*", seeing "*Smith's Select Discourses, and others of that refined devotional Strain, as the fittest Books he could think of, to raise one's Views above the World, and inspire that truly humble and heavenly Temper, which is the peculiar Glory of a Christian, and adds the highest Dignity to Human Nature, - Books! from which Light irradiates upon the Mind, and which set the Soul on Fire as one reads them.*"¹²⁷ An unusual echo of Smith appears in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*,¹²⁸ and there are doubtless others to be found in the fiction of the period. The discourse "Of Prophecy" became a standard point of reference for Anglican study of the prophetic books until the next century. It seems, however, that the most imaginative readings of Smith's prose were not always those of the Anglican tradition. The most vital line of influence was probably non-conformist, despite his attraction for men like John Jebb.¹²⁹

In August 1804, Coleridge read the *Select Discourses* whilst staying in Sicily.¹³⁰ He was already familiar with other works by the Platonists, not-

¹²⁶Defoe, *An Account of Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of a Private Gentleman: With Reflections Thereon*, pp.243-4. See also Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, pp.51ff.

¹²⁷Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education*, II, pp. 461, 143. See also Lobis, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-century England*, pp.198-255.

¹²⁸Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, p.229.

¹²⁹Jebb (1775-1833) had a copy of *Select Discourses* which is now in the Reading University Library, extensively annotated by him in 1809. Alexander Knox's admiration for Smith was noted in Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.95.

¹³⁰For his notes, see Coburn, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, pp.2-4, 7, 18, 20-1, 42-3, 123.

ably Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, and confessed himself attracted to the group, that which, he declared, "a more amiable never existed."¹³¹ He was not wholly uncritical, though: his attitude has been said to have been responsible for the belief that, whilst the Platonists' "ideas could be regarded by the Romantic poets as important for aesthetic theory, their literary performance was without value."¹³² Nor was he uncritical of their "confounding of Plotinism and Platonism", which led them "into the the mistake of finding in the Greek philosophy man anticipations of the Christian Faith, which in fact were but its echoes."¹³³ For Coleridge, Smith was "not the least Star in the bright Constellation of Cambridge Men", not only an "enlightned and able divine", but "a true religious philosopher" in his own right.¹³⁴ Indeed, it was Smith whose worked to him that "[i]t would make a delightful and instructive essay, to draw up a critical and (where possible) biographical account of the Latitudinarian party at Cambridge".¹³⁵ Like so many of Coleridge schemes, this did not come to fruition. It is significant, though, that he chose to conclude *Biographia Literaria* with an allusion to the *Select Discourses*.¹³⁶

References to Smith's work continue to appear throughout the nineteenth century, often in now obscure contexts, such as R.A. Willmott's *A Journal of the Summer Time in the Country* (London, 1849).¹³⁷ However, despite the analogies offered between the Cambridge Platonists

¹³¹S. T. Coleridge, *Notes on English Divines*, p.351. For Coleridge's reading of Cudworth, see Whalley, "The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge".

¹³²Hoyles, *The Waning of the Renaissance 1640-1740, Studies in the Thought and Poetry of Henry More, John Norris and Isaac Watts*, p.45. Coleridge's view, which are conveniently excepted from their diverse sources in Brinkley, *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, are the subject of of W. Schrixx, "Coleridge and the Cambridge Platonists", *REL*, 7 (1966), pp.71ff.; cf. Gerard, "Counterfeiting Infinity: "The Aeolian Harp" and the Growth of Coleridge's Mind"; Martin, "Coleridge and Cudworth: A Source for the "Aeolian Harp""; and Piper, "The "Aeolian Harp" Again". See also Macfarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*, and Howard, *Coleridge's Idealism: A Study of its Relationship to Kant and the Cambridge Platonists*. A possible exception to Hoyles' view of the Romantics is Thomas De Quincey, who expressed a heartfelt if slightly misplaced admiration for Henry More's poetry in Quincey, *The Works*, II, p.117.

¹³³S. T. Coleridge, *Notes on English Divines*, p.351-4.

¹³⁴Brinkley, *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, p.351.

¹³⁵S. T. Coleridge, *Notes on English Divines*, p.351.

¹³⁶cf. S. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, pp.218, 304.

¹³⁷Willmott, *A Journal of Summer Time in the Country*, p.15. cf. Cave and Nichols, "The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for the Year ...", esp. p.345.

and nineteenth century writers,¹³⁸ Matthew Arnold was the next, and the last, major literary figure to read Smith closely.¹³⁹ His work was apparently brought to Arnold's notice by Tulloch's classic study,¹⁴⁰ and the best known expression of his approbation was based on Smith's sound theology.¹⁴¹ For, although he thought the *Select Discourses* were "by much the most considerable work left us by this Cambridge school", Arnold considered their "main value" to be "religious, not literary".¹⁴² To some extent this judgement was determined by its context, since Arnold clearly aware of Smith's literary abilities. Indeed, he was the first to point out some qualities of his style, especially its psychological subtlety.¹⁴³

In the twentieth century, reading of Smith's work has fallen almost wholly within the purview of the academic scholar and theologian. In the earlier part of the century, the interest was mainly antiquarian and theological in its focus¹⁴⁴, while more recently, Smith's work has been examined (often almost incidentally) in the context of the history of ideas.¹⁴⁵ To

¹³⁸The Platonists have most commonly been compared with the group centred on F.D. Maurice, but a copy of *Select Discourses* (1660) in Nottingham University Library offers an specific parallel for Smith. On p.372, a nineteenth century hand comments, "A very eloquent passage ... John Smith was the Frederick Robinson of the 17th century" (!). The insight might be explored initially through Mackerness, *The Heeded Voice: studies in the literary status of the Anglican sermon 1830-1900*, pp.34ff.

¹³⁹Matthew Arnold, "A Psychological Parallel", in Arnold, *Essays Religious and Mixed*, pp.111-147. For detailed evidence of Arnold's reading, see H.F. Lowry and Dunn, *The note-books of Matthew Arnold*. cf. Allott, *Writers and Their Background: Matthew Arnold*, pp.139-141.

¹⁴⁰Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*. cf. Arnold, *Essays Religious and Mixed*, p.122.

¹⁴¹cf. Arnold, *Essays Religious and Mixed*, p.123-4. Arnold thought that Smith's ninth discourse, together with the Bible and Reuss' *History of Christian Theology at the Times of the Apostles* to be sufficient preparation for ordination.

¹⁴²This approval was noticed in the form published in Metcalfe, *The Natural Truth of Christianity: Selections from the "Select Discourses" of John Smith, M.A.*, by Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p.95.

¹⁴³Arnold, *Essays Religious and Mixed*, pp.125-7.

¹⁴⁴For a survey, consult Mario Micheletti, *Il pensiero religioso di John Smith*, pp. 28-111.

¹⁴⁵As, for example, in Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-century England*, Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy*, Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture*, Covington, *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor in Seventeenth-Century England*, Copeland and Machielsen, *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early*

some extent, therefore, a philosophical interest has replaced the earlier theological approach. The literary study of his writing, however, remains neglected, in part because of the absence of a reliable, annotated text. The rest of this introduction will try, in some small part, to remedy that neglect.¹⁴⁶

Modern Period.

¹⁴⁶A reader looking for an introduction to Smith's thought will find several readily available, usually indebted to Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*. The fullest account is Mario Micheletti, *Il pensiero religioso di John Smith*.