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THE  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF  
DAVID VAN CLEAVE SMOCK

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Feb. 16, 1858—Kept in by a lame back and having but little inclination to read or engage in any close study, I have been for an hour perusing Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church and the thought occurred that part of the day might not be misspent in sketching a few facts relating to my own history to which I may hereafter make additions.

My parents were descended from Hollanders and Huguenots. Demarce (or Demarist) was the maiden name of my grandmothers (both; they were sisters). Their father, Samuel, fled from France at the revocation of the edict of Nantes. (Note by reader: was in 1685). One of them, Rachel, the maternal, married a Riker in or near New York City, and afterward a Van Cleave. The other, Catharine, married Jacob Smock in New Jersey; afterward removed to Berkley (county?), Va., where my father, Samuel, was born; then to Mercer county, Ky., in troublous times. My grandfather and grandmother died at my father's near Hanover, Ind'a. My grandmother Van Cleave died at her son's, Peter, 4 miles from Madison, Ind'a. (All when I was a boy at school).

My father married in Ky. his cousin Rachel Robbins, who was a second time left a widow while very young (her first husband was Henry (?) Hoagland. In 1806 my father, with a young family, emigrated from Shelby County, Ky., to Indiana, being then a wilderness. He settled 4 miles from the Ohio river on the farm where he died in 1833. He filled the offices of magistrate, judge of the court, colonel of militia, and was a member of the convention that formed the first constitution of Indiana. About the year 1820 he and my mother made a profession of religion in the Presbyterian church. I remember when he first commenced family worship, which he maintained regularly, morning and evening, till his death. I think all his children, 11 in number, were baptized at one time by Rev. Orin Fowler, a missionary from New England. It must have been in 1821, when I was 11 or 12 years of age. Not long afterward my father was elected and ordained a ruling elder; first in the church at Madison while Rev. T. Searle was pastor. In this office he served the church of Hanover for many years till his death. From the establishment by his pastor, Dr. Crowe, of the Hanover Academy, afterward and now Hanover College, he was an active trustee of that institution till his death. He was buried in the graveyard at Han-

over soon after it was established in its present location.

(Later). My mother died in Davis county, Iowa, in 1864, aged 88 years.

I was born Nov. 13, 1808. The common schools of that day were but indifferent, but such education as they afforded I received. I was early fond of books and learned more probably from newspapers. These formed in me something of a literary taste. A postoffice for the accommodation of a large neighborhood was in early times established called Smockville, and my father was appointed postmaster. I had thus the opportunity of reading a number of papers, some of them worthless or of injurious tendency, but others valuable. The Western Luminary was established at Lexington, Ky., I think by the Rev. (after Dr.) John Breckinridge, and was for many years conducted by Thomas T. Skilman. My father was a subscriber to that paper from the first, and the reading of it was of great service to me in early life.

January 1827 (31 years ago) my pastor, Rev. J. F. Crowe, commenced a classical school, mainly to raise up ministers for the West. I entered it as a student at the beginning, in his round-log loom house, about 12 feet square. Before that Mr. Crowe had established a bible class at our district school-house in which I was interested. That manifestation of interest doubtless pleased him and inspired some hope that I might be of some use if educated. He proposed to my father to send me to the school he was about to commence. After reflection it was submitted to me. I had three brothers older than myself and could be spared from the farm. My father had bought a farm 4 miles N. E. of Madison a few years before and moved to it and lived on it two years to improve it; then sold it to invest the proceeds in wild lands in Marion county for his children. The proposition was, if I preferred it, to go to school in lieu of 80 acres of land which his other children were to receive. I eagerly embraced the proposition as it was in the direction of my wishes and desires but had scarcely been hoped for. I however wished to secure the best terms I could and consented provided I did not have to "stop off in the middle." Probably this was well considered or rather providentially ordered, for my father afterward found it a much more expensive undertaking than he had expected. He was probably as little able to "count the cost" as I was and circumstances changed during the 6 years from that time till

his death. The country school grew up to a college of 200 students located in a smart, tasty village. Among all his other pressing demands my honored father often found it difficult to meet the bills for books, tuition, etc. Yet I do not remember during those 6 years being detained at home to assist on the farm more than four or five days. Then it was a case of emergency, and being informed of it I cheerfully laid aside books for farming implements. I worked on the farm generally during vacations.

I dwell a little on that turning point in my history, the making and accepting the above-named proposition to go to school. It is fresh as yesterday in my mind. I was ploughing that day—I remember the ground, the gentle slope S. W. of the house, the team I was using. The work went on delightfully, I stepped lightly. I was hopeful and happy. I believe Mr. Crowe had once before asked me if I would like to go to the school he was intending to start.

I had never studied English grammar nor geography, nor was I very well acquainted with arithmetic, but I commenced the study of Latin at once; was very fond of it—made proficiency. Having no mathematical teacher I got forward in the languages, and when the college proper was organized some years later I was not prepared in mathematics for the grade for which my advancement in languages would have fitted me. I was determined therefore on an irregular course and never took the bachelor's degree. The master's degree was conferred on me some years later (1844) after I entered the ministry while I was a trustee of the college. My mathematical course was rather hurried and superficial, and indeed I had less taste for it than for languages, philosophy and belles-lettres. I became rather restless and in haste to get into the active duties of life.

I believe it was in the fall of 1828 that I made a profession of religion and became a communicant in the church. It is not my design here to speak of my religious experience; I may just say that there was nothing very marked or peculiar about it. My views at the time were rather obscure and indefinite. Still, I trust that about this time I experienced the new birth; though the evidence at that time, so far as I recall it to mind, was far less satisfactory than some years afterward. It might have been profitable to me if I had then been directed to a course of self-examination. I was received on

Monday after a communion; a delay of three months until the next communion might have been wiser. It was a time of religious interest and I think there was a disposition to depend on new measures and to hurry the thoughtful into the church. The more prudent yielded to the current for the time. My attention soon after this was turned to the ministry but I was undecided as to duty for a year or more. At one time I was so nearly resolved on another profession as to speak to a physician (Dr. Spear) about studying medicine under him. I however presented myself to presbytery as a candidate and was examined and received at Pisgah. My father was a member of presbytery at the time. The summer was spent in some special studies under Dr. Matthews' tuition in which we were deficient in company with James Hummer and Danl. Lattimore, both having families. In the fall, October 1832 (?) we three commenced the regular course of theological study and pursued it three years, part of the time having J. J. Gray, a licentiate, in the class. Rev. Jno. W. Cunningham for one or two sessions instructed us in Greek and Hebrew; and afterward Prof. Bishop.

At the end of the second year Bro. Lattimore and myself were licensed to preach by Madison presbytery with the understanding we were to continue another year in the seminary. During that winter I preached nearly every Sabbath at Bethel (Scipio) Centre and Dartmouth, a dying church high up on Graham's Fork. I rode generally on Saturday to the appointment, and on Monday returned, 13, 20 and 30 miles. This interfered somewhat with my regular studies. I took too little pains to prepare but acquired some facility in extemporaneous speaking which was of use afterward. In the spring of 1835 I was invited and urged by Rev. D. Montfort (now Dr. Monfort of Macomb, Ill.) acting in behalf of Indianapolis presbytery to visit a church which they had just organized at Knightstown, Ind'a. In June I made a visit and remained about six months, preaching there and at Lewisville and at Greenfield. Returning to the seminary we reviewed the course of study and passed our final examinations the last of September.

October 8, 1835, I married Margaret Ann Brown, aged 19 years, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Brown of Knightstown church (widow) and of Wm. Brown of Brownsburg, Rock-bridge county, Va. Nov. 17, 1836, I was installed pastor of

Knightstown church, still supplying for some time both L. and G. My salary was at first not \$300 and of that part came from the board of missions, and \$70 at first from the Indianapolis church. Here I struggled hard and was never well supported. I found in the church about 40 members and left it 7½ years after with 120. In June, 1838, my health failed, a hemorrhage it was thought from the lungs occurring after a protracted preaching season 2 or 3 times a day for a week. In the fall I went to Miss. and spent the winter in teaching in the pineries. In Nov., 1839, my second child died, Samuel Brown, aged one year. In the winter of 1843 (Jan'y) I resigned my charge and was released. In March commenced labor at Hopewell and Shiloh, same presbytery, 20 miles S. of Indianapolis and 40 S.W. from Knightstown and was installed during the summer. During the first year at Hopewell we enjoyed a precious revival and near 60 were added on examination to the church. I found about 100 members and at the end of 7½ years left 190 or more. I think both churches grew materially in liberality and other graces. I established here a parochial school which was greatly needed and which was the germ of a flourishing academy there now. Here I buried an infant. Frequently visited a very destitute region in Brown county while here and organized a church, secured the erection of a respectable church building, etc. Also organized Harmony church. Helped forward 5 or 6 young men into the ministry.

In this field I labored hard and injured my health which had for some years been pretty good. A very high and ill-constructed pulpit and a house unduly heated injured me before I was fully aware of it. I then constructed a low platform in front of the pulpit and preached from that. Some opposition and troubles tended toward the last to break down my health and spirits. Discouraged and in poor health I resigned the charge in the summer of 1850. For a few weeks traveled as a colporteur and finding it improved my health I removed in October to Crawfordsville, Ind., and engaged as an itinerant for Crawfordsville presbytery on a salary of \$450, more than I had ever before received. My field of operation was extended from Warren and Benton counties west of the Wabash to North Salem, about 100 miles, and from Darlington to Terre Haute, nearly the same distance south & north. My labors were useful; I organized

North Salem and Darlington churches and resuscitated Coal Creek and West Lebanon, and spent a week by request in Terre Haute removing difficulties and preparing the way to unite two weak churches and settle a minister which was soon accomplished. I was urged to settle there myself but declined. Also at Coal Creek and West Lebanon they actually made out a call for me and presented to presbytery. In four fields I was instrumental in preparing the way to settle ministers. At the end of six months, April 26, 1851, my wife died suddenly and broke up all my plans. Desolate and sad, my health again failed. I labored during the summer at Coal Creek, Darlington and Alamo. In October returned to my friends with my children. In Marion and Rush counties I spent most of the winter, preaching very seldom. In the summer I had visited Fredericksburgh, Ohio (near Wooster) and received a call from that church, which, however, I thought was not entirely cordial and I declined. On Jan. 1, 1852, I married at Rushville, Ind., Miss Anna Eliza Sherrill, 32 years of age, while I was 44. With improved health I sought a field of labor. My circumstances requiring a speedy settlement, thought it might be but temporary, I stopped at Crittenden, Ky., in April and remained there but one year. It was a barren field, burnt over, but some very good people there who wished me to remain. I saw a little of slavery and determined not to keep my family in a slave state; could get very little opportunity to instruct the slaves or do them any good. I became in my feelings nearer an abolitionist than at any other period of my life. There was nothing like a revival under my ministry in this field, but 2 or 3 additions on examination. In Rev. G. B. Armstrong's church, Lebanon, 3 miles in the country, while I was aiding him there was some interest and 8 or 10 additions. At Coal Creek the year before there had been a good deal of interest for a week or two and 10 or 12 added.

April 1853 I came to Iowa and the first Sabbath was providentially directed to Birmingham where I was invited to settle and where I have continued till this day. This church was organized at that time with 35 members. It now numbers about 80 and quite a number have been dismissed. A good house has been built and general improvement made; but I seem to have effected but little in this field. Yet my friends tell me I have been useful here. I


was moderator of the synod of Indiana in 1848, and of the synod of Southern Iowa in 1862.

There has been nothing like a revival in this field. It has never seemed to me there was—my faith has been weak. I labored with Bro. McCune in his church at Fairfield a fortnight in a revival when between 40 and 50 were added. Last month he and I visited the little vacant church at Sigourney, he continuing 5 days and I 10, during which time 23 were added, more than doubling the church. I think I have been of some use in a general way in all this southern part of Iowa. My health has very much improved; an asthma cough that had troubled me for years has entirely left me for two and a half years past. On my way to Iowa I covenanted with God to go to work in any field, though obscure, that He would point out to me, without waiting to look for a good settlement. I believe He sent me and approved of my stopping, but I also believe that my work here is now done. I have not been very well sustained here—no proper co-operation. While here I have partly educated four children. My eldest daughter, after giving promise of usefulness and affording evidence of a strong and mature mind, was cut down in her 19th year, 3 years ago next April, with consumption. She had made a profession of religion at the age of 10, and died a peaceful and triumphant death. I have deeply felt the bereavement but trust it has been sanctified.

I am urged to settle at Sigourney and incline to think that Providence points me there, but I would desire to read more distinctly my instructions. May they be plainly given and implicitly obeyed. I cannot remove much if at all before May. I have asked to be released and expect to be when presbytery meets in April. (Note: Was released from my charge and dismissed to presbytery of Des Moines in April as I requested by letter. Couldn't attend presbytery on account of wife's sickness; April 15 a daughter was born; 4 days after, I rode to Sigourney, bought a house and made arrangements for moving. Was received into presbytery at Des Moines Sept. 3rd.)

Feb. 17—The foregoing I wrote yesterday from memory and while in bodily pain. I find my ministerial life thus far has been divided into three periods of 7½ years each: (1) At Knightstown, on examination about 70, in 7½ years; (2) At Hopewell, on examination about 120, in 7½; (3) Missionary

traveling in Kentucky and here, on examination received about 80 members in 7½ years. I have had very little difficulty with any of them. In two or three cases there has been a little misunderstanding when I have been unkindly and unjustly treated by esteemed brethren—in these cases I have been enabled afterward to treat the brethren as though nothing of the sort had occurred. In one or two cases a low ambition, as I feared led weak brethren to forget their obligations and treat me in an unbrotherly manner, so that to a great extent I lost confidence in them. In such cases I have merely avoided intimacy and unnecessary intercourse with them afterward. I believe I have, in the different places of my sojourn, secured the respect and confidence of other denominations and of the men of the world with a few rare exceptions. In a few cases the unflinching discharge of what I esteemed duty has made me enemies; and probably in a few cases apostates from Presbyterianism and disappointed aspirants for fame have become implacable enemies. This I have particularly noted and have often wondered at the fact: Those who have set themselves against me in years past have in the course of providence been brought to naught or have been manifested to be unworthy of confidence. I write no names. Some friends have noted this thing as well as I, and mentioned it to me. Some have died under a cloud; some have been disgraced and put out of the eldership; some disciplined for falsehood and left the church. I can recollect but one who seems to be prospered and in repute. He, I always thought, was led by others more than designing, has often since treated me very kindly and is a good man. I would learn to leave my cause with God and quietly wait for His providential developments. I would not rejoice in the calamities of those who have acted as enemies, but I would note God's dealings. Conflicts at least of opinion must be expected in this world of ignorance and sin, and I desire to carry myself more meekly while shrinking from no duty. I would that I could always exhibit more suavity. Where I have been settled I have still many very warm friends whom I esteem and for whose esteem I bless God. They are here but I must leave them. Many have recently manifested more than usual kindness. May God's peace be with them. I cheerfully commit myself and family and interests for the future to God's care; and I beg to be kept from sin and made more



useful than heretofore.

1870—I note that I have made several short visits to my old home in Van Buren county and have been treated with great kindness. There are 2 or 3 persons there in whom I lost confidence who seem friendly but a little shy as though conscious of something wrong in their minds. I helped to install their present pastor, Rev. G. P. Bergen. I have reason to believe that I have been of use wherever I have been outside of my pastoral charge in getting ministers settled in vacant places. I think I have been enabled to accomplish some good with my pen. For half a dozen of our religious papers I have been a pretty frequent correspondent, sometimes of one, and sometimes of another and at times of two or three at once. During the last year I have furnished communications for The Presbyterian (Philadelphia), The Banner and Advocate (Pittsburgh), The Presbyterian of the West (Cincinnati), The Presbyterian Herald (Louisville), and The St. Louis Presbyterian. I have furnished something for the Presbyterian Magazine, The Home and Foreign Record, and The Sabbath School Visitor. I regret that I have not filed away my occasional pieces thus published, that they might have been preserved. They would have been quite a volume. I have written one tract on Systematic Benevolence. It was prepared by appointment of Indianapolis presbytery and first published by their request. It had I think accomplished some good; has had large circulation.

March 1859—Am still writing frequently for three of our papers and for others occasionally. I came here to Sigourney last May, I thought by Divine guidance, found a small church, scarcely organized at all. Have been trying to get things properly arranged, to correct glaring evils, and do what I could to build up and establish an efficient church. My success has not been very great though there have been several additions and evidence of improvement. I intended to remain but a year but the people very decidedly object to my leaving and I may engage again at the end of this year provided they can secure me a living. The times are very, very hard, and we have been obliged to economize. But shall the people here, because poor, be without the gospel? If I can have a living I will stay a little longer.

March 16, 1870—After 12 years this book turns up again and I write a little more. A very cold, stormy day—deep

snow and high wind, I am kept in and tired of reading. Have been very hoarse for a week, but preached twice each Sabbath. Through Bro. McCandlish's influence I have received a valuable present of half a dozen valuable books lately which I have quite enjoyed reading. I have been requested to write as a regular correspondent for "The Interior," just commenced at Chicago, with promise of compensation. Have written within the last few days near \$10 worth and laid by.

I remained at Sigourney 4½ years, having no marked success. Preached stately in Lafayette township (Scotland) 12 miles distant, and occasionally at Martinsburgh, 14 miles south. Organized churches at both places which now each number about 50. Both built good churches last summer. At Martinsburgh I believe I greatly aided the enterprise, and at Lafayette I was directly and efficiently connected with the enterprise, urging it forward and contributing more than \$100 to it. When the war broke out (1861) my second son, Finley, nearly 18 years old, enlisted, and William, unfitted for the service by a defective shoulder, went to Hanover college. Feeling assured that there would be for several years great difficulty in supporting ministers and sustaining the board of Missions, I concluded to try to make some provision for my family without giving up the ministry. I had agreed to give the Liberty church at Talleyrand, then in a declining condition, ⅓ of my time. Seeing an opportunity to purchase a small farm half way between Talleyrand and the Scotland church I secured it on low terms as a home for my family and after finishing the dwelling moved to it August 8, 1862. My first intention was to supply all three churches for a time as I thought Sigourney must run down if left vacant. The people, however, of that church seemed to think that unless the preacher lived in town the preaching would do no good. I found my time fully occupied with the two churches, together with a little farming and some educational labors. In 1861, without my knowledge or consent I was nominated and elected county superintendent of public schools. At that time and during the first term of two years the labor did not require 30 days in the year and the compensation was under \$100. I was elected a second time without being consulted. During the second term the legislature increased the labor and the pay. It now required

some 70 or 80 days, mostly visiting schools, and the pay amounted to near \$300. At the end of this second term I was consulted and consented to a nomination for a third term. Before this term expired I found the labor and exposure too great for my health and, feeling that both that and the ministerial work were rather slighted, I declined nomination for re-election.

During the last term of two years the income averaged nearly \$400 a year, though I was laid up a great sufferer nearly all the winter of 1866-7 with an abscess in my face and head, brought on by exposure. With the small support from the churches, this office enabled me to lay up some \$500 or \$600 for the future support of my family. We have been living economically, spending from \$375 to \$475 per annum, while other ministers in the Iowa towns have said: "We can't live on \$800."

During the last seven years William graduated with honor at Hanover college, spent a year or more as a sutler's clerk at Indianapolis and Columbus, Ind., making enough to buy him a farm near me; he has married and has two children and is succeeding very well as a farmer. Finley served with credit in the army four years till the end of the war. Was once severely wounded but mercifully spared, passing through several severe battles, returned to the shop as a wagonmaker, married two years ago and has a daughter. He has bought my house in Sigourney and paid in part for it. Both are industrious and respectable and entirely moral. Hattie and Ada, both communicants in the church, are succeeding very well as teachers.

I have now 45 acres here and 2½ of timber 10 miles away. I think the amount of farming I do promotes my health and vigor. I have generally preached twice a Sabbath, often three times. All last summer I preached three times a day and rode from 12 to 15 miles. I estimate the average income from the farm, including my labor and Jesse's, at about \$200 per annum, I should have to keep a team to get to church and they can more than raise their own feed. My orchard, planted nearly eight years ago, is beginning to bear. Have 12 acres of meadow.

The churches have grown but slowly. I have all along felt doubtful of the permanency of Liberty church; it was unfavorably located at first; members scattered and inefficient,

with a few exceptions. The other church is more compact but small. Some of their habits are very unfavorable and grieve me. But there is in some respects evident improvement and some very good members. I told them what I really thought; that their continued existence as a church depended on their building a church. Since that is done the prospect is more encouraging. I came here with an expectation of making this a home for my family and probably making no more removes till my final remove from this earth. I was past 50 and knew that churches prefer young ministers. It might be difficult at my age to get a suitable settlement, and it might be more difficult than formerly to adapt myself to new circumstances in a new field. But I have sometimes doubted the propriety of continuing. I presume I could obtain a situation where the results of my labor would be more likely to be apparent and the support better. And sometimes I think the interests of my children would be promoted by a change. Some things in the immediate community I very much dislike; but in addition to having a home here which I designed to be permanent, I feel interested in these little churches which I fear could not secure preaching if I should leave them—and without stated preaching they would surely become extinct; so I remain. Now, in my 62d year, I am not sure that I ought to seek another settlement if these churches should not desire my labors. Still, I am able to preach as much and as easily as at any time of my life—and I think more to edification. . . . I am invited to furnish regular contributions for definite compensation to "The Interior" and shall expect to use my pen a good deal in that way. If that will furnish me with periodicals and occasionally a new book of value, it will be quite a help. Apropos of books, through the agency of Brother McCandlish who supplied Sigourney a year but now at Omaha, I have had six or eight volumes lately presented to me—worth probably \$15.

I was a member of the General Assembly of 1866, and felt as though I was of little use there. I heartily voted for the appointment of a committee on reunion. But every basis since proposed, except the last, I opposed vigorously, wrote and spoke against them, and was influential in getting them disapproved by presbytery. The last I heartily voted for, making the principal speech in presbytery in favor of it

but insisted on not indorsing the preamble nor abandoning the right of examination. My hope that all will work well becomes stronger. A few years will, I hope, make the two parts really and fully one, one in faith, in spirit, in policy. In reconstruction, I think we need a great reduction in the size of the General Assembly but first the presbyteries will not agree to it. In 1842 when first in the Assembly I thought it quite too large and cumbersome and then proposed a synodical representation. It was not adopted. I wrote the joint committee on the subject last December, giving my views. They have recommended them to the church but there is considerable clamor against the plan. I have all along been inclined to take a deep interest and be active in proceedings of presbyteries and synods, but have often been restrained for fear of seeming too forward. For the last year or two, some of the older men having been called away, I have felt I must step forward more promptly and if necessary more conspicuously. My brethren seem cheerfully to accord me the place of a father, and in some sense a leader. I have secured a great improvement in conducting our meetings of presbytery and synod, imparting great interest by frequent conferences and devotional exercises. In these matters Brothers J. M. McElroy and Van Eman have co-operated very heartily. I have myself been refreshed in these conferences, and others, ministers and elders, have said: "We have never before had such pleasant meetings."

My association with ministerial brethren for some years past has been very pleasant, though restricted on account of my isolated location. Rev. A. A. Mathes was for three years at Sigourney and I was on terms of intimacy with him. William McCandlish succeeded him and stayed one year. To him I became very warmly attached; a kind, good brother. Mathes family more agreeable. Brother Srearer was at Washington till last year and I exchanged labor with him and loved him. I have exchanged with Brothers Condit and Haines; the former a warm-hearted, earnest man; the latter a little more intellect. VanEman is a good, active brother, a little impulsive. J. M. McElroy of Ottumwa, now about to move to Batavia, is a lovely brother, but health much impaired. Have recently had pleasant correspondence with my old college friends C. K. Thompson and John L. Martyn.

The latter has been four years at Toledo, Iowa, and thinks of seeking a location farther south; the former at Elizabethtown, Ind., has been greatly blessed in his labors during the last year, having received to four churches which he served regularly and occasionally 160 members. One entire church of about 80, all recent converts. God be praised that His work is going forward, though I am not permitted to have any large share in it. I may be useful in some other direction but in this field we have had nothing like a general revival; the largest number admitted was about 20 to the two churches in the course of a fortnight. Probably in eight years not more than 40 have been received on examination; in other churches where I have occasionally labored, probably half that number. During the whole time that the Northwestern Presbyterian was published I frequently furnished articles for its columns; also occasionally for the Presbyterian, Philadelphia. I have performed a good deal of occasional labor at Sigourney when they have been vacant, and some at Martinsburg, and have been enabled to nurse these churches, I think to their profit. The people show confidence and affection.

In 1872 I accepted calls from the two churches I was serving and became their regular pastor, partly that they might learn to appreciate the regular pastoral relation. The town of Keota, growing up on the railroad just built near me, I turned my attention to it at once as a point to be occupied for Christ and Presbyterianism. The church at Talleyrand had been unfavorably located and there was no human probability of its growth. They voted to move to Keota and assume a new name. I built at my own expense a hall which the church was to occupy for two years, paying me a small rent. It was the hive from which the four churches of the town swarmed. The M. E. church still owes me (Feb. '78) about \$20 for rent which I have often tried in vain to get them to pay.

May 10, 1874—Sabbath p. m. In weakness I have today preached one sermon, about 40 minutes. Have been quite unwell for three days, part of the time very sick. Last Sabbath, not being well and the weather very unfavorable, I did not fill my appointments. I feel the advances of age and am sometimes inclined to retire from active, constant work. Would have resigned the pastoral charge I think if



there had been any prospect of the churches being otherwise supplied, and living. There are those who desire more of the sensational ministrations and church arrangements and measures. Some whose influence I had hoped would be of much service in building up the cause at Keota prove an absolute hindrance. I am aiming now to get a good church building and to have the church in a fair way for living and growing, and then may retire. But I sometimes fear I shall not be able to accomplish that much and that a more active man must take up the work here. I am now well advanced in my 66th year. The Lord will direct and take care of His cause, and of me and my family. As to temporal support, I have lived economically and laid by a little for old age and for my family. Not much out of a salary never above \$500—generally far below that sum, but chiefly the avails of the office of county superintendent of schools, given without my seeking and held six years. I suppose if all my means except my little home were turned into money and loaned at the ordinary rates it would bring in some \$200 per annum. My sons are so far provided for as needful, I think. Daughter Hattie was four years ago removed to a better world. Ada was very well married last summer and has enough of this world. Frankie and Kitty are both pretty good musicians.

I had my heart made very glad a year ago by son William becoming a communicant in the church. Since ordained a deacon and now the most liberal and active member as to business matters in it. (He and I each gave \$300 to build church while all the other members will not give much more). But my heart is sore on account of Finley and Jesse, utterly careless, not even attending on the means of grace. O Lord, pity them—and me. I trust my daughters are somewhat thoughtful and piously inclined. I pray that they may soon come out boldly on the Lord's side, and be useful while they live and after my departure. (In April, 1875, my daughters both professed faith in Christ and became communicants in the church.)

This month I might have gone as a commissioner to the General Assembly, but did not wish to go. As I attended at St. Louis 8 years ago I prefer to wait till next year and go to some other point if continued on earth. If not, then I hope to join the general assembly above.

I have often entertained and expressed the wish that if it is God's will I might depart at last rather suddenly and without long bodily suffering. But still I have prayed to be permitted and enabled to bear good testimony for Jesus and religion in my last moments. I have been somewhat afflicted with asthma for 20 years, generally no more than shortness of breath and inability on that account to make much bodily exertion. I sometimes think that it arises from disease of the heart; if so, I shall probably drop off suddenly. This matter the Lord will direct aright. Only, may my work be done—well done. As for preparation for the change I trust solely in the free and sovereign grace of Christ, my substitute—surety—sympathizing and compassionate Savior.

April 2, 1875—Last December dedicated our church at Keota, a very neat and comfortable building, the best in town. Entire cost, including frescoing and furnishing, \$3,500. Of this I gave some \$325 besides much time. My son William gave \$350 besides much labor and time. Now my aim and prayer shall be to build up the spiritual church. Much and wisely directed work is needed.

The Lafayette church is weakened by removals and is inefficient. I fear my services are not greatly desired. They are not able to keep up the salary. My age and health make it difficult at times to reach regular appointments at that distance. So I have given notice that I shall resign that charge. I may supply them after that if they make a suitable application. If not, I may support on \$450—viz., \$200 from Keota, and \$250 from the board. This church, Keota, should raise more but probably will not at present. Not many years longer can I continue. Would gladly get this church up to half a salary, say \$350; then they might be supplied after my release. If they wish it I will resign and see what they can do. I probably ought to remove to the town—1½ miles is rather far. Later—April, 1876—Presbytery met at Keota and opposition was made to dissolving the relation between me and LaFayette and the matter was deferred until the fall meeting when my request was granted. I then received from Keota \$300 and from the board of missions \$200. I was satisfied that some members of presbytery were aiming to have me leave the whole field. During the winter of '75-6 I found there was a good deal of scheming by two or three members to secure my removal, and I offered

my resignation in April and in May was released from the charge. At this date, Feb., 1878, the church is still in debt to me for salary some \$30. The \$225 which I put in the building they have been advised by others to refund but not a dollar has been returned to me. Thrown out of income, too old to seek a new charge, and in debt, I have been driven to receive a little aid from the relief fund. In the fall of 1876 I bought of my son William six acres adjoining the town plot and built a good house on it to which we removed Nov. 23, 1876. I designed it for a permanent home for my family. I have since proposed to sell it but found no purchaser. Here we may probably spend the evening of life. In gardening and raising fruit I may make nearly half our living. My youngest daughter, Kitty, wishes to teach. She is competent and can thus support herself and help us. Frankie was married a few weeks ago to a teacher, Mr. R. Kieler, who will probably go to Kansas and make a farm there. Frankie has paid her way for two years by teaching music. Last fall I sold my former home, 40 acres a mile from Keota, to my son-in-law, C. Kirkpatrick, and by that means got out of debt. We are living very economically, wife working hard, making and selling butter, etc. Our outlays last year were only \$250. I hope to reduce it this year.

I work hard, especially in spring and summer. Have preached occasionally for Methodists and U. P.s as well as our vacancies and have received a trifle of money compensation. Last year traveled as a missionary of our board of publication some three months with my own team at \$45 per month. The work don't suit me and the funds of the board would not justify a continuance.

This winter I am reading Dr. C. Hodge's Theology. Am now half way through it. Since Jan. 1st have read daily a chapter in the Greek testament. Occasionally pay a little attention to Hebrew.

Have hope that the church here may soon obtain regular preaching and recover from its low estate. It has been running down rapidly for 18 months past. For one year ending last November they had a supply who did mischief—sowed discord, alienated members and the general community from the church. I have been trying to keep up the weekly prayer meeting this winter; slim attendance. The Sabbath school

has run entirely down and I don't feel at liberty to revive it. May, 1876, I went to General Assembly at Cleveland; wife with me to visit her sister at Elyria, Ohio. Brought her mother home with us to stay, returning by way of Indianapolis.

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Here ended the autobiography. An enclosed paper set forth the fact that Hendrick Matthyse Smock settled in New Utrecht, (L. I.) New York in 1654. Bought 30 morgans (60 acres) from Jacques Cortelyou. Married Geertje Harmens; died 1708.


David Van Cleave Smock went to join the Maker whom he loved and served with whole-hearted devotion Dec. 31, 1878, and his remains were laid to rest in the Keota Cemetery where they lie, surrounded by those of his children by the first marriage, William, Finley and Hattie; and by his second wife and their children Ada and Jesse. "For so He giveth His beloved sleep."

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#### DAVID VAN CLEAVE SMOCK—AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

My father, Samuel Smock, was an early settler from Shelby county, Kentucky, in Indiana territory while yet a wilderness. He was of Hanover and one of the ruling elders of the church which he together with others founded there. He was also a trustee of the college until his death in 1832. He was a farmer. My mother, Rachel Ryker, died in Davis county, Iowa, in 1864, aged 88 years. I was born in Clark county, Indiana (now Jefferson) three miles from Hanover, November 13, 1808.

Until I was 20 years of age educational advantages in Indiana were very limited. In 1827 my pastor, Rev. J. F. Crowe, commenced a grammar school in a log cabin near his dwelling, which school afterward grew into Hanover college. With five other farmers' sons I commenced in January, 1827, the study of Latin grammar with other branches, looking to a collegiate course, having joyfully accepted my father's proposition to take education instead of a farm. In 1828-9 Hanover and several neighboring churches were visited with a precious revival of religion during which I trust I was converted to God, but without any very marked religious experience. My religious views at that time were very obscure, and my advancement consequently very slow for a long time,



but from the time I made a profession in October, 1828, I had more or less desire to preach the gospel; still I had many misgivings and once, in a time of religious apathy, had nearly concluded to seek another profession, but my thoughts were more warmly turned again to the ministry, partly through the kind offices of my pastor. In October, 1831, without consulting any human being, I proposed myself to Madison presbytery as a candidate for the ministry and after a careful examination was received under its care. I was still pursuing my studies in Hanover academy.

The regular college classes were not formed until my academic course was nearly completed, hence I did not graduate, but in 1844, probably when I was a trustee of Hanover college, the degree of A. M. was conferred upon me. I studied theology in Hanover theological seminary from 1833 to 1835 under Rev. Jno. Matthews D. D. and Rev. Jno. W. Cunningham, who at the division of the church went with the New School. I hesitated as to which side in the controversy I should take and was for a time considered N. S., but after careful examination I took a firm stand and ever since have been firmly Old School. This I think was before I commenced the study of theology. At the close of my second theological year at Hanover I was licensed to preach in company with my fellow student Rev. Daniel Latimore October 1, 1834. Representatives of three little churches at distances from Hanover of 15, 20 and 30 miles at the same meeting of presbytery asked me to supply them stately during the winter. Their request was granted without any provision being made for my support. Anxious to be about my master's work I rode to these churches alternately on horseback on Saturday and returned on Monday. For these services the churches never gave me enough to pay for the shoeing of my horse. Near the close of my third year in the seminary at the request of Dr. D. Monfort I visited Knightstown, Ind., where the presbytery had recently organized a church. Here I commenced regular labor in the fall of 1835, supplying at the same time Lewisville (Ebenezer) 12 miles east, and Greenfield 13 miles west, both on the national road. At Knightstown October 8, 1835, I was married to Margaret Ann Brown, then recently from Rockbridge county, Virginia. On November 17, 1836, I was ordained by Indianapolis presbytery and installed pastor of the Knightstown church. When I

commenced labors at Knightstown the number of members of that church was very small, less than 40. Seven years later when I asked to be released from the charge the number was 120.

In the beginning of 1843 I was invited to take charge of the churches of Hopewell and Shiloh in Johnson county in the same presbytery where I continued as pastor for seven years. Here the membership of these churches increased during that time from 120 to 250. In the summer of 1850 with impaired health I resigned my charge and engaged for some months in colporteur labors. Finding my health improving I removed in October, 1850, to Crawfordsville, Ind., and accepted a commission as itinerant missionary in Crawfordsville presbytery. I traveled on horseback during the winter from 40 to 100 miles weekly and reorganized and resuscitated five or six churches.

In April, 1851, my wife was suddenly called to her rest. I was left with four children and health but partially recovered. In the beginning of the next year I married Miss Elizabeth Ann Sherrill, a teacher in the Rushville Academy and a native of Massachusetts. After supplying the church of Crittenden, Ky., one year, feeling unwilling to keep my family in a slave state, I came to Iowa in 1853 and settled at Birmingham, Van Buren county. The church organized there the next month grew during four years of my pastorate to the number of 100 and built a good house which they are still occupying. In April, 1857, I was released from that charge, having the previous fall asked to be dismissed, and moved to Sigourney to take charge of a missionary field. The little church at Sigourney numbered about a dozen when I first visited it, and these were mostly in Lafayette township, 10 miles from town. In that neighborhood I preached a third of the time and in 186— organized there a church of twenty members. After three years I gave another third (?) of my time to Liberty church, Talleyrand. In August, 1862, I purchased a small farm in Lafayette township, nearly equally distant from Liberty and Lafayette, to which I moved and have ministered to these churches ever since.

Without my consent I was elected county superintendent of schools in 1861 and twice afterward, filling that office for six years. The perquisites have supplemented my small salary and afforded a decent living. For 34 years I believe my

salary has not averaged \$400 per annum. In 1856 my oldest daughter fell asleep in Jesus after living with consumption six months, aged 19. Two infant children had died previously. I have two sons and a daughter by my first wife and a son and three daughters by my second. I have usually enjoyed pretty good health, but in 1838 was reduced by hemorrhage from the lungs and spent a winter in Mississippi. In 1850-51 I was troubled with a bronchial affection and afterward with asthma in a mild form. I have for thirty years been a frequent correspondent of various papers, mostly religious. I made the address before the alumni of Indiana theological seminary at Louisville, Ky., in May, 1844, and repeated it by request at New Albany in September. In 1840 I prepared a resolution to offer in the presbytery of Indianapolis appointing a member to prepare and deliver a discourse on systematic benevolence. Sitting with Bro. Gorley I handed it to him for examination; before I was aware he filled the blank with my name and offered it to presbytery. That discourse was published by presbytery and afterward as a tract by the Board of Publication. I was moderator of the synod of Indiana in 184— and of Southern Iowa in 1862. Working on a farm until I was 19 I have a good degree of physical strength. I have sought to be more of a worker than student, yet I believe, by writing very little for the pulpit, I have been able to study as much as a majority of ministers of the middle west.

From the first I considered it best to preach extemporaneously. As to the language I used I made but little use even of a skeleton. I have been permitted to labor in several revivals of religion but have had a dread for excitement. While a student and afterward I engaged in temperance labors and for one year edited a temperance paper but I never joined a secret temperance organization.

For some years I opposed the movement called anti-slavery thinking it an agitation injurious to both races and retarding the abolition of slavery. In this I possibly erred. I was decidedly and I think intelligently with the Old School. I favored reunion ONLY when truth could be preserved and maintained.

D. V. SMOCK.

Transcribed by F. A. Shearer, Washington, Iowa, March 17, 1869.

The foregoing principal autobiography is from the original diary of the Rev. D. V. Smock, now in possession of his grandchildren in Park Ridge, Ill. Most of it was likewise printed in The Keota (Iowa) Eagle on January 18, 1879, a few weeks after his death. The shorter autobiography is a transcript of an original in other hands as indicated.

Printed and distributed among his descendants by his great grandchildren, the publishers of The Keota Eagle, in 1939.