

which are held for almost purely devotional exercises, the prayer-meetings and concerts of prayer. In these "conference meetings," what seems a deficiency in our public worship is so fully supplemented that one may safely say there is a greater preponderance of the elements of worship in our churches than in many churches in which worship is thought by casual observers to be more prominent. Yet it may admit of a question whether it is not desirable to bring something out of our prayer-meetings into the general service of the Sabbath; and whether there are not important parts of public worship which we should do well to make more account of. No instrumentality can be contrived so effective for the spiritual renewing of men as a true and complete service of Christian worship.

Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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## ARTICLE II.

### NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.

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(Concluded from p. 512.)

#### REGENERATION.

ALL Calvinistic divines believe in the necessity of regeneration, i. e. of a radical change of character; and they believe that whenever it takes place, the primary efficient cause is the Holy Spirit. But this doctrine had to a great extent been lost sight of during that deep spiritual declension which prevailed previously to the "great awakening." The fathers of New England theology aimed to restore or give greater prominence to this cardinal truth of the gospel.

In doing so, they were led carefully to consider the *nature* of this great change, and to adopt views in regard to it which should harmonize with their views concerning the nature of holiness and of sin, and the natural ability of the sinner.

If there is a holiness prior to all holy acts of will, or exercises of the heart; and if there is a sinfulness prior to all sinful acts of will, or exercises of heart, then the change from sin to holiness must be an involuntary change, or a moral change in the involuntary disposition of the soul. But if all holiness and sin consist in voluntary exercises, then the change, so far as it is a *moral* change, is a change from sinful exercises to holy exercises. The latter is the doctrine of New England theology. As it makes all sinful depravity consist in a wrong will, a fixed evil purpose, an active evil disposition, so it makes regeneration, in so far as it is moral or implies a change of character, to consist in a change of will, purpose, inclination, from evil to good. But, as we find in the works of Edwards and some of his followers expressions which seem inconsistent with the principle that all sin is voluntary, so we find expressions which seem to teach that regeneration consists in imparting to the soul a new spiritual taste, relish, or principle, which is prior to, and which lays a foundation for, holy voluntary exercises. But they do not say that this change, considered as distinct from all the exercises which it precedes and occasions, is a *moral* change; and that the involuntary taste and disposition which is imparted or inwrought by the Spirit is in itself holy; but imply the contrary. Thus Edwards, in his *Treatise on the Religious Affections*, says: "This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word principles for want of a word of a more determinate signification. By a principle of nature, in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul. So this new spiritual

sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid, in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So the new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will."<sup>1</sup> But this foundation for new exercises of the understanding cannot be holy, for such exercises themselves, viewed as distinct from the heart or will, have no moral character. And if the foundation which consists in a "*new sense*" be not holy, why is the foundation which consists in a new *disposition* holy? Such a disposition is the mere cause or occasion of exercises of the will; and it is a fundamental principle of Edwards that the holiness or sin of all volitions or voluntary exercises lies in their *nature*, and not in their *cause*, whether that cause be a new disposition or a new sense, or God himself. Bellamy says we need to be "effectually awakened" by the Spirit to attend to the manifestations which God has made of himself in his works and word, and to have "imparted to us a spiritual taste," that we may have a sense of his infinite glory, "For these two will lay an effectual foundation in our hearts for that love which the law requires."<sup>2</sup> But *all* holiness he affirms consists in that love which the law requires, and of course does not, in any degree, consist in any *foundation* for love, whether laid originally in our nature by creation, or subsequently by regeneration. He does indeed call this foundation a "holy principle," but it is not holy in any such sense as constitutes fitness for heaven; for he says that the promises of the gospel are not made to it "passively considered, but to its acts and exercises; and to the objection that, if a person to whom this holy principle has been given, should die before it had been exercised in believing, he would not be saved; he replies, that such will never be the case; that God will preserve all to whom he gives this

<sup>1</sup> Treatise on the Affections, Part III.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. II. p. 49.

principle, till it is actually exercised in that faith to which the gospel promises are made; thus virtually conceding the point that this principle, which is the foundation of holy exercises, does not, apart from those exercises, and "passively considered," involve any degree of true and saving holiness.<sup>1</sup> Hopkins, whom no one can suspect of believing in the possibility of any holiness or sin which does not consist in voluntary exercises, occasionally employs expressions similar to those used by Bellamy and Edwards. He speaks of a "good taste, temper, or disposition," which the Spirit begets in regeneration, and which "lays a foundation for holy exercises of heart." What this taste or disposition, which is antecedent to all right exercises, is, he says, "it is perhaps impossible to form any distinct and clear idea," but thinks that "it may be resolved into a constitution or law of nature."<sup>2</sup> But this "taste," or "law of nature," in itself, and viewed as separate from the exercises of which it is the foundation, involves no holiness, is no improvement of *moral character*, and does not commend the subject of it to the divine approbation, nor entitle it to the promises of the gospel which are made to those who have any, even the least degree of, holiness of heart. It is no compliance with the conditions of salvation; for these are holy exercises. If persons having it should die before putting forth holy exercises (which will never actually occur), they would die in an unpardoned and unjustified state.<sup>3</sup> By "law of nature," Hopkins seems to mean just what those philosophers do who define it as "an established and uniform mode of divine operation." This "divine operation" may be with or without the intervention of secondary causes. Dr. Emmons has generally been supposed to teach that it was without any secondary causes, a direct exertion of divine power, producing holy exercises instead of sinful exercises. He repeatedly affirms that in regeneration "the Holy Spirit produces only love or holy exercises." "Not a new taste

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. II. p. 634.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. I. p. 553.

<sup>3</sup> Works, Vol. III. p. 564.

or relish or disposition or principle, but love and nothing previous to it, or the foundation of it."<sup>1</sup> But he was controverting the views of those who held to a *holy taste* antecedent to holy exercises. Such a taste, he argues on true Edwardean principles, there cannot be; for it would be the love of complacency; and the love of complacency cannot, in the nature of things, be an antecedent to the love of benevolence. "Benevolence will produce complacency; but complacency will not produce benevolence."<sup>2</sup> Whether he held to an *involuntary* taste or disposition which is not itself holy, but through which God produces holy exercises, is not certain. He emphasized the divine agency, and was jealous of allowing anything to come between it and those holy exercises which it produced. So much was this the case, that many have understood him to deny, not only any change in the nature of the soul, i.e. in its taste or disposition or life, prior to the production of holy exercises, but also the existence of the soul itself, as an entity, distinct from its exercises. But his last biographer declares this opinion to be incorrect; and attempts to show that Dr. Emmons did believe that the soul was something more than "a bundle of exercises," that he did believe in "the reality of second causes," in "the laws and forces of nature," but chose to say little of these, lest he should withdraw attention from divine, sovereign efficiency.<sup>3</sup> If this view be correct, then it is possible, yea probable, if not certain, that Emmons agreed precisely with Hopkins and Bellamy and Edwards in believing that the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, produces, not holy exercises of heart only and immediately, but also a change in the state or nature of the soul, which change gives to it a taste or principle, which taste or principle is not in itself holy, but is "a constitution or law of nature"; which "law of nature" is only "an established mode of the divine operation" in producing holy exercises. And this is the view which has been gen-

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. V., Sermon 51.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. V., Sermon 51.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Park's Memoir of Dr. Emmons, pp. 385-387, 417-420.

erally adopted by those who represent New England theology. Some, on the one hand, have indeed, denied or seemed to deny, that there is any change of nature prior to moral action ; while, on the other hand, some have not only held to the reality of such a change, but have regarded it as holy and morally praiseworthy. But the generally received doctrine has been that the great change involves two things : a change of nature, i. e. a change in the disposal or adjustment of the natural powers and susceptibilities of the soul ; and a change in the moral exercises or acts of the soul, consequent on this change of nature. This whole change, taken comprehensively, is to be attributed to the Holy Spirit, as its primary, efficient cause.

To the question, "*Is the sinner passive or active in regeneration?*" the answer of New England theology varies, according as the term "regeneration" is used in a broader or narrower sense. Usage is not uniform as to the meaning of the word. If regeneration is used to denote *the act* of God, which is the primary cause of the change, as it sometimes, though not often, is, then man is neither active nor passive in it. If it be used to denote that change of nature in man which is prior to all holy action on his part, then he is wholly passive in it. In this sense it is distinguished from conversion. The distinction is not always formally made. The terms "regeneration" and "conversion" are used interchangeably by Edwards, Emmons, and others. Hopkins carefully distinguished between them, confining regeneration to the change of nature which precedes choice and action, and conversion to the choice and action which follows that change. Generally this school of divines has, either expressly or by implication, recognized this distinction. In this change of nature, the sinner is not active, is not required to be, cannot be, but is wholly passive. But if the term "regeneration" be used, as it often is, to denote the whole complex change, a change of exercises as well as change of nature, conversion in the restricted sense, as well as regeneration in the restricted sense, then the sub-

ject of it is both active and passive. He is passive in the change of nature; and passive also as a recipient of those influences of the Spirit, which indirectly through a change of nature, and then directly, cause him to act aright. But in those exercises in which the change as a *moral* change consists, the regenerated man is active. He acts while and because he is acted upon. Thus Dr. Hopkins says: "So far as the Spirit of God is the cause or agent, the subject, the heart of man, is passive, being the subject on which or in which the effect is wrought. Though the effect be activity or the exercise of the new heart, in which the renewed person is the agent, yet in the operation which causes the effect to exist, and therefore in the order of nature is antecedent to the effect, the Spirit of God is the only agent and man is the passive subject."<sup>1</sup> Here, the only effect of the Spirit's operation spoken of is the soul's activity; no allusion being made to any change of nature prior to activity. And so far as the change is a change of moral exercises, the soul is active in it, and passive only in the same sense in which it is always passive, when influenced to act by motives or otherwise. Hence Hopkins not only teaches that man ought to renew his own heart, and has the natural ability to do so without the regenerating influences of the Spirit, but actually does renew his own heart under the operations of the Spirit. "Whenever and wherever God gives a new heart, the man makes himself a new heart, in that agency and those exercises in which a new heart consists. He renews and cleanses his own heart, circumcises it, by turning from sin to God." "The sinner's heart cannot be made a clean heart by the divine agency in any other way but by the sinner's cleansing his own heart; because a clean heart consists in those exercises of the man in which he does cleanse his own heart."<sup>2</sup> In very similar terms does Dr. Emmons speak of the sinner's activity in the change. "If the making of a new heart

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. I. p. 367. See also Vol. III. p. 554.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. I. p. 138.

consists in the exercising of holy instead of unholy affections, then sinners are not *passive* but *active* in regeneration." "It has been the common opinion of Calvinists that a new heart consists in a new taste, disposition, or principle, which is prior to and the foundation of all holy exercises. And this idea of a new heart has led them to suppose that sinners are entirely passive in regeneration. But if a new heart consist in holy exercises, then sinners may be as active in regeneration as in conversion. Though it be true that the divine agency is concerned in the renovation of the heart, yet this does by no means destroy the activity of sinners. Their activity, in all cases, is owing to a divine operation on their minds."<sup>1</sup>

We must, then, first determine in what sense divines of this school use the term "regeneration," before we can know in what sense and to what extent they regard the sinner as active, and in what sense and to what extent as passive, in the change. They all agree, however, in denying that the sinner is passive in the sense that he passively receives a nature which, irrespective of all voluntary exercises is holy, in the place of a nature which, irrespective of all voluntary exercises, was sinful; and they all agree in teaching that the sinner cannot have a new, holy heart without himself actively putting forth those holy affections in which a new heart consists; and they all agree in teaching that he never does, though he has natural ability to, put forth those holy affections, except under the special influences of the Holy Spirit.

*Does the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, act directly on the soul, or by means of the truth?* If regeneration be used in the comprehensive sense, then all New England theologians would agree in saying God regenerates the soul by means of the truth, for holy exercises are holy choices, and choice always implies motive. "It is out of the power of Deity, therefore, to oblige men to act, without making them willing to act in the view of motives. Accordingly, when

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. V. Sermon 52.

he works in us to will and to do, he first exhibits motives before our minds, and then excites us to act voluntarily in view of the motives exhibited."<sup>1</sup>

If regeneration be used in the restricted sense, to denote the change of nature which precedes choice, then in effecting it the Spirit acts, first, directly, to excite attention to the truth, then makes the truth the means of exciting the sensibility, and then through the sensibilities causes the will to act in view of the truth. Edwards represents God as acting in the first place directly on the soul, communicating a "new perception or sense" of the truth, and then, through this, acting to excite the will or heart to put forth "gracious affections."<sup>2</sup> Hopkins says the change in this restricted sense is "wrought by the Spirit of God immediately," and "is not effected by any medium or means whatsoever;" "light and truth, or the word of God, is not in any degree a means by which this change is effected." Still he holds that "means are necessary to be used to prepare persons for regeneration." "Speculative knowledge" of the truths of revelation, "attention of mind to them," and such a sense of heart of them as an unregenerate sinner is capable of, are necessary to prepare a person to act when regenerated. Means are also "absolutely necessary in order to any exercise of the new heart," for there can be no holy voluntary exercise at any time unless there is truth before the mind as an objective motive.<sup>3</sup>

But he does not mean that the agency of the Spirit is confined to the presentation of the truth either before or after regeneration. The influence of the truth is necessary to voluntary action, but alone does not secure it. The Spirit acts directly to cause the sinner not only to attend to and perceive the truth, but also to yield to it or act in view of it. Hence Dr. Emmons, who said little or nothing about a change of nature, and much about a change of exercises in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. IV. p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Treatise on the Affections, Part III.

<sup>3</sup> Works, Vol. III. p. 570, 571.

regeneration, declares that "no means nor motives are sufficient to produce benevolence in the heart of a totally selfish sinner," and that "accordingly the sacred writers uniformly ascribe regeneration to the immediate efficiency of a divine influence."<sup>1</sup> The manifest aim of these divines in their treatment of this subject, was to exalt the agency of God as the primary efficient cause of the comprehensive change, without excluding either the voluntary agency of the subject of it, or the instrumental agency of the truth. Perhaps the following general statement would be assented to by most or all of those who have adopted the leading views of these eminent divines on this vital article of religious faith. In regenerating men, God in some respects acts directly and immediately on the soul, and in some respects he acts in connection with and by means of the truth. He does not regenerate them by the truth alone, and he does not regenerate them without the truth. His mediate and his immediate influences cannot be distinguished by consciousness, nor can their respective spheres be accurately determined by reason.

#### ATONEMENT.

As to "substance of doctrine," the New England theology is thoroughly Calvinistic on the atonement; but adopts a theory or philosophy of the atonement differing in some important particulars from that generally held by the old Calvinistic divines. That the atonement was necessary, that it has an efficacy God-ward as well as man-ward; that it is vicarious, i. e. is substituted for deserved penalty, and that it is the ground of pardon and salvation to all who are saved, are points in which the "new divinity" is in entire agreement on this subject with the old. But questions like these: Why was the atonement necessary? What is its nature? What its design? What its extent? suggest points of difference between the old theory and the new. The early fathers of New England theology, Edwards, Bellamy, and

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. V., Sermon 54.

Hopkins, did less directly towards developing and shaping those peculiar views on the atonement which have been held by their successors, than they did towards developing other parts of the system. In general they adopted both the views and favorite expressions of the old Calvinists on this subject. The atonement was not assailed in their day, so much as other doctrines were, nor so much as it was subsequently; hence they were not driven to any thorough original investigations in its defence. Their strength was mainly expended in defending those other parts of the evangelical system, which subtle errorists were then seeking to undermine. Still, the germs of the new theory are contained in their views of holiness and sin, and of natural ability and of divine sovereignty. And the general spirit and drift of their theological inquiries was away from the old and towards the new mode of stating and defending the doctrine of the atonement. The school which they founded, only carried out consistently to their logical results, and applied to this subject, certain great principles which they had elaborated and taught. But it was to the second generation of divines of this school that we are indebted for the formal, scientific statement of the New England doctrine of the atonement. The younger Edwards, Smalley, Dwight, Griffin, and Emmons, though not entirely agreed among themselves, have contributed more, perhaps, than any others to elucidate this doctrine, and set it in harmonious relations to other parts of the system to which it logically belongs. The more important features of the doctrine of atonement received and taught by this class of theologians, may perhaps be sufficiently indicated by showing how they answer two inquiries, viz. What is the *nature* of the atonement? and, What is the *design* of the atonement?

I. What is the nature of the atonement, or in what does it consist? It consists in the sufferings and death of Christ, and not in his holy life, i. e. in his passive and not in his active obedience. The old doctrine is, that the atonement consists both in the active and passive obedience. The new

doctrine confines the atonement to the latter, and makes it consist wholly in Christ's suffering. His active obedience was inseparably connected with, and an indispensable condition of, the atonement, but no part of it. "The atonement of Christ not only did not consist *essentially* in his *active obedience*, but his active obedience was *no part* of his atonement properly so called, nor essential to it."<sup>1</sup> "His [Christ's] obedience made no part of his atonement; it was only a prerequisite to qualify him to make it by his death."<sup>2</sup> This is one of the points of the new theory which Hopkins adopted. He says: "On the whole, the scripture represents the atonement which Christ has made, by which sinners are delivered from the curse of the law, — the wrath to come, — to consist wholly in his suffering unto death for their sins." "The obedience of Christ, though most excellent and meritorious, is not an atonement for the sins of men, or really any part of it."<sup>3</sup>

The active obedience of Christ answered many useful ends, and was an important part of his mediatorial work; but it did not in the least degree atone for sin.

## II. What was the *design* of the atonement?

(a) It was not designed to satisfy *distributive justice*. According to the old theory, the distributive justice of God demands the punishment of the sinner; and that demand is met and satisfied by the infliction of the deserved punishment on Christ instead of the sinner. The advocates of the new theory say: "Distributive justice is not at all satisfied by the death of Christ." "If distributive justice were satisfied, it would have no further claim on the sinner; and to punish him when this kind of justice has no claim on him, is to treat him more unfavorably and severely than his personal character deserves."<sup>4</sup> "Though he [Christ] suffered in our stead, yet he did not suffer the punishment which we

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edwards's Works, Vol. I. p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. V. p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Edwards's Works, Vol. I. pp. 47, 48.

deserved, and which the law threatens us." "His sufferings were no punishment, much less our punishment." "Nothing, therefore, that Christ did or suffered here on earth can satisfy God's distributive justice, or pay the debt of suffering which we owe him."<sup>1</sup> "It follows from the foregoing reasonings, that the sufferings of Christ are not a literal satisfaction of law and justice, even in behalf of believers, much less in behalf of the unregenerate."<sup>2</sup>

(b) The atonement was designed to satisfy the *general justice* of God. General justice "comprehends all goodness." "In this sense, whatever is *right* is said to be just, or an act of justice; and whatever is *wrong* or improper to be done, is said to be *unjust*, or an act of injustice. To practise justice in this sense, is to practise agreeably to the dictates of general benevolence, or to seek the glory of God and the good of the universe."<sup>3</sup> This general justice or rectitude of God, which is that love in which all holiness primarily consists, prompts him to do what is fit and proper, and promotive of the highest good of the universe, including himself and all his creatures. The atonement was a provision or expedient, originating with and adopted by general justice, and therefore satisfactory to it, for promoting the highest good. It was a means to an end, and that end is the same which God has in view in all that he does.

But *how* does the atonement satisfy general justice? By being a substitute for the penalty of the law. The penalty was annexed to the law to answer certain ends. These ends are answered by the atonement. It was designed to take the place of penalty in regard to them. "The atonement is the substitute for the punishment threatened in the law; and was designed to answer the same ends of supporting the authority of law, the dignity of the divine moral government, and the consistency of the divine conduct in legislation and execution."<sup>4</sup> It was designed to be, not

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. V. p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Griffin on the Atonement, Part I, Chap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Edwards's Works, Vol. I. p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Edwards's Works, Vol. I. p. 17.

penalty, but a substitute for penalty; not punishment, but sufferings equivalent to punishment, i. e. equivalent in respect to the ultimate end of punishment, viz. the good of the universe through the support of law and government. The *immediate* end of punishment, viz. the satisfaction of distributive justice, is not answered, nor was designed to be answered, by the atonement, for this is impossible except by the punishment of the sinner himself; but the ultimate end of punishment, which is the ultimate end of all that God does, is answered by the atonement as well, or better, than it would have been answered by the infliction of punishment on the guilty. It is one of the fundamental principles of New England theology, as we have seen, that all virtue is resolvable into love, and hence that all the moral attributes of God are only so many different modifications or forms of love; and hence, that love is the controlling principle of action in all that he does; actuating him alike in creating and in governing the universe, in executing justice and in showing mercy, in punishing and in forgiving; in annexing the penalty to his law, and in providing an atonement as a substitute for that penalty. If distributive justice were the divine attribute to which all others are subordinate; or if it were an independent attribute not resolvable into love, nor subordinate to love, then the atonement, instead of being a substitute for penalty, must have been literal penalty, and instead of being a designed means of promoting the good of the universe, must have been only a designed means of expressing or exercising distributive justice; such exercise of justice being an ultimate end in itself. But by making distributive justice only a form of general justice, and resolving all holiness into love, New England divines hold that distributive justice exercised in the infliction of penalty, not being an ultimate end in itself, but only a designed means to an ultimate end, viz. the good of the universe, may be dispensed with, if anything can be substituted for it equally efficacious in sustaining law and government, and thus securing the good of the universe. The atonement, they believe, is such

a substitute, its *immediate* design being the same as that of threatened penalty, viz. the vindication of law, and support of government; its *ultimate* design being the highest good of the universe. But the atonement was not designed to promote the highest good of the universe directly, but indirectly, by what it should enable God consistently to do in consequence of it. First, by rendering it consistent for God to offer pardon and salvation to all men, thus rendering the salvation of all men possible. Without an atonement it would have been inconsistent for God to offer salvation to any, because he could not save any, even if they were penitent. But he does offer salvation to all; and it was the design of the atonement to render it proper and consistent for him to make this offer; and, in this sense, the atonement was general, designed for all, and not limited or designed for the elect only. It is not only sufficient for all, but was intended for all. Thus even Dr. Bellamy says: "And God has expressly declared that it was the design of Christ's death to open the door of mercy to all." "And, indeed, was not the door of mercy opened to all indefinitely, how could God sincerely offer mercy to all; or heartily invite all?"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hopkins used similar language.<sup>2</sup>

The successors of these men reaffirm and emphasize their views on this point. Dr. Emmons says: "The atonement of Christ has the same favorable aspect upon the non-elect as upon the elect. It opens as wide a door of mercy to the one as to the other. It removes all natural obstacles out of the way of the salvation of either, because it renders it consistent with the justice of God to pardon and save a part or the whole of mankind, according to his sovereign pleasure and eternal purpose. The atonement of Christ has laid God under no obligation to save one of mankind, but left him at liberty to save a part or the whole of the human race. It is generally believed that God does, in the gospel, offer salvation to all; but how can he consistently offer salvation to

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. I. pp. 292, 294.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Vol. III. pp. 565, 566.

all, if Christ has not made atonement for all?"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Griffin asks: "What do we mean by *for*, when we say that the atonement was *for* all?" and answers: "We mean four things: 1. That in its actual influence it changes the relations which all, as moral agents, sustained to the divine law. 2. That it thus became, in relation to all who hear the gospel, a provision for moral agents and a real privilege. 3. That the provision and privilege were purposely intended for all. 4. That the atonement was expressly offered to all."<sup>2</sup> This design of the atonement to render the salvation of all men possible, and so render the offer of salvation to all consistent and proper, is the more readily admitted by these divines, because they hold to the doctrine of natural ability. If sinners could not accept the atonement, it could not properly be said to be for them; and the offer of it to all would be only a mockery. Sincere offers of salvation to all imply that all have natural ability to accept the offer; and if the offer be based on the atonement, and could not consistently be made without it, then the atonement rendered, and was designed to render, it consistent for God to make the offers of salvation to all men. Thus reason the men who believe the atonement is not penalty, but a substitute for penalty; designed to answer the same end for which penalty was threatened.

*Secondly.* The atonement was designed to promote the highest good of the universe by rendering it consistent for God not only to offer salvation to all, but also, by his Spirit to lead to repentance, and so actually save those whom he has chosen unto eternal life. In other words, the atonement was designed so to answer certain governmental ends as to render it consistent for God to regenerate and save those whom he, having the highest good of the universe in view, had elected to salvation. When it is said that the atonement was designed for all, but was designed to be actually applied only to the elect, the meaning is that it has,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. V. p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Treatise on the Atonement, Part II., Chap. 19.

and was designed to have, such an efficacy that God can be just to himself and to the universe in promising salvation to all who will repent, while he can be just to himself and to the universe in giving repentance to those, and only to those, whom, in the exercise of sovereign love, he has purposed to save. The atonement is not the reason why he elects a definite number of the race, and no more and no less. His purpose of election is an exercise of that same benevolent sovereignty which always has in view as an ultimate end the good of the universe. The atonement enables him to execute that purpose without sacrificing that end. So that in providing an atonement for all, and applying it to the actual salvation of the elect, he acts simply as a sovereign, subject only to the law of love, having always one and the same great end in view, the highest welfare of the universe. It was by exalting the sovereignty of God in connection with the atonement, and by insisting that acts of sovereignty are acts of that love, which is the essence of all virtue, and by showing what was the ultimate end of God in creation, that Edwards, Bellamy, and Hopkins prepared the way for that theory of the atonement which now holds a recognized place in New England theology.

#### DECREES.

No theologians have given greater prominence to the sovereignty of God than those whose views we are endeavoring to set forth. One of the standing objections against them has been that they wrote and preached of nothing else; but the truth is, they gave this prominence to God's sovereignty because they held so firmly to those principles which secure man's freedom and responsibility. Their doctrine of the nature of sin and of natural ability made it safe for them to exalt sovereignty.

They accepted the ordinary statement of the doctrine of decrees found in the old Calvinistic symbols. Their only peculiarity in treating the doctrine lies in their method of meeting the objections brought against it. These ob-

jections refer to the relation of decrees to the existence of sin.

1. It is objected that it is inconsistent with the character of God to decree the existence of sin. Being in its very nature an evil, and infinitely hateful, how can a holy and benevolent God make its existence the subject of his immutable decrees? To meet this objection, it was natural for these divines who resolve all virtue into benevolence, and so make the highest good of the universe the ultimate end of God in creation, to take the ground that God decrees sin because it is the necessary means of the greatest good. It is consistent with the whole spirit of his system for Dr. Hopkins to say: "It is abundantly evident and demonstrably certain from reason assisted by revelation, that all the sin and suffering which have taken place, or ever will, are necessary for the greatest good of the universe, and to answer the wisest and best ends, and therefore must be included in the best and most wise and perfect plan."<sup>1</sup> Similar language is employed by most of the early fathers of New England theology. But they did not mean that sin is the direct and efficient means of the greatest good, but only that it is the occasion for God so to work as to secure the highest good. He does not decree the non-existence of sin, because the execution of such a decree would require action on his part inconsistent with the highest good. Hence he decrees the existence of sin rather than its prevention. It is better for the universe that sin should exist and be held in check and overruled, than that there should be such a change in the present system as would be necessary to prevent its existence. And as the benevolence of God moves him to decree what is for the highest good, he decrees to permit rather than prevent sin, so that its existence, viewed as decreed, proves rather than disproves his perfect benevolence. As Edwards says: "God does not will sin absolutely; but rather than alter the law of nature and the nature of free agents, he wills it. He wills

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. I. p. 90.

what is contrary to excellency in some particulars, for the sake of a more general excellency and order."<sup>1</sup>

Most divines of this school at the present day are not satisfied with the formula that "sin is the necessary means of the greatest good," though holding substantially the doctrine which it was intended to express. They would not say that sin is literally "necessary," nor that it is, strictly speaking, the "means" of good. It is for the best that sin exist, only in the sense that the non-prevention of it by God is for the best. His decree that it exist, is better than would be a decree to do what would be necessary to prevent it. He does not decree it because he prefers it to holiness in its stead, but because he prefers it to such a change in the system as would secure holiness in its stead.

Some New England divines have preferred to meet this objection against decrees, by the hypothesis that it *may be* God could not prevent sin in a moral system. This view, however, has not been generally accepted. If the statement were, that God could not prevent sin in the *best* moral system, it would be substantially the same as that given above, since he has decreed the best system, and this includes the permission of sin; therefore a change in this system which should prevent sin would make it another and an inferior system.

2. It is objected to the doctrine of divine decrees, that it is inconsistent with man's free moral agency. To this objection it is replied: (a) That the freedom of every moral act is as much decreed as the act itself.<sup>2</sup> God decrees that men shall act freely in whatever they do. (b) That there is nothing in the nature of decrees while unexecuted "to influence the actions of men, any more than if they did not exist."<sup>3</sup> If in any way they interfere with human freedom, it must be in the mode of their execution; i. e. in the divine agency consequent on the divine decrees. But whatever influence God exerts upon men in fulfilling his

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. II. p. 516.

<sup>2</sup> Hopkins's Works, Vol. II. p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. IV. pp. 394.

decrees, whether directly by his Spirit, or indirectly by motives, our consciousness testifies to no interference with our freedom. We are conscious of no irresistible force necessitating our action. We have natural power to resist the influences to which we yield, and always feel that we act freely, whether we yield or resist. The divine agency, executing the divine decrees, may render moral actions *certain* without rendering them *necessary*. Certainty is consistent with freedom, else prophecy and foreknowledge were impossible. Men are not compelled to do what they certainly will do, and they can do what they certainly will not do. They act as freely as if there were no certainty in the case.<sup>1</sup> If the divine decrees were supposed, either in themselves or in their execution, to deprive men of power to act otherwise than as they do act, the objection that they destroy freedom would seem valid; but the doctrine of natural ability as held by these divines enabled them to turn the force of this objection. They would not all care to say, with Dr. Emmons, that "men always have natural power to frustrate those divine decrees which they are appointed to fulfil."<sup>2</sup> But the truth thus paradoxically stated they deem essential to a right conception of the doctrine of decrees, and to a successful vindication of it against the objections urged by Arminians and infidels.

There are several other Christian doctrines which have been treated in a peculiar manner by this school of New England divines; but as the peculiarities of views adopted in regard to them are less important than those already considered, and have less vital relations to the whole Calvinistic system, and as this Article is already unduly extended, no mention is here made of them.

Our aim has been historical rather than controversial, — to exhibit rather than defend or combat a peculiar system of theology, or rather a peculiar type of Calvinistic theology. In conclusion, we can but express the conviction that no

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins's Works, Vol. I. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Emmons's Works, Vol. IV. p. 304.

man can make himself familiar with this New England theology, its origin and history, without entertaining a profound respect for the piety and ability of many of those men whose names are intimately associated with it, however much and earnestly he may dissent from the peculiar views which they adopted.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF THEODORE PARKER.<sup>1</sup>

BY REV. HERMAN LINCOLN, D.D., PROVIDENCE, R. I.

NEWTON, an English painter of celebrity in the last generation, paid a professional visit to the United States, extending through several months. Much of this time was spent in Boston. On his return to England a London cockney undertook to condole with him on his long exile from good society. "Sir," was the indignant reply of the artist, "I met such people in Boston *every day* as I should be glad to meet here *occasionally*." The compliment was a generous one from an Englishman, but strictly just, as any one familiar with Boston society at the close of the last century can testify. The recent Memoirs of Choate and Prescott and Parker indicate that Boston has lost none of its celebrity in our generation. They moved in different social circles. They rarely met each other in private life, nor did they have mutual friends. But each of them had a large circle of friends of generous aims and high culture, in whose companionship they sought mental refreshment and stimulus. Three such men in a single city (in which Webster and Everett and Wendell Phillips were contemporaries) silence the sneers of foreign critics that American life is too young and

<sup>1</sup> Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker, Minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, Boston. By John Weiss. New York: D. Appleton and Co. 1864.