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THE RELATION OF HORACE BUSHNELL'S THEORY OF
THE ATONEMENT TO THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

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OUTLINE OF THESIS

THE RELATION OF HORACE BUSHNELL'S THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT TO THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.

Introduction. The problem of this thesis is to show the relation of Horace Bushnell's theory of the Atonement to the New England Theology. In order to do this we will attempt the following:

- A. To make clear the natural reaction of the personality and life of Bushnell to the New England Theology.
- B. To give a comprehensive statement of Bushnell's theory of the Atonement as revealed in his works.
- C. To compare Bushnell's views on the Atonement with those of the New England system.

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to the time of Bushnell.

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

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America has achieved many triumphs in financial organization, commercial development, gigantic construction, and skilful invention. She has done much in science, but little in theology. England and Germany have taken the lead in works of original and profound thought concerning the great problems of man's relation to God.

However, there have been two giant intellects in our country, who, by their brilliant and original thought have marked new epochs in the realm of theology. These are Jonathan Edwards, the founder of the New England School of Theology and Horace Bushnell, whose work on the Atonement has given us a new elaboration of the Moral Influence Theory. We shall attempt no criticism in this thesis of either of these leaders in theological thought. They were markedly independent, both of the schools of thought preceding them and of contemporaneous European influence.

In our study of Bushnell, in order that we may understand his writings, it will be necessary that we study the man himself. We shall endeavor to visualize his environment, comprehend the thought of his time, and ascertain why he was dissatisfied with the doctrine generally held. To fully understand that doctrine we shall find ourselves obliged to journey back many years to investigate that system of thought which began with Jonathan Edwards and which bears the name of the New England Theology. We shall see how it grew in a rugged soil and was nurtured

and developed by keen and logical intellects. We shall attempt to show what would be the natural reaction of a personality like Bushnell's to this theology which was the prevailing one in his day. We shall give a careful statement of his theory of the Atonement. Then we will cull the views of the Atonement from the writings of the New England School. Finally, we will compare these views with the theory advanced by Bushnell.

To summarize then, the problem of this thesis is to show the relation of Horace Bushnell's theory of the Atonement to the New England Theology. In order to do this we will attempt the following:

A. To make clear the natural reaction of the personality and life of Bushnell to the New England Theology.

B. To give a comprehensive statement of Bushnell's Theory of the Atonement as revealed in his works.

C. To compare Bushnell's views on the Atonement with those of the New England system.

1. THE NATURAL REACTION OF THE
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A. A Brief Biography of Bushnell.

Connecticut has been called a mother of theologians. Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, West, Emmons, Smalley, Lyman Beecher, and Taylor, were all born in that state. The younger Edwards and President Dwight at an early age became residents of Connecticut. All these theologians had their influence on the man whose personality and life we are considering.

Horace Bushnell was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, April 14, 1802. He was the eldest son of Ensign and Datha Bishop Bushnell, plain farming people who were known among their neighbors for their uprightness, industry, and kindness. The Bushnells are supposed to be of Huguenot origin. The father was a Methodist, the mother an Episcopalian. They became Congregationalists when they moved to a town where a church of that denomination was the only one in the locality.

The time of Horace Bushnell's boyhood was one of unbounded hope in Connecticut. The state had recovered from the exhaustion and the impoverishment of the Revolutionary War. The people were full of courage, planning

educational and industrial institutions for the future. It was a wholesome, vigorous atmosphere, both physical and moral, into which Horace Bushnell was born.

In 1805 the family moved to New Preston where the father, beside his farming, engaged in the business of carding wool and dressing cloth for machinery. The farm was beautifully located in rugged, picturesque country. Rocky and hilly, it was only by untiring effort that the soil produced a sufficient harvest.

Young Bushnell was reared¹ under strict discipline in the simplest of habits. From childhood he was taught to do his share of the farm work and to contribute to the support of the family. Horace's younger brother thus writes of their father and mother. "Religion was no occasional and nominal thing, but a constant atmosphere, a commanding but genial presence. In our father it was characterized by eminent evenness, fairness, and conscientiousness; in our mother it was felt as an intense life of love, utterly unselfish and untiring in its devotion, yet thoughtful, sagacious, and wide, always stimulating and ennobling, and in special crises leaping out in tender and almost awful fire."¹

At the age of five Horace entered the district school. Of his teacher there he writes these words forty-four years later; "that friendly teacher who had the ad-

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell, p.8

dress to start a first feeling of enthusiasm and awaken the first sense of power."¹ Horace is described as a boy of happy temperament, learning quickly, but being fonder of play than of study. At the age of fourteen, he was employed in his father's carding and finishing mill in the summer. He also did his share of the farm work, attending school in the winter.

Even at this early age his energetic, exploring mind was in evidence. During his first year of mill work, the carding machine was not giving satisfactory results. Young Bushnell took it entirely apart, repaired and reconstructed it. He showed such interest in mechanics that later he invented improvements to the machinery of the mill.

In the winter of 1817, Bushnell attended the High School at Warren. The next winter a classical school was opened at New Preston. Here he began his study of Latin. Soon after this we find him very fond of debating.

Bushnell dated his conversion as taking place March 3, 1822. At this time he united with the church and entered enthusiastically into religious work. Now at the age of nineteen he began to desire a college education. After a somewhat imperfect preparation he passed his examination for Yale in the summer of 1823. Characteristically he went back gladly to the work on the farm. That

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 11.

summer he built the solid stone dam above his father's mill. It still stands as a fine piece of constructive skill.

At the age of twenty-one he is described as being of a remarkably robust physique, and of a strong and wiry frame. His head was large and seemed even larger because of the thick masses of black hair. His complexion was ruddy and his deep-set gray eyes brilliant. Even then he seemed conscious of his very original powers. His college chum thus describes him as an undergraduate, "He thought for himself and he thought vigorously. There was no task to which he was called that he hesitated to attempt, and whatever he undertook, he accomplished. There was a wonderful consciousness of power."¹ Although Bushnell's college life was lived according to the strictest moral standards and he regularly attended Communion service, he thus writes of college days; "My religious character went down."² His classmates say that during his college course he was reticent as to his religious views, never discussing whatever doubts or religious problems were vexing him.

After graduating from Yale in 1827, Bushnell went in September to Norwich, Connecticut, to teach school. However, he felt no special fitness for this work and was

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 37.

²

Ibid., p. 36.

glad to give up his task. In February he was offered the position of associate editor of the Journal of Commerce, a newly established New York daily. This he eagerly accepted and at once entered upon his new duties. Although he showed some brilliancy as an editor, Bushnell did not wish to make it his life work. After ten months, he gave up his newspaper work and returned to New Haven to enter the Law School there. After spending a year and a half in the study of law, his plans were made to enter a law office in a Western city. But at this time he received an invitation to become a tutor at Yale. Owing to the influence of his mother, Bushnell declined the law opening and accepted the position of tutor. However he continued his studies in the Law School with the view of eventually making the law his life work. At this time, because his own faith was so vague and undefined, he found one of his most difficult duties to be that of taking his turn in conducting the daily prayers at chapel. His success as a tutor may be seen from a letter written in later years by one of his colleagues, Dr. McEwen. He writes; "He was more than ordinarily successful as a teacher in college, imparting the same manly enthusiastic spirit of¹ enquiry and investigation so characteristic of himself."

His labors as tutor and his law studies were successfully carried on for a year and a half. In the winter of

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 54.

1831 his law studies were completed, he passed his examination for admission to the bar, and would have launched out upon a legal career but for an unexpected occurrence. The winter of 1831 was marked by a religious revival at Yale. For a time Bushnell hesitated, but moved by his great responsibility over his pupils, he made a new decision for Christ and determined to serve him earnestly. From that time he labored to bring his students to a like decision. His doubts were not all gone. Yet apparently he had begun to learn the truth which he later expressed in these words, "One of the greatest talents in religious discovery is the finding how to hang up questions, and let them hang without being at all anxious about them."¹

His new decision or conversion changed his life completely. He determined to relinquish the profession of law and enter the ministry. In the autumn of the next year he entered the Theological School at New Haven, of which Dr. N. W. Taylor^o_^ was president. Bushnell enjoyed the school in many ways. It was called progressive and there was about it a healthful and invigorating atmosphere. Dr. Taylor was one of the leading theologians of the New England School. Bushnell thought highly of him as a man, but they were too different in temperament to see alike. Dr. Taylor was severely logical, laying great stress upon the importance of defining every technical term most

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 60.

minutely. Bushnell was imaginative, depending in his search for truth more on intuition than logic. He soon wearied of the mechanical methods of thought of the classrooms, as well as of what seemed to him the rather barren theological controversy taking place between the Old and New schools of thought. At the time of his graduation from the theological school, the controversy between Taylor and Tyler was at its height. The seminary, later known as the "Hartford" was founded in 1834, one year after his graduation.

Bushnell was called to the pastorate of the North Church, Hartford, Conn., in 1833, and was ordained there in May of that year. ^e
[^]Even in this church the dividing lines between the Old and New theology were strongly marked, the conservatives being somewhat suspicious of the New Haven School from which Bushnell had come. In later years he referred to himself as "the young pastor---
¹
 daintily inserted between an acid and an alkali."

Bushnell was married in New Haven the same year that he was settled. Here ^{he}
[^]~~Bushnell~~ remained as pastor until 1859, twenty-six years, and then, because of continued ill health, resigned against the unanimous wish of his people.

Bushnell soon showed his extraordinary powers as a preacher. His natural eloquence, his deep insight into spiritual things, his profound knowledge of human nature,

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 68.

his clear and yet picturesque manner of expressing truth, all combined to make him one of the greatest pulpit orators of America or of any other country. He was pre-eminently the preacher rather than the professional theologian. He was also a lecturer of great ability. He was the type of man who is interested in every important question of his day.

After his resignation, Bushnell spent the remainder of his life mainly in Hartford where he died in 1876. Twice he refused the offer of the presidency of a college. In 1841 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., and later the same degree from Harvard, and that of Doctor of Laws from Yale.

Bushnell's chief works are "Christian Nurture," published in 1847 and again in 1861. "God in Christ," in 1849; "Sermons for the New Life" in 1858; "Nature and the Supernatural" in 1858; "Christ and His Salvation" in 1864; "The Vicarious Sacrifice" in 1865; "The Moral Uses of Dark Things" in 1868; "Sermons on Living Subjects" in 1872; and "Forgiveness and Law" in 1874. This last book was afterward incorporated as the second volume of "The Vicarious Sacrifice."

B. His Independent Personality and Originality of Thought.

Bushnell had an energetic, independent, creative mind which spurred him on to solve whatever problems he met. There was in him little of that conservatism which

remained satisfied with the past. He copied no man. He was bold and venturesome. He had the consciousness of power within himself. Apparently he felt that he could improve on the work of others and was not ashamed of that sentiment, for in his farewell address to his students at Yale he said, "It is folly to think of succeeding in life without some pretensions. A man must begin to hold up his own head, or no one will see it to be worth the pains."¹

Mention has been made of his ingenuity and initiative at the age of fourteen in taking the carding machine to pieces and reconstructing it. We have called attention to his building the dam the summer he passed his college examinations. We have shown that in college he was vigorous and independent in thought, with a wonderful consciousness of power, and that as a tutor he showed the same enthusiastic spirit of investigation. As a theological student he was dissatisfied with the severely logical methods of theological controversy, and was already known as an independent thinker.

Then as we study his life we find that he either spoke or wrote on many different subjects ranging from "Agriculture" to "Woman's Suffrage," and concerning which he believed that he had something worthwhile to contribute

Two incidents of his life which we have not mentioned

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Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, p. 61.

also show his independent personality and originality of thought. Believing that Hartford needed a public park, he made a careful study of the situation. After much investigation he decided upon a tract of land partly filled with ashes, garbage, shanties, and pig stys. At first the City Council heard his suggestion with good-natured laughter. However, Bushnell described the possibilities of the piece of land so eloquently that at a later meeting the Council appointed a committee to further investigate the project. The result was that the land was purchased and beautifully laid out. Just before Bushnell's death the Council voted to name it Bushnell Park in honor of the famous preacher. He also had a scheme for bringing down from Windsor the great water power of the Connecticut River. His interest in his city, his plans and suggestions may be realized by this quotation from the Hartford Courant shortly after his death. "The Park, which fitly bears his (Bushnell's) name, is only a conspicuous instance of what he has been doing for the beautifying of the city these many years. How many buildings public and private, are the better for his wise suggestion. How many builders have profited by his mechanical skill and his artistic sense. The very street power has been indebted to him for some helpful word, and surveyors and engineers have found him at home in their occupations and often able to give them instruction.----Dr. Bushnell woke the city to new life, and gave an impulse to its business interests which has been felt to this day. It may be

doubted whether another instance in our own history is to be found of a man impressing himself in so many ways, and with such force, upon a place of any such size and importance as this."¹ Near the close of Bushnell's life a friend said to him, "Behold and see your vision fulfilled. Here is your Park, than which there is none lovelier in New England. Yonder is the beautiful Gothic church of your own parish facing it from over the river, and here is rising the noble Capitol to crown the western hill."² These activities show a man not only deeply interested in the problems about him, but with the daring to attempt to solve them even when they are outside his particular field of knowledge.

Another incident will illustrate this same trait. His friend Mr. Twichell has said, "It was when he was in California that he manifested in as marked a manner as he ever did, the original habit of his mind."³ The Pacific Railroad at that time was only a project. There was a difference of opinion among engineers concerning the best route through the state of California. Dr. Bushnell was an invalid and visiting California for his health. Yet he was so interested in the possibilities of the railroad that he carefully studied out the route which he believed

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¹ Bushnell, M. C., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, pp. 320 and 321.

² Ibid., p. 508.

³ Ibid., p. 405.

would be best, announcing to the surprise of many, that it must reach San Francisco by the aid of piles across the bay. When at last the railroad was constructed it was found that the engineers had adopted the route suggested by Dr. Bushnell.

We have dwelt on these incidents of his life to show that he reacted in a very energetic manner to all questions and problems of his day. His daughter writes of him, "There was nothing going on in the great world of affairs in which he did not take a practical interest--- He also kept pace as he had opportunity with the latest discoveries of science, profoundly interested in their influence upon religious thought."¹ A man of this sort was sure to have decided views in regard to a system of theology which had swayed the ministers and churches of New England for a hundred years. As a boy he had grown up in a church where this teaching was familiar to him. His pastor was of the New England School. This theology was the dominant one at college. The head of the theological school which he attended was one of the leaders of this school of thought. His keen, alert mind was sure to react vigorously toward the system of thought of his day. But how? Favorably or unfavorably?

Before we answer this question let us ascertain what the views of the New England Theology were which faced

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¹ Cheney, M. B., Life and Letters of H. Bushnell, pp. 508, 509.

Bushnell. To make these clear we will trace the development of this famous school of thought, also noting the currents of influence that were undermining its power in Bushnell's time.

C. The Views of the New England
Theology which Faced Bushnell
in His Day.

(1) The growth and development of this school to the time of Bushnell.

(a) The soil from which this stern and severely logical system sprung.

Much has been written about the landing of the Pilgrims on the "stern and rockbound" coast of New England. They were an austere and hardy people and have been accused with some justice of harshness. While some of this severity was due to their experiences in England, we must also remember that they waged a life and death struggle, both with the rocky soil and with the fierce savages of New England.

The first of these Indian Wars began in 1635 and lasted until 1637 and is known as the Pequod War. It ended when men from the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Plymouth colonies formed a small army of three hundred men and exterminated the Pequods at their chief fortress.

A more important Indian War lasted from 1660 to 1678,

and decided once for all that the white men were to be masters of the land. To be sure, compensation had been granted to the Indians for land taken. Missionary work had been prosecuted among them with some success. In 1674 there were about "4000 converted Indians."¹ However dissensions arose between the two races. Perhaps each felt that the supremacy could be settled only by force of arms. This war, usually known as King Philip's, was settled by the attack on the Indian fortress at South Kingston, Rhode Island. Two thousand warriors, with many women and children, were gathered within its walls. At least a thousand Indians were slain in this contest² "which was one of the most desperate of its kind ever fought in America." The Massachusetts men grimly attacking over the narrow log which led to the main entrance to the fortress showed the same qualities which later were evident in their determined assault on the great problems of theology. These they approached by the narrow logic of their Calvinism. The men of Connecticut storming the Indian fortress from the rear were no whit behind their Massachusetts brethren in stern bravery, as they were not in later days in theology. In this war nearly a thousand strong men had been slain; over half the towns of Massachusetts and Plymouth had suffered depredations, and there was

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Wilson, Woodrow, Epochs of American History, p. 170.

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Ibid., p. 171.

mourning in nearly every family.¹ Men of the Colonies attended the Church services armed and always preceded the women from the meeting house in case Indians should be near. It is said that the custom of the men sitting at the head or door of the pew came about from the need of rushing out quickly to meet an Indian attack. Such experiences were bound to affect the thinking of the people, and added a stern and even harsh tone to their attitude toward life.

The New Englanders were a religious people. They had come to these shores because of persecution in the mother country. The outward or legal side of religion was far more prominent than in our day. People were obliged by law to attend church service on Sunday. None² but church members were allowed to vote. The Sabbath was kept very strictly with many regulations.

Because of the importance given to religion, the minister was greatly looked up to; He was considered to be "the just man made perfect, the oracle of the divine will."³ A man in Windham, Conn., in 1725, greatly shocked the church by declaring that he had rather hear his dog bark than to listen to Dr. Bellamy, the New England theologian preach. However he was obliged to read public-

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¹ Fiske, John, Beginnings of New England, pp. 268, 269.

² Thwaites, R. G., Epochs of American History, p. 128.

³ Earle, A. M., Customs and Fashions in Old New England, p. 267.

ly a confession of sorrow for using such words and promised to listen to Dr. Bellamy's preaching.¹

They were a strictly moral people. Dr. Timothy Dwight, who traveled through New England in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, calls the morality of the people remarkable. He writes; "Half or two-thirds of the inhabitants sleep at the present time without barring or locking their doors."² Their strictness of morality showed itself in laws which would hardly be popular to-day. In 1676, thirty-eight women were brought into court for their "wicked apparel."³ Yet a few years afterward such prosecutions were given up.

The New England people were intelligent, enterprising, and with a great love for education. "The Massachusetts colonists were for the most part middle-class Englishmen and education was general among them. Many were graduates of Cambridge."⁴ This love of learning was shown in the establishment of schools of lower grade and of colleges⁵. These lower schools were such as to "give every child in this country, except in very recent settlements, an ample

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¹ Earle, Alice M., Customs and Fashions in Old New England, p. 269.

² Dwight, T, Travels in New England and New York, p. 172.

³ Earle, A., Customs and Fashions in Old New England, p.317

⁴ Thwaites, R. G., Epochs of American History, p. 130.

opportunity of acquiring the knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic."¹ Their enterprise along educational lines was shown in the founding of colleges. When we remember how large a place religion played in their lives, it is not surprising that these higher educational institutions were planned specially for the training of their ministers. This was ^{true} in the case ^{of} ~~with~~ the founding of Harvard, (1636) Yale, (1700) and other early colleges.

When we remember, then, that the people of New England struggled with a rocky soil and carried on a relentless warfare with the savages of the new land, it is not to be wondered at that they developed a stern theology. Why they turned their attention to theology and put their best thought into the statement of its doctrines is explained by the fact that they were pre-eminently a religious people. Their severe and legalistic ideas of morality would naturally color their theological system. Their ministers were thought of highly and listened to carefully. Hence the pastor in a small town was a man of importance, both preacher and theologian, in fact the person or parson. Then we must remember that the people were intelligent, with a deep love of learning. When we bear these facts in mind, we may realize how the soil was prepared for the growth of one of the most remarkable systems of thought ever produced by the mind of man.

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Dwight, T., Travels in New England and New York, vol. 2, p. 171.

(b) The Arminian views

which aroused

Jonathan Edwards

to make his state-

ment.

Having gained a picture of the people from whom this theology emanated, let us consider the immediate cause of the movement. This is usually referred to as "Arminianism,"¹ but was in reality a variety of views, coming from various sources.

Calvinism had triumphed with Parliament in England and had formulated its theology in the Westminster Confession in 1646. The influence of this is seen in New England which adopted the Westminster Confession in 1648. With the victory of the monarchy in England in 1660 under Charles the Second came the period of the Latitudinarians who were Arminian in their tendencies. This set of ideas prevailed largely in England throughout the Eighteenth century. Of course this dominant thought was bound to have a powerful influence on the people of New England. However another movement which strongly modified Latitudinarianism was that of the Methodists under the leadership of John Wesley. This was also Arminianism, but of a very different type. It was thoroughly evangelical and had an evangelistic fervor seldom equalled.

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Boardman, G. N., New England Theology, p. 10.

The Arminianism of the first half of the Eighteenth Century in America bore no resemblance to the evangelistic zeal of the Methodists. It came to be a term used "to designate any kind of laxity and indifference in the Christian life."¹ During this period there was a strong current of liberalism, which was felt both in England and America. The influence of English liberal writers was shown in the teachings of such prominent Massachusetts ministers as Experience Mayhew and his son, Jonathan, and Lemuel Briant of Quincy. Mayhew was a leader among those referred to as Old or Moderate Calvinists. Their tendency was to neglect the creed and emphasize the importance of a moral life.

The general effect of the philosophers of the time, Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Malebranche, and Leibnitz, was to arouse rationalistic and skeptical speculations. This influence was greatly augmented by such English free-thinkers as Tindal, Woolston, Morgan, Collins, and Bolingbroke. The views of these writers were very easily communicated to their fellow countrymen across the sea.

Another influence which added to the easy going liberalism and the spiritual decline in the churches was the so-called "Half Way Covenant." The original plan of the Puritans had been to establish an ideal state which should have as its citizens regenerate church members. It was

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Boardman, G. N., New England Theology, p. 31.

the custom to baptize children of members in infancy. However, they were not admitted to the church unless they were converted. If they did not become church members their children were not baptized. Consequently many of the second and third generations of Puritans were not members of the church. This was further embarrassing because only church members were allowed to vote and to hold office. In 1657 the Massachusetts Court called a conference to deliberate upon this state of things. They decided that those who had been baptized in infancy, but had not been converted should "own" the covenant. Then they could have their children baptized. This practice was called the "Half Way Covenant," and gave great numbers of unconverted people a loose connection with the church. This was still another reason for the general indifference to religion in the first part of the Eighteenth century.

Rev. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton went one step further. He admitted the unregenerate to the Lord's Supper, holding that the Sacrament was a means of grace for the impenitent. While the Northampton church was the only one which altered its profession to allow this, similar ideas were prevalent in other parts of New England.

This was the state of things before the beginning of the New England School of Theology. A liberalism, bordering on skepticism, was loosely referred to as Arminianism. Large numbers of unconverted people were connected with the churches, although not actually members. Conversions were infrequent, the general moral tone of

the communities was degenerating. Everywhere there was felt the need of some sort of revival of religion.

(c) The New England

Theology as out-

lined by Edwards.

The men of the "New Divinity," as the new school of theology was often called were strict Calvinists, in contrast to those of the "Old Divinity" who were moderate Calvinists. The leaders of the new theology were for the most part graduates of Yale and were parish ministers. The surprising thing is that they were nearly all pastors in small towns. This School became the dominating force in Congregationalism, which was the controlling power in American Christianity. The theology of this new School grew out of its practical problems. Its success was in part due to the character of the men who led in its thought. It was aggressive; it was in accord with the spirit of the age. At times its opponents outnumbered its adherents. But the "new divinity" men were very forceful. They were active in all reforms. They wisely made use of the press to disseminate their views.

The New England Theology began with the settlement¹ of Jonathan Edwards as pastor at Northampton. In order to better understand the work of its founder, let us briefly consider his life previous to his going to North-

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Boardman, G. N., New England Theology, p. 1.

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Jonathan Edwards was born October 5, 1703, in the town of East Windsor, Connecticut. His father was a scholarly minister. His mother was remarkable for her "extensive, information, thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and of theology, singular conscientiousness and piety."¹

Young Edwards was a child of rare intellectual precocity. He was not quite thirteen when he entered Yale. Four years later he graduated with the highest honors the institution could offer. For the next two years he remained at Yale to carry on his theological studies. He was then called to a newly organized Presbyterian Church in New York City where he remained for eight months. Returning to East Windsor he was soon after made a tutor at Yale, which office he held for the next two years. Even as late as 1725, Edwards had doubts as to his conversion. He writes, "From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom He would to eternal life, and rejecting whom He pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell."² Yet he says the time not only came when these objections disappeared, but also "the doctrine (of God's sovereignty) has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet."³

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Allen, A. V. G., Jonathan Edwards, p. 3.

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Edwards, Jonathan, Works, Vol. 1, p. 60.

These words are very significant when we consider his theological work. They refer to that experience, or settlement of views, which came to him during his teaching at Yale. In 1727 he was ordained at Northampton as the colleague of his grandfather, Rev. Solomon Stoddard, whose liberal views in regard to the Lord's Supper we have already mentioned.

For twenty-four years Edwards was pastor at Northampton. During his ministry occurred the two great revivals of 1735 and 1740, which began in his church, and spread not only over the northern colonies, but were also felt as far away as Scotland. His removal to Stockbridge was occasioned by his opposing the liberal views concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper which his grandfather had made popular in Northampton. Jonathan Edwards died in 1757, after being president of Princeton College a short time.

In this time of theological uncertainty, spiritual dearth, and moral degeneracy, Edwards by his natural genius, intellectual equipment, and intensity of conviction, gradually changed the thought and life of New England. The historian Bancroft has said; "He that will know the workings of the mind of New England in the middle of the last century, and the throbbings of its heart, must give his days and nights to the study of Jonathan Edwards¹".

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Boardman, G. N., New England Theology, p. 47.

He was profoundly attached to the Calvinistic system and his first instinct was to restore it to a high place of influence.

The sovereignty of God was the cardinal principle of the theology of Jonathan Edwards. He understood that God had mercy on whom He would and hardened whom He would. He held that God was under no obligation to do anything for man. That He wills to save men at all is an act of gratuitous condescension. It is also His grace which causes Him to save some and not others. Edwards laid great stress on the glory, sovereignty, and holiness of God.¹

Closely connected with his emphasis on the sovereignty of God was that on the total depravity of man. He held that in every person, in virtue of his birth or creation, was actual wickedness without measure. Even the little child is as full of enmity against God as a venomous beast is full of poison. Men have no goodness in them.² God is under no obligation to save men. Yet He is free to save whomsoever He chooses. As sin against God has "infinite demerit, it should be punished with an infinite punishment."³ The holiness of God which is "the infinite opposition of His nature to sin" disposes Him to punish sin.⁴ The greatness, excellence, and majesty

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¹ Edwards, J., Works, Vol. 1, pp. 132-134.

² Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 8.

³ Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 507.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 7, p. 508.

of God's character require that the punishment of sin be infinite.

To make clear the connection between the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man, Edwards wrote his celebrated essay on the freedom of the will. It was a powerful blow at the Arminianism of his day. He argues that the self-determination of the will is impossible; the will cannot be free. He writes; "To talk of liberty as belonging to the very will itself, is not to speak good sense."¹ God determines the will. God decreed to permit the fall. By that decree every individual of Adam's posterity was involved in his sin. Then the question arises as to whether God who is the author of their being is responsible for their sinful nature. Edwards meets this difficulty by asserting that God does not plant any positive influence for evil in the soul of man, but instead has left man without positive good principles, and by withholding the power to impart good principles, the certain result is "the total corruption of the heart."² The effect of the treatise on the will by Edwards "was to bring the theology of New England back to Calvinism."³

In discussing the Atonement, Edwards taught that in those passages which speak of Christ's bearing our sins,

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¹ Edwards, J., Works, Vol. 2, p. 39.

² Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 532.

³ Foster, F. H., New England Theology, p. 77.

as Heb. 9: 28, the meaning is "having it imputed and charged upon the person."¹ It is interesting to note that Edwards uses as an illustration for "imputing" merit the case of a person who is respected because of friendship with, or blood relation to someone of eminent merit or dignity. In such an illustration there appears a suggestion of the class distinctions of the time.

In writing of Christ's redemption, Edwards is not quite clear in his terms. He says, "It (the word purchase) is oftentimes used---to signify only the merit of Christ, and sometimes to signify both his satisfaction and merit." Sometimes "divines use merit for the whole price that Christ offered."² Edwards holds that Christ's satisfaction for sin was mainly by His death, but also by all the sufferings of His life. The acts of sacrifice in Christ's life could be viewed in two ways. Considered as an act of obedience, they were part of the price by which he purchased heaven for His followers. Considered as satisfaction to God's offended justice, they were "part of Christ's bearing punishment in our stead." The purchase of redemption was made by "Christ's obedience and righteousness."³ Edwards assumes that the atonement of Christ was only for the elect.

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¹ Edwards, J. Works, Vol. 7, p. 519.

² Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 295.

³ Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 297.

(d) Modifications made
by Bellamy, Hopkins,
and Emmons.

Joseph Bellamy was born in New Cheshire, Conn., Feb. 20, 1719. He graduated from Yale at the age of sixteen and two years later was licensed to preach. At the age of twenty-one he became pastor of the church at Bethlem, Conn., where he remained until his death fifty years later. He is said to have had rare gifts as an orator in spite of the incident that we have mentioned of the parisher who preferred to listen to the barking of a dog. He was a man of keen intellect and accepted as a leader among the clergy. For a time he was a member of the family of Jonathan Edwards and was a close friend of the latter. He was a vigorous opponent of ^{Arminianism} ~~Antinomianism~~ and the Half Way Covenant.

Dr. Bellamy takes exception to the views of the Arminians of his time, who, he says, held that God owed it to a fallen world to furnish some relief which He did in Christ.¹ Bellamy affirmed that man because of his sin has become an enemy to God and to His government. God has appointed His Son as mediator and has made Him a curse to redeem us from the penalty of sin. He has set His Son forth to be a propitiation for the sins of man. By this propitiation, God can forgive sins and yet be

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Bellamy, J., Works, Vol. 3, p. 394.

just. Thus "the honor of His law is secured in the sight of all worlds."¹ Christ pays our debt. Bellamy argues that since our obligations to God are infinite, the least defect is infinitely wrong, therefore every such defect should be punished with the everlasting pains of hell."² He states that "vindictive justice is an amiable perfection in the Deity; a beauty in the Divine character."³

Samuel Hopkins was born in Waterbury, Conn., Sept. 17 1721. He graduated from Yale in 1741. He was a great admirer of Edwards and was in his family part of one year. For twenty-five years he was pastor at Great Barrington, Mass., then known as Housatonic. With the feeling that he was little appreciated, and with his salary in arrears, he was dismissed, and soon became pastor at Newport, Rhode Island, where he remained twenty-nine years, until his death. Harriet Beecher Stowe describes him as a large man, over six feet in height, "a grand-minded and simple-hearted man---ready to be sacrificed as a lost spirit or glorified as a redeemed one, to throw away his mortal life or his immortality, to help build the glorious commonwealth of God, which should dwarf the misery of the lost to an infinitesimal amount."⁴ Hopkins held such a high conception of the glory of God that he claimed that every

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¹ Bellamy, J., Works, Vol. 2, p. 311.

² Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 367.

³ Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 413.

⁴ Stowe, H. B., The Minister's Wooing, p. 24.

Christian should be willing to be damned if it would advance that glory. So great was the influence of his writings that the "New Divinity" men were often called Hopkinsians.

Dr. Hopkins differed from Edwards in placing liberty in the volition itself, while the former had put it in the external ability to execute our volitions.¹ Hopkins also laid great stress on the decrees of God. He was a higher Calvinist than his predecessors in the New England School. In his severely logical way he asserted the love of God. Lest God be charged with the sin of man, he maintained that the Divine decrees included the freedom of man. He also held that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good.² Hopkins was also clearer than Edwards in stating that all sin was voluntary.³

In giving his view of the Atonement, Hopkins begins by exalting the law of God. This cannot be abrogated, nor can the penalty for breaking the law be omitted.⁴ Therefore a mediator is necessary. He views the work of the Atonement as consisting of two parts. The first is that accomplished by the sufferings of Christ. Christ suffered "in His own person the curse of the law."⁵

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¹ Hopkins, S., Works, Vol. 1, p. 87.

² Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 89.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 322.

³ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 464.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 324.

At times, however, he uses the word "equivalent" to express the relation of the sufferings of Christ to those required by the law.¹ Hopkins looks upon God not so much

as the offended party as the Governor of the universe.

The second part of the Atonement was that accomplished by the obedience of Christ, which was the price with which positive blessings were purchased for believers. The sufferings of Christ procure the remission of sins for all who believe in Him, but they procure for the sinner no positive good. Therefore "it was necessary that Christ should obey the precepts of the law for man,--- that by His perfect and meritorious obedience--- He might obtain all the positive favor and benefits which man needed."²

Hopkins taught that Christ made a general atonement, but that it was efficacious only for those who accepted it.

Nathaniel Emmons was born in East Haddam, Conn., April 20, 1745, and graduated from Yale in 1767. After studying theology with two other ministers, he was ordained in 1773, and became pastor of the church at Wrentham, Mass., where he remained an active and faithful minister until his death in 1840,-- sixty-sevn years later.

Dr. Emmons held that both "holiness and sin consist³ in free voluntary exercises." Hence he rejected the

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¹
Hopkins, S., Works, Vol. 1, p. 326.

²
Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 345.

³
Emmons, N., Works, Vol. 2, p. 592.

doctrine of a sinful nature, for he argued that "there is no morally corrupt nature distinct from free, voluntary, sinful exercises."¹ He maintained that dependence on God and personal liberty were not inconsistent, appealing to the experience of his hearers. He says, "Should you all speak the language of your own experience upon this subject, we presume that you would with one voice declare that the Spirit of the Lord never destroyed, nor even obstructed your liberty."² He held that "right and wrong are founded in the very nature of things."³

Emmons differed from his predecessors in his understanding of the Atonement. In mentioning the difficulty which theologians were experiencing in reconciling free pardon with full satisfaction to divine justice, he says, "The difficulty has arisen from a supposition that the Atonement of Christ was designed to pay the debt of sufferings which sinners owed God. There is no grace in forgiving a debtor after his debt is paid, whether by himself or by another. But sin is not a debt and cannot be paid by suffering. The Atonement He (Christ) made did not lay God under obligation, in point of justice, to pardon sinners on account of his atonement.---God exercises as real grace in pardoning sinners through the atonement of Christ, as in sending Him to make atonement. Free

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¹ Emmons, N., Vol. 2, p. 592.

² Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 412.

³ Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 176.

pardon therefore is perfectly consistent with free
 grace."¹ Emmons also taught that notwithstanding the
 total depravity of sinners, God has a right to require
 them to turn from their sin. Therefore preachers should
 exhort sinners to turn to God. In their regeneration men
 are not passive objects in the hands of God, but are active
 and willing. These views of Emmons are far more moderate
 than the high Calvinism of Edwards, Bellamy, and Hopkins.

(2) Changes in this School

in Bushnell's Time.

(a) The Oberlin School.

The leader of the Oberlin School of thought was
 Charles G. Finney, the noted revivalist. He was born in
 Warren, Conn., Aug. 29, 1792. Converted at the age of
 twenty-eight, he gave up the practice of law, was licensed
 to preach, and soon began his remarkable evangelistic la-
 bors. In 1835, he went to Oberlin as professor and was
 elected president of the college in 1852. Here he was
 associated with three other able men, Mahan, Morgan, and
 Cowles. Mahan seems to have been the first of the school
 to bring out a doctrine of perfection. He taught that
 this is attainable through prayer, faith in Christ, and
 His indwelling.

Finney had two fundamental purposes in his theologi-
 cal
 thought, conversion, and sanctification. He lays great
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Emmons, N. Works, Vol. 2, pp. 176 ff.

emphasis on the freedom of the will. He writes, "In the present work I have attempted to prove and have¹ everywhere assumed the freedom of the will." Finney minimized Calvinism, but held to the great central evangelical doctrines of the New England system. He held that man is active in regeneration and taught the endless future punishment of the incorrigibly wicked. Finney adopted the governmental theory of the Atonement, but rejected the theory of imputation. He held that the atonement of Christ was for all. Finney was a contemporary of Horace Bushnell and was much influenced by the latter's professor of theology, N. W. Taylor whose views we will now consider.

(b) The New Haven School.

The New Haven theology received its name because certain men of that city made a further change in the New England school of thought. The outstanding name in this connection is Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor. He was born in New Milford, Conn., June 23, 1786, and graduated from Yale in 1807. He became pastor of the First Congregational Church of New Haven in 1811 and was appointed Professor of Didactic Theology in Yale College in 1822. He remained in that office until his death in 1858. Under his leadership the New England theology was often referred to as "Taylorism." Prof. Fitch, a colleague of Prof. Taylor, published a sermon in 1826, in which he took the ground that "sin is the act of a normal agent, and that no sin

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Finney, C. G., Theological Lectures, Vol. 1, p. iii.

of Adam is reckoned to his posterity."¹ In the controversy which followed, Dr. Taylor took much the same ground, claiming that all men, unless grace intervenes, commit sin in their first and every other moral act. In this discussion, 1827-1829, it was evident that many of Taylor's and Fitch's opponents held to the sinful nature of the soul before any act was put forth. This controversy which was prolonged for years raged chiefly around the questions of sin and regeneration and God's relation to sin. While Dr. Taylor held to the view that "mankind are by nature totally depraved," yet he also says, "I do not believe that the nature of the human mind, which God creates is itself sinful."² He also held that sin is selfishness, the choice "of some inferior good to God."² In the controversy he affirmed that sin is not the necessary means of the greatest good. He also doubted the ability of God to prevent all sin in a moral system. He held that regeneration is effected by man's action, put forth in perfect consistency with the laws of moral agency. His chief antagonist was Dr. Bennett Tyler whose views received the name of "Tylerism." The opposition to "Taylorism" was so strong in Connecticut that it led to the establishment of a new theological seminary of which Dr. Bennett Tyler became president. This institution was located at

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¹ Boardman, G. N., New England Theology, p. 254.

² Christian Spectator, 1832, pp. 171-173.

East Windsor, but was later moved to Hartford and is now known as the Hartford Theological Seminary.

(c) The final stage
under Professor
Park.

Prof. Edwards A. Park was born at Providence, R. I., in 1808. He graduated from Brown University in 1826. and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1831. He taught at Andover from 1836 until 1881, and was professor emeritus until his death in 1900. His was the final fruit of the New England School. With the close of his work as a lecturer in 1881 he may be "placed at the end of the historical account of the school."¹ Thus we see that for many years he was a contemporary of Bushnell.

Prof. Park's theology was a carefully worked out system. He began with a principle which he attempted to prove. Upon this he built his system step by step, proof by proof, according to the careful rules of logic. His treatment of every topic was predominantly rationalistic. His starting point was Biblical, but the elements of proof were rational. He took up the problems of the older New England theologians and defined them with the greatest care, adding the discussions of miracles and the Trinity. In his careful definitions and logical deductions there emerges the conclusion that " God's love is his sole

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¹
Foster, F. H., New England Theology, p. 472.

moral attribute."¹ However, Park would make this love a benevolence which would include both God's love of holiness and His hatred of sin. Prof. Park's views on the Atonement will be considered when we are summing up the views of the New England School on that subject.

(3) Currents of Thought in
Bushnell's Time which
were Hostile to the
New England School.

(a) Unitarianism.

In England the Latitudinarianism following the Restoration developed into Arianism and Unitarianism. These influences were strongly felt in America. We find no public advocacy of Unitarianism in New England in the Eighteenth Century, but the works published at that time suggest that Unitarian sentiments were in the air.

In 1795 Timothy Dwight, the new president of Yale College, found that institution of learning permeated with the spirit of French infidelity. By his strength of intellect and commanding personality, President Dwight was able to turn the tide in favor of evangelical religion, and ^{ed} in a revival which swept through southern New England.

In Massachusetts, where the influence of Harvard College was strong, there had been similar liberal

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¹
Park, E. A., Memorial Collection of Sermons, p. 319.

tendencies. Here there was no Timothy Dwight to lead and the revival had little effect. In 1805 Henry Ware was elected to the chair of divinity in Harvard. It was soon found that he was an avowed Unitarian. As a result it was felt that Harvard was no longer a suitable place for the education of Orthodox ministers. Consequently in 1808, Andover Theological Seminary was founded in Phillips Academy.

For some years after this, Unitarianism progressed slowly in New England without exciting much attention. The beginning of the controversy between the Unitarians and the supporters of the New England theology began in 1819, just four years before Bushnell entered Yale. This controversy, called "the most important event in the history of Congregational theology,"¹ was occasioned by the sermon preached by W. E. Channing at the ordination of Jared Sparks who later became president of Harvard College. Channing urged the rejection of contradictions that were contrary to reason, the acceptance of a doctrine of the unity of God and of Christ. As to the Atonement,² Channing held that Jesus came to effect "a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind." This he accomplished by his instructions and example and by his death. Prof. Moses Stuart of Andover Seminary replied to Channing in 1819.

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¹ Foster, F. H., New England Theology, p. 281.

² Channing, W. E., Works, p. 377.

Different scholars entered the controversy on both sides. Theologically there was no victory, but positions were more sharply defined. Practically, the result was that many Congregational Churches went over to the Unitarian side. King's Chapel in Boston, established in 1787, was the first Unitarian Church in New England. By 1820 there were one hundred and fifty, chiefly in Massachusetts.

(One of the doctrines of the Orthodox theology that the Unitarians assailed with vigor was that of the Atonement.)

The Unitarians in Bushnell's time had an influence beyond that which their numbers would suggest. Politically, socially, and educationally, they were prominent in New England. That Bushnell was deeply interested in the dispute between the Unitarians and the Orthodox Congregationalists there is ample evidence in his writings. For years one of his most intimate friends was Rev. C. A. Bartol, a prominent Unitarian minister of Boston. Through this friend he came into close contact with Unitarianism on its most representative side. Not only his friendly feelings toward Dr. Bartol, are shown in his letters, but Bushnell shows in these that he was fully appreciative of the weakness and strength of the Unitarian position. He writes to Dr. Bartol, "I rejoice not a little in spirit to see the signs that are beginning to be unfolded of a new spiritual relation between our divided families. I rejoice, too, in the fact that the Unitarian side in Boston are evincing just now signs of spiritual life that

rebuke the dullness of orthodoxy. Unitarians, however, will need to come off their moralistic, self-culturing, method, cease to think of a character developed outwardly from their own centre and pass over by faith to live in God, which only is religion or Christianity."¹ Other passages could be quoted to show that he was in close touch with the best thought that Unitarianism had to offer.

(b) Universalist Thought.

Another stream of liberal thought which had been running counter to New England Theology for many years was Universalism. The first Universalist to gain general attention was Hosea Ballou who published his work, "A Treatise on Atonement," in Boston in 1804. He held that Jesus Christ was not God. His view of the Atonement was that man needed reconciliation, but that God did not. By the sin in the Garden, man believed God to be his enemy. However, God continued to love man and manifested His love by the Atonement. This revelation of the love of God produces love in the heart of man. The temporal death of Christ and His literal blood did not make the Atonement. Ballou was unable to find any necessary place for the death² of Christ in his system. He argued for universal salvation on the grounds (1) that God had implanted the desire for future happiness in every soul; (2) if any of the

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Munger, T. T., Horace Bushnell, p. 138.

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Ballou, H., A Treatise on Atonement, p. 167.

human race are endlessly miserable, all Christians must be unhappy; (3) the universe is a place of education and men will sometime leave their sins when they learn better.

Theologically, Universalism soon became identified with Unitarianism, and it was felt by the orthodox that arguments which answered the one did the same for the other. We find no mention in Bushnell's works of the views of the Universalists, but they had laid a new emphasis on the love of God which Bushnell was to make central in his theory of the Atonement.

(c) Contemporary scientific
and philosophical
thought.

Science was not only making rapid strides in Bushnell's time, but its discoveries had an important bearing upon theological thought. For instance in 1839, six years after Bushnell was ordained, William Smith, the "father of English geology," died in England. His discoveries and observations in regard to fossils and strata affected theories of the formation of the earth and its age. "The facts which he unearthed were as iconoclastic in their field as the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo."¹ That same year Dr. Theodore Schwann of Germany propounded his famous cell theory explaining the structure and growth of animals and plants. Agassiz the naturalist

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Emerson, E., The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 2, p. 909.

was publishing his original researches on fresh water fishes. Charles Darwin returned that year from his scientific travels, and published his "Journal of Researches." However, he did not publish his "Origin of the Species" until 1859. Huxley wrote his "Philosophical Transactions" in 1851. That same year Spencer began to publish his books. All this meant that Bushnell lived in the thick of the evolution controversy. In this important scientific discussion, the liberal forces in theology generally supported the new scientific theories, while the orthodox theologians took the defensive attitude.

In the year 1836, three years after Bushnell's ordination, the Transcendental Club was formed in Boston with Ralph Waldo Emerson the leading spirit of the group. Other members were A. B. Alcott, C. A. Bartol, Bushnell's intimate friend, W. H. Channing, and Theodore Parker. We need not take the time here to enter into all the theories of New England "Transcendentalism." It is enough to note that it held that the basis of the religious life, the ideas of God, duty, and immortality, are given outright in the nature of man and do not have to be learned from any book or confirmed by any miracle. Emerson's essays made "Transcendentalism" famous as a philosophy. Lowell's works expressed its poetical side. The leader of its theology was Theodore Parker who published in 1841 "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." In this he took the ground that its moral doctrine and religious life was

the permanent, while the transient was "the form, the creed, the fable, and myth wrought about it."¹ We need not attempt to describe the bitter feelings and words which followed the publication of this pamphlet. It is sufficient for our purpose to bear in mind that the leaders of New England Transcendentalism were Unitarians and their influence was on the liberal side in opposition to the New England Theology.

(d) Other influences
in opposition to
the New England
system.

We find considerable evidence that the New England Theology was unpopular in many quarters in Bushnell's time. Of course much of this unpopularity was caused by Unitarian and other so-called "Liberal" views. In the very year that Bushnell was ordained it was the custom of some ministers to ask the candidate if he was willing to be damned for the glory of God.² God was looked upon as a Sovereign, a hard and austere Master, rather than as a Father. According to the theory of the "Decrees" of God and "total depravity," God was said to damn some in infancy. Belief in these doctrines was necessary for entrance into the church. Ministers were complaining of the deadness

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¹ Allen, J. H., Our Liberal Movement in Theology, p. 74.

² Mallary, R. D., Lenox, p. 322.

of the people and of their unbelief in the doctrines taught.¹ Ministers ~~taught~~^{preached} that God hated sinful man, and that whatever he did was evil in the sight of God. The punishment of Hell was in a real fire. Hopkins writes of the wicked, "God will show His power in the punishment of the wicked by strengthening and upholding their bodies and souls in suffering torments which otherwise would be intolerable."²

Catherine M. Sedgwick of Stockbridge, Mass., was a popular novelist of New England in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. She felt it her duty to expose the harshness of the New England Theology and the hypocrisy that its stern tenets caused in the churches. At first she was a member of an orthodox Congregational Church, but later in life became a Unitarian. One of her books which illustrates this attitude is "A New England Tale," published first in 1822, the year before Bushnell entered Yale, and a second edition in 1852. The story is laid in Stockbridge. The mother is a stern, but hypocritical woman, strict in holding family prayers and deeply interested in Indian missions. Her son, who turns out badly, reproaches his mother for teaching him that he is totally depraved, and that, because of original sin, he could do nothing good. So in doing wrong, he had been but acting

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¹ Mallary, R. D., Lenox, p. 324.

² Hopkins, S., Works, Vol. 2, p. 253.

according to the sinful nature given him. Miss Sedgwick evidently thought that the teachings of the New England Theology had a pernicious influence in the lives of people in general.

Another writer, Harriet Beecher Stowe, gives a similar impression in "The Minister's Wooing," published in 1859. The story is laid in Newport in the pastorate of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, the famous theologian. Mrs. Stowe portrays Hopkins as a man of exceptionally fine Christian character and suggests that he was better than his theology. She writes thus of the New England Theology, "These systems of theology, when received as absolute truth, had on certain minds the effect of slow poison. An awful dread was constantly underlying life, the dread of eternal doom."¹ When a writer with the influence of Harriet Beecher Stowe thus characterizes the effects of the regnant orthodox theology, it seems evident that the system was arousing the opposition of a large number of thoughtful people.

D. His New Method of Approach to Theological Problems.

Bushnell was not in sympathy with the severely logical reasoning on great theological truths, nor with the hair-splitting definitions of doctrines which he believed it was impossible to define. This feeling he expresses

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Stowe, H. B., The Minister's Wooing, p. 339.

in a letter to his friend Dr. Bartol while his book, "God in Christ," was in the hands of the printer. He writes, "My hope is ---that it will lead to thoughts of a different character from those which have occupied the field of New England theology, to ---more faith and less dogma, and above all to a more catholic and fraternal spirit. I have a confidence that a class of men who have heart enough to go into the aesthetic ¹ side of religion and eyes to see something besides propositional wisdom, will admit that I have some truth." Again in the same letter he writes[†], "God, in the matter of trinity and atonement is seen to approach us or come into knowledge, not under terms of logic, but under the laws of expression. To this, trinity is brought down; to this, atonement. They meet us poetically, aesthetically, to pour their contents into us through feelings and imagination; to deposit their contents, not in our reason, but in our faith."² These words tell us very plainly that he was dissatisfied with the method used by the New England theologians, but that he will use another means of acquiring and expressing truth. Bushnell's teacher in theology had been Dr. N. W. Taylor who was a master in dialectic. He frequently declared to his classes that to make definitions was³ "the severest labor of the human mind." It was partic-

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¹ Munger, T. T., Horace Bushnell, p. 137.

² Ibid., p. 140.

³ Ibid., p. 102.

ularly at this point that Bushnell parted company with his professor. Defining and re-defining had proceeded endlessly and to little real success.

In his book "God in Christ," he explained his use of language. He held that no words can ever fully express great truths. However, by the use of figures, and by approaching the subject from many different sides, the reader may receive a more complete understanding of the particular idea. He claimed that no great Christian truths can be made to fit into the moulds of any dogmatic statement. The great problem of theology, Bushnell affirmed, was to set forth God, His truth, love, justice, compassion. Human language is not capable of doing this. According to this theory of Bushnell, theology cannot be an exact science. Language, he believed, was not so much descriptive as suggestive, and was figurative in its dealing with spiritual truth. The best that language can do is to suggest the scope and significance of the underlying spiritual truth. The New England theologians had laid great stress on definition, holding that words could be so accurately defined that they would exactly express the truth in question. Bushnell denied the possibility of this. He would lay the emphasis rather on expression. This was a revolutionary attitude toward the New England theologians of his day. As we examine his works on the Atonement we shall find this method at times leading him to redundancy of expression and at others to the use of words the meaning of which cannot be accurately ascertained.

Bushnell, then, with his original and energetic mind, his confidence in his powers to solve difficult problems; with his aversion to the hard and fast logic of the theologians of his time, and with his new method of theological expression, is ready to cope with one of the great problems of the Gospel.

One of the points of attack by the Unitarians was the views of the Atonement held by the Old school. However, in spite of their long line of famous men, poets, scholars, orators, preachers, and statesmen, they were lacking in any constructive doctrine. On the other hand the New England School was on the defensive, trying to redefine their terms to meet new assaults of liberal thought. Midway between the two parties appeared Bushnell with a message which he felt would give a new vision of truth.

**2. A COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT
OF BUSHNELL'S THEORY OF
THE ATONEMENT.**

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OF BUSHNELL'S THEORY OF
THE ATONEMENT.**

**A. Statements Bearing on
His Views on the Atone-
ment Found in His Works
Previous to 1865.**

We have little to do with the first of Bushnell's well-known works, a book which is said to have changed the attitude of the Church toward the entrance of children into its fold. "Christian Nurture," published in 1847, has nothing which refers directly to his thought of the Atonement. However, such a statement as this has a bearing on our study. "Christ is a Saviour for infants and children and youth, as truly as for the adult age; gathering them all into His fold together, there to be kept and nourished together."¹ Compare this statement with that of Professor Edwards A. Park of Andover who was a contemporary of Bushnell's and also one of the last of the New England School of Theologians; "We have

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¹
Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture, p. 83.

an instinctive hope that infants are saved. We cannot perhaps prove it."¹ The cautious and narrow logic of the latter is in sharp contrast to the former's intuitive appreciation of the love of God expressed in the life of Him who said; "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."² Bushnell boldly takes this position in regard to infants, contrary to the older theologians.

In his book, "God in Christ," which Bushnell published in 1849, there is a chapter which sets forth in a general way his views on the Atonement. These were later amplified in "The Vicarious Sacrifice." This chapter is "The Discourse on the Atonement Delivered before the Divinity School in Harvard University, July 9, 1848." Bushnell lays emphasis in this address on the statement that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. This he uses to prove that man was reconciled to God rather than God to man. He announces that he will set forth the Atonement in two distinct views, subjective and objective, which are really one. The objective he defines as an "Altar Form" for the soul. He affirms that the end of Christ's work was to "renovate character; to quicken by the infusion of the

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1

F. H. Foster, History of New England Theology, p. 510.

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Matthew 19: 14.

divine life; in one word that He comes to be a Saviour, as saving His people from their sins."¹ Bushnell considers this view very different from those passages in Paul's writings, which speak of Christ as a propitiation, a sacrifice, as bearing our sins or as obtaining remission of sins by His blood. Such expressions as these Bushnell considers "altar forms," or objective views of the Atonement. He reminds us that the work of Christ has been explained by certain analogies of criminal law, of commercial law, or of ceremonial law. These analogies cause confusion. In regard to the penal theory, that Christ suffered evil for evil, Bushnell says that view has been largely given up. Instead, the orthodox teaching was that Christ's suffering expressed the abhorrence of God for sin. Bushnell thinks that this is artificial and little better than the old penal idea, and also makes a forced distinction in the Trinity, because the Father would cause the Son to suffer. It would be the frown of God on Himself.

In explaining his double view of the Atonement, Bushnell takes up first the subjective, which he defines as "that which represents Christ as a manifestation of the Life, thus a power whose end it is to quicken, or regenerate the human character."² Jesus is the incarnate

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H. Bushnell, *God in Christ*, p. 191.

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- *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Word expressed in and through the human. His was not only a perfect human life, but a manifestation of the Life of God. To break the power of evil, Christ brings to mankind that which is Divine. The eternal Life organizes a new society or kingdom which breaks forever the power of social evil. The Life as manifested in Christ convicts men of sin. As they receive that Life by faith they enter into a vital union which makes them free.

In answer to the objection that this does not take into account the eternal verity and sanctity of God's law, Bushnell affirms that his view shows that the law was brought closer to men's souls than ever before. This was done in four ways, (1) by Christ's teachings; (2) by His obedience; (3) by His expense and painstaking; (4) by His death.

Bushnell tells us that the objective or ritual view of the Atonement is necessary to understand the full work of Christ. These terms in Scripture which represent Christ as our sacrifice, sin-offering, and atonement, illustrate the work which has actually been done in the soul of the believer. God has prepared these images through the Jewish sacrifices for the representation of Christ and His work. In regard to the objective view of the Atonement, Bushnell makes four observations. (1) The earnest Christian feelings of the apostles center in this objective representation of the vicarious sacrifice of

Christ for the sins of the world. (2) The Hebrew ritual was appointed to prepare a sacred language to express the work of Christ. (3) Christ is represented in terms of the old ritual before His passion. (4) It is a philosophic necessity that a religion which is to be a power over mankind should have an objective character. Bushnell closes his discourse by urging his hearers to preach Christ. "It is the living life-giving experience of Christ Himself; study cleared by communion, knowledge grounded in faith,- this it is which prepares insight, character, and love, and forms the true equipment of an earnest, powerful preacher."¹ In general then, from a study of this address we find that Bushnell's theory of the Atonement was pretty definitely formed by 1848. "The Vicarious Sacrifice," published in 1865, is but the same teaching, only more full and complete.

In Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural," published in 1858, we have but little concerning the Atonement. Yet this book tells us of his attitude toward sin. Sin is no light matter for Bushnell. There is no remedy for sin in natural development nor in self-reformation. Sin can only be overcome by supernatural power. He says, "Religious character is not legal. It is an inspiration,- the life of God in the Soul of man; and no such life can ever

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H. Bushnell, "God in Christ," p. 274.

quicken a soul except in the faith of a Living God."¹

Again he describes sin in these words; "Consider--- the lapsed integrity of a soul. Its original spontaneity to good is gone, its silver cord of harmony is broken, the sweet order of life is turned into a tumult of inward bitterness, its very laws are become its tormentors. Manifestly none but God can restore the lapsed order of the soul."²

In "Sermons for the New Life," published in 1858, a volume which contains some of Bushnell's finest sermons, there is little about the Atonement. This is largely because of the themes which he has taken. However in the sermon on "The Power of God in Self-sacrifice," we find these words which he speaks of the death of Christ. "And when I stand by His cross, when I look on that strong passion and shudder with the shuddering earth, and darken with the darkening sun, enough that I can say: My Lord and my God! I ask no sanction of the head. I want no logical endorsement. Enough that I can see the heart of God, and in all this wondrous passion know Him as enduring the contradiction of sinners."³ Here we have the thought of God suffering and by so doing He appeals mightily to the heart of man. In the sermon "Christ as Separate from

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¹
H. Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 235.

²
Ibid., p. 236.

³
H. Bushnell, "Sermons for the New Life," p. 360.

the World" in this same volume, occurs a sentence which bears on our subject,- "The Son of Man in glory whose image we aspire to, and whose mission as the Crucified on earth, was the revelation of the Father's love and holiness."¹

"Christ and His Salvation" is a book of sermons which Bushnell published in 1864. In the discourse on "Christ's Agony or Moral Suffering," we find the thought of God's sacrificing love for man. He asks, "Is there any sensibility in God that can suffer? He could not be good, having evil in His dominions, without suffering even according to His goodness."² In this sermon Bushnell implies that Christ suffers the penalty of sin simply because He is one with humanity. This submission will arouse in man a new consciousness of sin. He says, "By this submission of Christ to man's curse or penalty, an impression will be made for God's justice, and a sting of conviction sharpened against sin, that will even start a new sense of His law."³ Further on in this sermon Bushnell adds that God's had been "a suffering love even from eternity."³ Again we find his idea of vicarious sacrifice in these words, "Every sort of love connects some kind of suffering greater or less.---Thus it is that friendship,

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¹ H. Bushnell, "Sermons for the New Life," p. 456.

² H. Bushnell, "Christ and His Salvation," p. 234.

³ Ibid., 240.

charity, motherhood, patriotism, carries each its burden, light or heavy, according to the nature and degree of its love."¹

In another sermon in this same volume, "The Physical Suffering or Cross of Christ," Bushnell affirms that nothing can be made of Christ's suffering simply as physical pain. His being willing to suffer the pains of humanity shows the attitude of God toward man. Bushnell states that Christ by His death makes no satisfaction to the justice of God. Yet the very tragedy of His death will appeal to the hearts of men.

In still another sermon in this volume, "Christ Bearing the Sins of the Transgressor," Bushnell discusses a phase of the Atonement. He states that no one can suffer the actual punishment of a wrong-doer, because he is not guilty of the sin. Bushnell also thinks that Christ could not bear our sins because God's abhorrence of our sin was laid upon Him. He asks how God could abhor that which is not abhorrent,- goodness, truth, and beauty. When Bushnell considers how Christ could have borne our transgressions, his conclusion is that it is first of all in a representative manner. Christ is our representative and has acquired such power in us by his sacrifice as to take our sin away. He gives still other ways in which Christ bears our sin. Christ assumes our guilt, just as

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H. Bushnell, "Christ and His Salvation," p. 234.

a father takes upon his sympathy the wrong doing of his son. Also Christ is incarnated into our state of sin, including all the corporate woes of penalty. Still another way in which Bushnell thinks that Christ bears our sins is by enduring the direct attack of evil upon His person. By this means Christ shows what His attitude would be if all the wrongs of the world were heaped upon Him, and thus He gains power over the sins of mankind.

Having examined Bushnell's works before 1865, we find the doctrine of the Atonement stated in ^amore or less fragmentary way. Doubtless it had already been completely worked out in his mind. It was not however until 1865 that he published his "Vicarious Sacrifice," giving in that work a complete statement of his theory. We will turn to the book itself for the full explanation of his thought on the Atonement of Christ.

**B. Bushnell's Doctrine of the
Atonement as Stated in "The
Vicarious Sacrifice." (1865)**

**(1) Introduction in which
he gives his purpose in
writing the book.**

In the introduction Bushnell tells us that he wrote "The Vicarious Sacrifice," not as an argument against past doctrines of the Atonement, but to make a contribution to "a doctrine never yet fully matured."¹ The true view, he

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N. Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 2.

thinks, must finally be that Christ "by His suffering life and ministry becomes a reconciling power in character."¹ This is but another way of saying that God is in Christ reconciling men to Himself. In this introduction Bushnell uses a fine phrase for the events which make up the Atonement, - "the shining tokens of love and sacrifice."² This thought runs through his entire book.

Bushnell had come to the conclusion that no explanation of the Atonement had been given that satisfied the whole Christian world. However, he thinks that Anselm's exposition on this subject, which was the first, has been the source of the multitude of treatises which have followed it. He holds that the principal mistake that Anselm made was to fail to give proper place to the Incarnation. He also thinks that Anselm's strict logical method tended to narrow his understanding, as the Atonement is too great a subject to be explained by human logic. In fact Bushnell holds that thinkers who have attempted to ~~reduce to logic and~~ ^{reduce to logic and} dogmatize great spiritual truths, were endeavoring to make them small enough to be successfully handled. For instance he noted the statement of Anselm that Christ had "restored life to the world" and "assumed the littleness and weakness of human nature for the sake of its renewal," yet in his treatise Anselm makes no use of this great fact.³ Bushnell notes Anselm's idea that

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¹ Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 14. ² Ibid., p. 24.

³ Ibid., p. 25.

Christ properly passed over to sinners the superfluity of His rewards for restoring God's honor. He thinks that Anselm by his effort at logic misses the great "conception of the self-sacrificing love of Christ," and loses the opportunity of showing "the transforming efficacy of God."¹ Bushnell writes, "In one way or another, the gospel teachers appear to have been trying everywhere and in all the past ages, if not consciously, yet unconsciously, to get beyond their own doctrine and bring out some practically moral-power view of the cross, more fruitful and sanctifying, than by their own particular doctrine, it possibly can be."² These words show the reaction of Bushnell's mind in studying past theories of the Atonement. His dissatisfaction with past explanations grew until the way was paved for his new "moral power view of the cross." In another place Bushnell states his disagreement with the past theories of the Atonement in this graphic manner; "If Christ has simply died to even up a score of penalty, if the total import of His Cross is that God's wrath is satisfied and the books made square, there is certainly no beauty in that to charm a new feeling into life; on the contrary, there is much to revolt the soul, at least in God's attitude, and even to raise a chill of revulsion."³

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 26.

² Ibid., p. 28.

³ Ibid., p. 30.

Again he writes, "The power which is so continually sought after in the unfolding and preaching of the cross-- is not in any consideration of a penal sacrifice, but is-- a Christ outside of the doctrine, dwelling altogether in the sublime fact of His person, his miracles, and his passion."¹ Bushnell feels that the theories of the Atonement leave out something important and yield little satisfaction. This is because they fail to realize that the whole Christ makes up the Gospel. "The real Gospel is the Incarnate Biography itself."² Bushnell thinks that it would be as appropriate to attempt to reduce Othello to a dogma as to attempt it with the tragedy of Jesus. In his introduction Bushnell announces that he considers that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was in the line of His simple duty, rather than an action resulting in a surplus of merit. He also warns us that he does not use the title "Vicarious Sacrifice" with the commonly accepted meanings of the church confessions. However, he tells us that his purpose is to show "the Christ whom so many centuries of discipleship have so visibly been longing and groping after; viz., the loving, helping, transforming, sanctifying Christ, the true soul-bread from Heaven, the quickening Life, the Power of God unto Salvation."³

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¹

Horace Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 30.

²

Ibid., p. 31.

³

Ibid., p. 32.

(2) Bushnell's argument
on the Atonement
in this book.

(a) He claims
that there
is nothing
superlative
in vicarious
sacrifice,
(Part I)

In this part he begins by the consideration of the meaning and method of reconciliation, which he thinks has never been satisfactorily explained. Although the meaning of reconciliation has never been theoretically made clear, its practical significance has readily been seized upon by faith. Many have claimed that vicarious sacrifice is irrational, while orthodox believers have maintained that it is the central fact of Christianity. Bushnell feels that the orthodox explanations have been unsatisfactory.

Bushnell finds no such word as vicarious in the Scriptures. There are many different expressions for Christ's suffering for us in the New Testament. The word vicarious is chosen to express the various thoughts. Bushnell says, "Any person acts vicariously, in this view, just so far as he comes in place of another."¹ His full explan-

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Horace Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 39.

ation of vicarious sacrifice is given in these words;
 "The expression is a figure representing that the party
 making such sacrifice for another comes into a burden, pain,
 weariness, or even to the yielding of life for his sake."¹
 By his definition, Bushnell avoids the strict meaning of
 complete substitution. In fact he tells us plainly that
 he does not believe that Christ literally became a sub-
 stitute for the sinner. He argues that Christ could not
 become guilty for us, and therefore could not justly be
 punished. What Christ actually did for us, he puts in
 these words, "Christ in what is called His vicarious sac-
 rifice, simply engages at the expense of great suffering
 and even of death itself to bring us out of our sins them-
 selves, and so out of their penalties; being Himself pro-
 foundly identified with us in our fallen state, and bur-
 dened in feeling with our evils."² In this statement Bush-
 nell does not explain how Christ is identified with us but
 implies that it is by sympathy.

Very beautifully he says, "Love is a principle es-
 sentially vicarious in its nature, identifying the
 subject with others so as to suffer their adversities and
 pains, and taking on itself the burden of their evils."³
 When we read that Christ "bare our sicknesses,"⁴ He did

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¹
 Horace Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 40.

²
 Ibid., p. 41.

³
 Ibid., p. 42.

⁴
 Matthew 8: 17.

so sympathetically. Hence Bushnell argues that he bore our sins not literally, as the old theologians claimed, but sympathetically as a friend. In this way the mother bears the pains and sicknesses of her child in her feelings. Thus God Himself takes our sinning enmity on His heart. "Such a God in love must be such a Saviour in suffering."¹ Very beautifully Bushnell expresses his meaning that God shows His love in the sacrifice of Christ in these words, "There is a Gethsemane hid in all love, and when the fit occasion comes ----its heavy groaning will be heard---even as it was in Christ. He was in an agony, exceeding sorrowful even unto death. By that sign it was that God's love broke into the world, and Christianity was born."² This love Bushnell holds was higher in degree than human love, but contains the same principle. Wherever love is, there is found vicarious sacrifice. Bushnell thinks that there should never have been any more question as to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ than as to a mother's when she watches over her child. He feels that so often theologians by their logic and speculations have turned out theories both dry and revolting. So often the theologians have pictured God as standing apart from men, a figure of stern duty and abstract justice, with no appeal to human beings in their need.

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 47.

² Ibid., p. 47.

Bushnell takes up the objection that because vicarious sacrifice is so universal, it must bring an overwhelming amount of sadness and suffering. On the contrary he calls attention to the fact that people are never so happy as when they are doing for others. Those who are wearing out their lives in sacrifice for the evil and undeserving are experiencing a deeper joy than those living selfishly. Thus Christ experienced a deep joy in spite of His hard life.

Bushnell gives us the secret of his theory by telling us that we learn its truth by experience. For instance he advises us, if we have been wronged by a person, first to pray for him. Then we are to take him on our love, study by what means we can get him out of his evil ways, and make a friend of him. In that way Bushnell says we will understand the true meaning of vicarious sacrifice.

In his second chapter Bushnell offers a fine suggestion in discussing whether or not death was optional with Christ. He writes, "Not that He (Christ) was under obligation to another, but to Himself. He was God fulfilling the obligations of God."¹ God showed the principle of vicarious suffering before the coming of Christ. Bushnell argues that God must be the same in the Old Testament times as in the New. However he thinks that God dealt with people more roughly in the olden days because

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Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 58.

of their barbaric condition. He was preparing them for the time when He would be known as the God of love and sacrifice. Christ was a revelation in time of the love which always had been in the heart of God. Christ was a fuller revelation of the love of God than any preceding His time. Christ is not a mediator between God and man in the sense of being a third person. Being in humanity we are enabled by faith in Him to take hold of God and are reconciled to Him. Bushnell explains the intercession of Christ by saying that God does not need to be propitiated, but the intercession is in the feelings of our hearts. He tells us that Christ crucified reveals the eternal cross in the heart of God.

In his third chapter, Bushnell argues that the Holy Spirit is a personality. The work of the Spirit is in sacrifice. He holds that the Spirit enters into the Divine vicarious sacrifice by His suffering patience and affliction of feeling. Bushnell thinks that we understand the sufferings of Christ better than those of the Spirit because of the humanity of the Former.

In his fourth chapter, Bushnell argues that all created beings have their perfection and blessedness in vicarious sacrifice. This chapter has to do with the character and work of the angels. He claims that the service which they render is vicarious. He calls attention to their sympathy with Jesus in His work. He speaks of the angels of the Transfiguration as Moses and Elias. They had been trained for sympathetic fellowship with Jesus by

their trials and burdens of love on earth. The angels rejoice over the repentance of sinners. They are interested in the beggar Lazarus. In general Bushnell thinks that the Scriptures teach the vicarious sacrifice of the angels as well as of Christ. They are ministering spirits, which suggests both service and sacrifice. Consequently he holds that they enter into the suffering love of God and are engaged in that kind of vicarious work which love would prompt.

In chapter five, he shows how vicarious sacrifice belongs to men as well as to angels. Christ in His vicarious sacrifice simply fulfills what universally belongs to love, doing only what the common standard of right requires. Bushnell has shown the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and of angels, now he claims that this should be true of men. He argues that as Christ's love prompts Him to vicarious love, His followers, who are restored from their fallen condition to one of fellowship with Him, receive a vicarious love similar to that of their Master. Vicarious sacrifice will not be something which distinguishes Christ from His followers, but will be marked in them as well as in Him. Bushnell calls attention to the fact that Christians usually think that they can have no part in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, because He makes the perfect and complete atonement for the sins of the world. Bushnell declares that Christ's suffering was different from that of the Christian in office and degree but not in character. The disciple can never have ^{the} A

same office, Son of God and Saviour, but may always enter into fellowship with Christ in His work and accomplish humbler and inferior service. The Christian enters into fellowship with His sufferings because he, like his Lord, suffers morally. Bushnell teaches that when Christ urged His followers to bear the cross in following Him, He meant vicarious sacrifice. As Christians, we ought to suffer with Him, to feel as He did, be burdened with His burdens, afflicted in all His losses. Because we love Him, we shall enter into His sorrows as He does into ours. But is this vicarious sacrifice in the case of the Christian? Bushnell claims that it is, believing that we may help and support Christ in His work. He quotes the words of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemanem "Tarry ye here and watch with Me--could ye not watch with Me one hour?"¹ Christ calls upon His followers to serve, "even as the Son of Man came to minister."² The Christian is urged to "take up his cross and follow" Christ. Bushnell speaks thus of the death of Christ, "the crowning fact of His sacrifice, and yet He does not claim any exclusive right to die in this manner, but even lays it down as the universal test of love and discipleship- if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren

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¹
Matthew 26: 38.

²
Matthew 20: 28.

³
Matthew 16: 24.

and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Obedience unto death is to be a law for them as truly as for Him."¹ These words do not mean that the Christian can do the work that was entrusted to Christ. Explaining the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies, bless them which curse you, do good to them that hate you," and "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," Bushnell says that we are to enter into the same standard which God has, which is one of sacrifice and suffering patience. This is the law which Christ fulfills. For His disciples Christ laid down the same law of sacrifice as for Himself in these words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."² Peter thus interprets the Gospel, using similar words, "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye also should follow His steps."³ Bushnell thinks that we have failed to realize the vicarious suffering of the Christian because we have assumed that such sacrifice could belong only to Christ.

Bushnell calls attention to the sacrifices and sufferings of the Apostle Paul, who in some way conceived

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¹

Horace Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 114.

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John 12: 24.

³

I Peter 2: 21.

these as complementary to the work of Christ, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church."¹ He even goes so far as to say, "I am now ready to be offered," and "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all."²

In this chapter he very beautifully shows the duty of the Christian to enter into the sacrifice and even suffering of Christ. For instance the disciple should have the same unselfish love for others which his Master had. He argues that so often the Christian thinks that Christ lived a life of sacrifice, and suffered once for all. His followers, they seem to feel, may lead lives of ease and selfishness. Bushnell claims that Christ's sufferings belong to His character, and that Christians who are sincere will also suffer vicariously. Real love, Bushnell thinks, is always vicarious. Yet he tells us that we are not to set ourselves up as Redeemers of the world. Vicarious love in Christ should be answered by vicarious love in His followers. This love should make Christians enjoy doing hard things, even doing good to their enemies.

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¹
Col. 1: 24.

²
II Tim. 4: 6; Phil. 2: 17.

(b) He explains how
the life and sac-
rifice of Christ
become a saving
power. (Part II)

In the previous section Bushnell has endeavored to show the general meaning of vicarious sacrifice and to explain the passages of Scripture related to it. He now comes to what he calls the second stage of his argument, namely, "the end He (Christ) will accomplish, the power by which He will accomplish it, and the course of life and benefaction by which He will obtain that power."¹

Bushnell advances the rather startling statement that Christ was "not here to die, but dies because He is here."² His coming into the world is "the mode or instinct of His love."³ To further explain his thought, Bushnell writes, "He (Christ) was in vicarious sacrifice before He came into the world, having the world upon His feeling as truly as now, and only made the fact-form sacrifice, because He had the burden of it on Him already."⁴ He illustrates this by the missionary who does not go to the heathen land to die, but dies when it is necessary for his work. "He (Christ) is not here to "square up" the account of our

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Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 129.

² Ibid., p. 130.

³ Ibid., p. 130.

⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

sin, or to satisfy the Divine justice for us."¹ Instead the work of Christ was "a regenerative, saving, truth-subjecting, all-restoring, inward change of the life, in one word, the establishing of the Kingdom of God."² In these words Bushnell gives his idea of the relation of the sacrifice of Christ to regeneration.

His argument in this chapter which is on "The Healing Ministry," is that Christ is the Great Healer. As men feel the ills of the body in the soul, the body needs healing. The sicknesses of man are caused by his sins. By His healing touch, Christ makes evident His incarnation. He also shows the love of God in freeing men from the pains caused by sin. While sin is a spiritual matter, the results of sin are felt in the sufferings of the body. The most obvious way of showing men the sympathy and forgiving power of God was to show pity for illnesses and to heal their bodily pains. This He does, Bushnell says, with no thought of satisfying God's justice or pacifying His wrath. He quotes the passage, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,³ 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.'" Bushnell says that evidently Christ did not become a literal substitute in bearing our illnesses, but does so by

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¹

Horace Bushnell, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 131.

²

Ibid., p. 132.

³

Isaiah 53: 4.

His "pains-taking labor and exhaustive sympathy."¹ Because He showed His wonderful power of healing and renovating life we have confidence that when we go to Him He will effect our deliverance. Bushnell argues that Christ's life and miracles prove His power so great that we expect to find something unusual in His death. "It is only when the Great Healer dies, that we look to find His cross a deed of power."²

Then Bushnell raises the question, "As we are partakers in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, are we also to have a part in the healing?" His answer is that without the power to perform miracles we may enter with Christ into the ministry of love by our sympathy with the sick, our labors and prayers for them.

In the second chapter in this "Part," Bushnell tells us that the cure of the bodies which Christ did was but the outward type of a more sublime healing, that is of fallen characters. This is His great mission, His vicarious sacrifice. Bushnell reminds us that this purpose is contrary to the one which many held in his day, namely, the satisfying of God's justice. Instead of Christ by His death purchasing for us the Holy Spirit, He is the great Soul-Healer Himself. This healing Christ does in three ways, first by appealing to our feelings by His com-

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 146;

²

Ibid., p. 146.

passion, second by awakening our consciences by His sufferings for us, and third, by becoming our friend. Bushnell quotes passages to prove that Christ is a regenerator as well as the Holy Spirit. To quote two will be sufficient. "That He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."¹ "He hath begotten us again to a lively hope."² The whole consciousness of the disciples "is a Christ-consciousness, - everything good and strong in them is Christ within."³ Bushnell claimed that many Christians in his day thought of Christ, not as a regenerating power, but simply as one who had squared their account with God. He says that as an actual fact those preachers who held the penal satisfaction doctrine pictured Christ as the loving Saviour who was lifted up to draw men to Himself.

Bushnell here uses certain passages to support his argument. Of these we will mention three. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."⁴ It does not say that He takes away the punishment but the sins. "Who His ownself bare our sins, in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed."⁵ In

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¹
John 17: 2.

²
I Peter 1: 3.

³
Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 159.

⁴
John 1: 29.

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I Peter 2: 24.

regard to this passage, Bushnell's explanation is that the bearing of sins has its end that we may live unto righteousness. This is "an appeal of suffering for us, to work a change inwardly in our life---so the stripes are not penal stripes inflicted for God's satisfaction, but such kind of suffering as works a divine healing in us."¹ "For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God."² Bushnell argues here that this does not mean a suffering of penalty for the unjust, but that the object of the suffering is plainly declared to "bring us unto God." These three passages will suffice to show the Scriptural grounds which our author uses.

In the third chapter in this "Part," Bushnell says that Christ is to be God's power in working recovery of character. He writes, "A great power then is wanted, which can pierce, and press, and draw, and sway, and as it were, new-crystalize the soul."³ In this section he argues that Christ by His sacrifice becomes the moral power of God which creates anew the character of the believer. We should note here that Bushnell says very definitely that this power is not that of example. He reminds us that the "Example Theory" of the Atonement

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 163.

² I Peter 3: 18.

³ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 169.

has never satisfied the great majority of Christians. He puts it thus, "For the truth is that we consciously want something better than a model to be copied; some vehicle of God to the soul that is able to copy God into it. Something is wanted that shall go before and beget in us the disposition to copy an example."¹ Bushnell holds that Christ in His sacrifice is moved not only by love but by "the everlasting word of righteousness."² He explains the moral power of God or Christ as "the power of all God's moral perfections."³ By the compelling argument of the cross Christ draws men away from their sins and unto Him, as He says, "And^I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me."⁴ When Jesus is "declared to be the Son of God with power,"⁵ it is moral power that is meant. Among other passages Bushnell quotes, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."⁶ Still another is "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."⁷ Thus the Apostles felt that Christ was the power which created new life in the souls of men. By these passages and many figures of speech the writers of the New Testament

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 170.

² Ibid., p. 171.

⁴ John 12: 32.

⁶ I Cor. 1: 24.

³ Ibid., p. 172.

⁵ Romans 1: 4.

⁷ Romans 1: 16.

endeavor "to express the wondrously divine, all-renovating, all-revolutionizing moral power of God in the gospel of His Son."¹ Bushnell argues that had Christ come only to satisfy the justice of God, He would have come earlier in history, but He appears only when men are far enough advanced to be appealed to by the moral power of God.

In the fourth chapter of Part II, Bushnell tells us how Christ became so great a power. He argues that Christ's power was not that of the attributes of God, as these are abstract and distant. Instead His was a moral power, which is cumulative, increasing as His earthly life progressed. By His incarnation He gains power among men, just as they acquire influence in their relations with each other. In this connection, Bushnell discusses the power in the name of Jesus. In the New Testament we read of the relation of the disciples to the name of Jesus. They are baptized in it; reproached for it, teach in it, have life through it. Yet Bushnell thinks that the power of His name was not recognized in His ministry of love, nor in His suffering and death. But when He rose from the grave, then His disciples saw His life and ministry with a new meaning. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."² ~~Thus~~

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 182.

² Romans 1: 4.

Thus the disciples go forth preaching in the name of Jesus. The power of that name increases through the ages. Bushnell claims that it "is exactly the power obtained by the life (of Christ) and can be represented only by the facts, of which it is the character and expression."² Bushnell explains the power of Christ under four points, as (1) being different from any which had been obtained by men, deeper and holier; (2) humanizing God to men. "He is in our plane, acting with us and for us, interpreted to our sympathies by what He does, and is in social relationship with us. We know Him in just the same way as we know one another."² (3) By His ministry, His death and resurrection, He both awakens the guilt of the sinner and yet draws us to Himself. (4) He reveals God as suffering for the sin of man. Some theologians have held that God is superior to any suffering. They claim that in Christ's death on the cross it was only the human nature that felt pain. Bushnell has this fine sentence in regard to the suffering of God. "The principal suffering of any really great being and especially of God is because of His moral sensibility, nay, because of His moral perfection."³ God's sufferings are moral, but are the greatest and most real. When we say God is love, we must remember that love is vicarious. Yet the beatitude

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 213.

² Ibid., p. 220.

³ Ibid., p. 224.

of God is not diminished in this suffering, because suffering for love's sake becomes "a transcendent and more consciously sovereign joy."¹ Bushnell holds that the sufferings of Christ on the cross are the symbol of the moral suffering of God for the sin of humanity. He tells us that the great name of Jesus becomes the Moral Power of God in the revelation of a suffering God. Whoever believes in that name is born of God.

(d) He shows the relation of

God's law and justice to His

saving work in Christ. (Part III)

In this section Bushnell says that it is his purpose to consider questions of law, penalty, justice, righteousness, and their connections with mercy and forgiveness. In his first chapter he reminds us of the danger of using as analogies the laws and government of a political state. By these analogies, feelings and actions have been attributed to God which are doubtless far from the truth. Bushnell lays emphasis on the fact that God's law, meaning His necessary, everlasting, ideal law of Right, was always in existence, long before He became the Governor of this universe. Hence His law existed before His government. Bushnell uses the analogy of our own natures, as we are created in the image of God. We have an instinctive idea of right, apart from

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Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 226.

the laws that have been made by the body politic. This law of conscience is present in all people, Christian or heathen. If all observed fully this moral law, they would be perfect in love to God and man. When they break the moral law and come into rebellion against God and into disharmony with their neighbors, God institutes government and becomes the Ruler. Yet the righteous love which God bears those whom He has created unites Him to them in acts of tenderest sacrifice. Hence His government and His redeeming sacrifice work together for the good of man. Presumably God is in vicarious sacrifice ^{in government} as in redemption. In this discussion Bushnell would distinguish between the righteousness of God, by which is meant His perfections, and the justice of God, by which is meant His dealings in government. He holds that both the moral law of God and His justice work together for the redemption of man. Further, he thinks that justification need not and probably does not have any reference to God's justice, but signifies a new connection through faith with the righteousness of God. God in His legislation and in His redemption is guided by the everlasting law of His nature.

In the second chapter Bushnell discusses God's instituted government. This is His government, counsel, and will to maintain the everlasting law. To do this He incorporates a grand machinery of discipline with its penalties. But to co-operate with this, He plans the Incarnate Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. To make this clear Bushnell would remind us of five things.

(1) Law and obligation do not begin with God's expressed will, but exist before that in His nature. (2) His instituted government differs from His law before that government because it inaugurates justice and penal sanctions. (3) God's instituted government is the necessary co-factor of redemption. (4) We should distinguish between righteousness and justice. By the former Bushnell evidently means the action of God, in obedience to the law of His nature. By the latter he means the necessary discipline to maintain His law. (5) Bushnell thinks that when we conceive of God's nature in an impersonal way, we come to think of God's government as Himself. Then we often drop the institutional thought and call Him King. Bushnell also takes up in this chapter the objection that if Christ does not bear the penalties of sin when He takes them away He weakens the government of God. If God forgives sin without some penal satisfaction, His rectoral honor is diminished; His authority as a Ruler is gone.

In chapter three, Bushnell takes up the answers to the difficult questions just mentioned under the head of "The Antagonism Between Justice and Mercy." He says that the general view of the theologians has been that God, having begun to govern by law with various rewards and punishments, and having failed to attain His ends, brings in a second dispensation by means of Christ. He suffers death as a satisfaction to justice, and thus maintains the integrity of God's government. Bushnell disagrees with this view. He says that the antagonism between justice

and mercy is not as serious as we think it is. Here Bushnell very clearly states that God's punishment for sin is not a quid pro quo, but it is to advance the interests of character and society. Then there is no good reason to think that there is a priority of justice in respect to mercy. Rather justice and mercy are co-ordinate principles with God. These principles run side by side in God's dealing with men and in their experience with God. Among the verses he gives in support of this are "mercy and truth^{are} met together, righteousness and justice have kissed each other,"¹ and "mercy rejoiceth against judgment."² The mercy of God is emphasized in the Old Testament as well as in the gospel of the New. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin."³ Bushnell affirms that for the sake of God's administrative character justice must be maintained. Yet he claims that God dispenses justice according to His discretion, in that He shows mercy when it is for the good of man. Both mercy and law are for the same purpose. Bushnell claims that the natural law of justice is never infringed by mercy, not even by a miracle. Yet mercy interacts

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¹
Psalm 85: 10.

²
James 2: 13.

³
Exodus 34: 6,7.

with this justice by the Gospel of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is this interaction, the sense of unhappiness because of sin, and the appeal of mercy in the gospel of Christ, that brings about conversion. Here justice and mercy beautifully co-operate for the blessing of man. Bushnell^{thinks} that if we could see deeply enough we should find that justice and mercy coalesce at the root. On the other hand he thinks that the teaching that penalties threatened against wrong-doers are not executed on them because these penalties have been inflicted on a right-doer, is ridiculous. One person cannot bear the guilt of another. To hold that Christ suffered the penalties of sin in some theologically fictitious sense does not help the matter according to Bushnell. The natural order of justice and the supernatural order of mercy work together for the salvation of man.

In chapters four, five, and six, Bushnell tells us that he will attempt to show that forgiveness and free justification do no damage to the just government of God. He reminds us that God's forgiveness differs from ours. We may forgive a person and he goes away feeling the same toward us. But God forgives only when there has been a change in the soul of the sinner. Bushnell claims that no ground for the forgiveness is needed, but only that it be executed in such manner as to save the authority of God's government. He gives four ways in which Christ by His sacrifice magnifies the law of God. (1) Christ restores men to the precept, - so that they are brought into a love for it and for God by Whom it is enforced.

(2) Christ honors the precept by enthroning it in love and organizing it into a kingdom. (3) Christ adds honor and authority to the precept, because He is the incarnation of it. (4) He honors the precept by His obedience which is a revelation of God's own everlasting obedience to His moral nature. To God love is right and Right is love. Christ came as the Incarnate Word and Saviour, not because of choice but because the law of love made it a necessity. "Christ makes a contribution of honor to the law He obeys, that will do more to enthrone it in our reverence than all the desecrations of sin have done to pluck it down--more too than all conceivable punishments to make it felt and keep it in respect."¹ "Christ came ~~just~~ because the law He had been in from eternity sent Him, and His incarnate appearing was but the necessary outcoming in time of God's eternal love."² Bushnell says that the sacrifice and suffering of Christ "was the letting out of God's feeling, that could get no such sufficient vent before."³ Also he thinks that God has from eternity suffered in all the sin and sorrow of His creation. The Gethsemane of His compassions kept company with His joys. "The law that was being sublimely fulfilled in God's suffering love from eternity is only now fulfilled to human view by the suffering ministry of Jesus."⁴

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¹

Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 314.

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⁴

Ibid., p. 315. Ibid., p. 318. Ibid., p. 318.

In chapter five, Bushnell continues his argument in respect to the law, holding that legal enforcements are not diminished by his view. He claims that threatenings of law and penal enforcements are needed to awaken the sinner and turn him to Christ. "Christ recognizing the fears as an original and profoundly rational function of souls, makes no scruple of appeal to them, even when His object is to consummate a character wholly superior to their active sway."¹ Bushnell claims that terrible retributions not only act as deterrents to evil doers, but also create moral sensibility as to the sanctity of law. Christ^{p. 20} (denounces) eternal punishment on sinners. In this chapter Bushnell discusses everlasting punishment which he thinks is a finite retribution laid upon the head of finite sin. This punishment is likely to be everlasting as there is so little reason to think that a person will repent in the next life. Bushnell here makes several observations. (1) Christ in His forgiveness of sin never considers that He weakens the government of God. (2) Christ in declaring the penalty of eternal punishment never hints that such a penalty is over-severe. (3) Even those who object to eternal punishment admit the authority of Christ. (4) The teaching of eternal punishment has a good effect on the sinner seeking salvation. Bushnell thinks that Christ thus teaches eternal punishment because it is necessary for the good of human character. Christ Himself

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Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 325.

is the one to enforce law, because He declares Himself to be the final judge of the world. The natural ^{laws} of retribution bring endless punishment to the sinner, but at the same time side by side with these laws is the supernatural grace. The result of the working of these laws of retribution and grace is salvation. Bushnell endeavors again and again to make clear the relation between retribution and grace, but fails to do so.

In chapter six he holds that "God's rectoral honor is effectively maintained" by his view. Here he is coming to a question with which the New England theology was largely concerned. Bushnell says that the theologians of his day realized the difficulty in holding that Christ offered a literal satisfaction ^{to} ~~of~~ God's justice. On this account they claimed that Christ, by His death, showed the same abhorrence of sin that would have been shown by the punishment of the guilty. Bushnell disagrees with this view, declaring that abhorrence of sin expresses practically nothing which would not be expressed by punishment. There is no judicial vigor in abhorrence and even an imperfect person may abhor sin. Bushnell sees no abhorrence of sin expressed in the death of Christ. He claims that these theologians took this view as a compromise, because they saw the inconsistency of God punishing the innocent in place of the guilty.

Bushnell also criticizes the view that the death of Christ is a satisfaction of both the ethical nature of God and of man. Such a view, namely, that God punishes

Himself is both a weak sort of justice and is unjust as well.

Again Bushnell reminds us of the distinction between law and righteousness. The one is the absolute law of right existing before government. The other is maintained for the vindication of government. Bushnell thinks that Christ's hardships and human sufferings,- the very fact that He entered into the curse and corporate evil of humanity,- were sufficient compensations to law. He admits that this is not complete substitution for the sinner, but thinks that we should take the expressions in a figurative sense.

In summing up these last three chapters, Bushnell says that the moral power of Christ's life is not sufficient to regenerate man. There must be "law, conviction, judgment, fear, taking hold of natures dead to love, and by this necessary first effect, preparing a way for love."¹ Bushnell claims that Christ suffers "in a way to honor the precept, enforce the penalty, and sanctify the justice of law."² In these chapters Bushnell labors to make these points clear, with considerable repetition.

In the last chapter, number seven in this part, Bushnell discusses "Justification by Faith." He says that however great the moral power obtained by Christ for the

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¹

Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 401.

²

Ibid., p. 401.

reconciliation of men may be, it can not be efficacious until it is accepted by men. This can be done by faith. This faith becomes a new inspiration of life and character. In his rather lengthy discussion of justification by faith, Bushnell thinks that the Catholic view "to make righteous" and the Protestant interpretation, to "declare righteous," are both imperfect. He coins a new word, claiming that God is the "righteousser." By this^{he} means that God's righteousness continually flows into the soul of the person united to Him by faith. Christ then is not the ground, but the power of justification. Here we must remember Bushnell's idea of the righteousness of God as being the perfections of His character from eternity. The best definition of Bushnell's "justification by faith" is found in these words, "We are thus united to God in the antecedent¹ glories and liberties of His eternal character."

In the latter part of this chapter Bushnell discusses the relation of faith to justification. He would define faith as "the trusting of oneself over, sinner to Savior, to be in Him and of Him, and new-charactered by Him."² In speaking of imputation, Bushnell claims that Luther did not understand his own heart. He quotes the extreme statement of Luther how Christ having the sins of mankind

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1

Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 428.

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Ibid., p. 434.

imputed to Him "becomes the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, that ever was or could be in all the world."¹ This view was not common in Bushnell's day. Bushnell believes that the view of imputed righteousness that we should hold is that "there is a power in Him (God) everlastingly able to beget in us, or keep flowing over upon us, every gift our sin most needs."²

(d) He gives his views of the
meaning of sacrificial sym-
bols. (Part IV)

In the first chapter of this part Bushnell considers the relation of "sacrifice and blood and the lustral figures" to the atonement of Christ. Up to this time he has endeavored to show Christ not as a ground of justification, but as the moral power of God upon us. Bushnell considers that the work of Christ "terminates not in the release of penalties by due compensation, but in the transformation of character, and the rescue in that manner of guilty men from the retributive causations provoked by their sin."³ Our author now intends to consider the sacrificial symbols in their relation to the gospel. He says that the Hebrew people never offered human sacrifices. Their sacrifices originated in the Divine instigation working through human nature. Bushnell reminds us

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¹ Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 438.

² *Ibid.*, p. 446.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

that we should not interpret them by the sacrifice of Christ and thinks that they were not given as types of His death on the cross. However he thinks that they illustrated the spiritual strivings of man and so furnished analogies of Christ's atonement. In considering what the sacrifices meant to the Hebrew people, he calls attention to the fact that they made nothing of the pain of the animal, nor did they show any sympathy for the victim. Bushnell says that the sacrifices were the transactional liturgy of their religion, signifying their guilt and repentance before God. The worshiper feels his ceremonial uncleanness and by the sacrifice is cleansed or hallowed. Bushnell thinks that the ensuing state of ceremonial cleanness gradually leads to a deeper and more spiritual conception of righteousness. The purpose of the sacrifices he holds was lustral and quotes such passages as these, "Make an atonement for the house and it shall be clean,"¹ and "made an atonement for them to cleanse them."² Then Bushnell asks the question, "In what sense is Christ a sacrifice?" He answers that it is not because of His pains, nor because He becomes our legal substitute by His death. He fulfilled the analogy of the ancient sacrifices with a more complete lustral effect. The common terms of the sacrifices furnished an excellent set of terms for making the meaning of the Atonement of

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¹
Lev. 14: 53.

²
Numbers 8: 21.

Christ understood. However there was no external correspondence except in the sacred blood of Christ. Bushnell claims that nine tenths of the New Testament allusions to the effect of altar sacrifices on men are illustrative. Among the references he gives are, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,"¹ and "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience."²

In closing this chapter Bushnell calls attention to the judicial, political, and commercial figures used of the work of Christ. These he sums up in this way, "All the Scripture symbols coincide, as nearly as may be in the one ruling conception that Christ is here in the world to be a power on character- to cleanse, to wash, to purify, to regenerate, new-create, make free, invest in the righteousness of God the guilty souls of mankind."³

In the second chapter of Part IV Bushnell discusses the terms "atonement, propitiation, and expiation." "He affirms that the English word atonement is entirely an Old Testament word, with possibly one exception. In the Old Testament it often has the meaning of "putting-at-one." The Hebrew word is to "cover." The transgressor thus "covered" is cleansed, and is put into a new relation with God. The "covering" results in an effect on us, reconciliation

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¹ I John 1: 7.

² Heb. 9: 14.

³ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 481.

or at-onement, and the other, an effect in God as related to us, propitiation. Bushnell thinks that these terms have been falsely colored by the thought of expiation injected into them by theologians. He claims that expiation is not a word of the Scriptures, but of the classics, a Latin idea. He defines expiation as "an evil given¹ for sin, which is to avail as being an evil." Bushnell claims that for God to accept pains not deserved would be far from justice. He says that punishment or pain not deserved, accepted by an innocent party, so far from being any due support of law, is the worst possible mockery of it."² Then again Bushnell holds that expiation has the thought of one person of the Trinity placating another, which is untenable. He finds no teaching of expiation in the Scriptures. When we read such passages as "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin," we should remember that always in the Bible blood is represented as cleansing and life-giving. Hence he believes that the sacrifice of Christ is not an expiation. In closing the chapter Bushnell says that atonement and propitiation are the correct explanations of the Hebrew word "to cover." "To atone, or make atonement then, is to remove transgression itself, or reconcile the transgressor-- in one word--it makes clean."³ Atonement is

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice" p. 490.

² Ibid., p. 493.

³ Ibid., p. 518.

the bringing the sinner into "at-one-ment" with God.

"Atonement then is a change wrought within us, a change by which we are reconciled to God. Propitiation is an objective conception, by which that change taking place in us, is spoken of¹ as occurring representatively in God."

In the last chapter of Part IV, Bushnell instead of summing up his doctrine, explains the practical uses and ways of preaching the Atonement of Christ. He tells us that it is a mistake to preach Christ by formula. To preach Christ only as a great teacher, or to preach the gospel as an array of legal motives addressed to self interest, or to set forth Christ as a satisfaction to God's justice is erroneous. Christ has come into the world to be the moral power of God on mankind, hence the power of God unto salvation. Bushnell specifies three distinct elements in the preaching of Christ. (1) God's law and justice must be preached in order that men's consciences may be awakened. (2) The good news or gospel facts must be set forth, that His life may be appreciated. (3) The gospel should be explained under the altar forms provided for it. He declares that all ministers should use the expressions "blood," "cross," etc., even if they do not believe that Christ was a judicial satisfaction for sin. By doing this Bushnell claims an objective form much need-

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Horace Bushnell, "The Vicarious Sacrifice," p. 523.

ed is given to the gospel. He thinks any strictly subjective kind of religion is vicious, and even though these Scriptural symbols of sacrifice have been misused, we should employ them freely to obtain an objective religion. In closing, Bushnell exhorts ministers to preach the gospel as it was done in the early church when there were no clearly formulated doctrines and theories. Yet he says that we have gained from all the reasonings and controversies, and can appreciate the meaning of the gospel all the more on account of them. We should come back "to preach Christ just as the Apostolic Fathers and the saints of the first three centuries did; viz., in the facts of His personal life and death, and these facts in the forms of the altar."¹ By "forms of the altar," he means "the Scripture figures of sacrifice and blood (which) make up a complete investiture for the gospel in all its highest meanings and profoundest mediatorial relationships."²

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¹ Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 547.

² *Ibid.*, p. 549.

(3) A summary of the theory as
stated in "The Vicarious
Sacrifice."

In summing up the theory of the Atonement which is stated in "The Vicarious Sacrifice" with considerable repetition, we should remember that Bushnell is presenting his subject to us as a closely thought out argument. In order to get his meaning before us as clearly as possible, let us attempt to reduce this argument to the form of a brief. The introduction consists of a criticism of preceding theories of the Atonement and of a preliminary sketch of his own.

Theme: "The Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ."

1. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ was not in performing what is beyond the universal principle of duty (Part I) because

A. The meaning of vicarious sacrifice is to come into burden or pain for another.

~~■~~ Christ is profoundly identified with man and sorrowful for man's sins. (Chapt. 1)

B. God has always suffered vicariously. (Chapt. 2)

C. The Holy Spirit also suffers vicariously. (Chapt. 3)

D. The Good Angels have a part in vicarious sacrifice. (Chapt. 4)

E. All redeemed people have a part in vicarious sacrifice. (Chapt. 5)

2. By His life and death Christ becomes a regenerating power (Part II) because

- A. His healing ministry expresses His sympathy with men whose bodies suffer because of sin. (Chapt. 1)
- B. His real object was to heal men's souls. (Ch.3)
- C. He is to be God's power in healing sinful souls. (Chapt. 3)
- D. He becomes this power in the revelation of the Father as a suffering God. (Chapt. 4)

3. By His life and death, Christ upholds the rectoral power of God (Part III) because

- A. God's law existed before His government (Ch. 1)
- B. This law of His very being instituted government. (Chapt. 2)
- C. Justice and mercy are united in God's unchangeable righteous character. (Ch. 3)
- D. He sanctified the law precept by His life and death. (Chapt. 4)
- E. He does not abolish retributive causes and punishments, but delivers from them. (Ch. 5)
- F. He pays solemn deference to God's instituted justice and suffers our corporate evil. (Chapt. 6)
- G. He fills with the righteousness of God those who have faith (Chapt. 7)

4. The sacrificial symbols and terms of the Bible do not have either a penal meaning nor one of substitution

(Part IV) because

A. Sacrifice, blood, and such altar terms are lustral figures. (Chapt. 1)

B. Atonement and propitiation are really changes wrought in us, not in God. (Chapt. 2)

~~But~~ Expiation is not taught in the Bible.

C. Yet these altar terms may be effectively used in preaching Christ. (Chapt. 3)

The last chapter is one of practical exhortation rather than argument.

Put briefly, Bushnell teaches in this book as follows concerning the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. His atonement did not consist in winning any superlative merit for men, but in sympathizing with them and bearing their burdens as His love prompted Him. Love is always vicarious with God, with Christ, and with Christians. Christ did not save men by enduring their punishment, but by becoming a regenerating power in their lives. He showed His love by healing their bodies, but more by curing their souls. He does this by His revelation of the loving and suffering heart of God. In saving men thus He does not weaken the government of God, but upholds it. To understand this we must remember that God's character existed before His government of man. Because of His righteous character God instituted government for man. Justice and mercy are equally in God's character. Christ did not abolish this government of God with its punishments for sin. Instead He delivers men from sin. He denounces sin and

affirms that sinners will be punished eternally. He also suffers the results of being incarnated into our corporate evil. Yet He brings those who have faith in Him into union with God so that His righteousness may continually flow in- to their souls. To understand this more fully we should know that the altar terms of the Bible have neither penal nor substitutionary meaning, but a lustral one. Expiation is a classical, not a Scriptural term. The words atonement and propitiation are figures which show that we are reconciled to God rather than God to us. However these terms should be used for the sake of their objective value

"The Vicarious Sacrifice" called forth more severe criticism than any previous book of his. Outside of New England the condemnation was general. It was for a further explanation of his views that Bushnell wrote "Forgiveness and Law" in 1874. Some have held that it was because of the sharp criticism of "The Vicarious Sacrifice." It has also been charged that the later book modified the theory set forth in the earlier one. The author's daughter, Frances Bushnell, who edited this book and revised it after her father's death, tells us that the work was written on "the arrival of fresh light."¹ She also says that her father intended that this treatise should take the place of Parts III and IV of "The Vicarious Sacrifice." However Bushnell's friends persuaded him to allow "Forgiveness and Law" to stand as the second volume of the earlier work.

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Horace Bushnell, Forgiveness and law, p. 3.

The author made some objections to this as the later volume contains matter which appears in the earlier. Let us now turn our attention to Forgiveness and Law.

C. The Later Form of His Theory in
 Forgiveness and Law, (1874)

(1) Introduction, in which he gives his
 reasons for writing a revision of
 his former statement.

In the Introduction to Forgiveness and Law, Bushnell tells us how he came to write the book and sketches the thought which he proposes to develop. He says that some of the ideas found him, instead of being reasoned out. While working on a discourse on forgiveness of personal injuries, he came to the conclusion that the injured party should make such cost in his endeavor to remove the enmity as to change the heart of the enemy. In making this sacrifice the injured one propitiates himself. He tells us that in chapters I and II he endeavors to show the rational possibility of a propitiation of God. This propitiation is not a penal satisfaction of God, but "the consummated fruit of His (Christ's) incarnate obedience."¹ God at the cost of His son gains power to win His enemies to Him. He tells us that in this book he asserts "a real propitiation of God, finding it in evidence from the propitiation we instinctively make ourselves when we heartily forgive."² Bushnell says that he is more than ever convinced

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¹

H. Bushnell, Forgiveness and Law, p. 13. Ibid., p. 14.

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that the vicarious sacrifice of Christ will be understood only by the analogy of our human relationships. He also remarks that since his last book there seems to be an increasing tide of feeling rising against the teachings of expiation and legal atonement. Again, because of missionary movements, great care should be taken that no false or artificial teaching prejudices other races against the gospel. Bushnell mentions the statement of Nevius that the Chinese students at Shantung University in their debates with Christians ask how it can be consistent with the justice of God to punish the innocent and clear the guilty, as He does in visiting the penalty of death on Christ and letting the sinner go free. In view of this he says that we ought not to attempt "to maintain doctrines of ~~the~~ salvation which are themselves an offense to the sturdiest inborn principles of our moral nature itself."¹

(2) Bushnell's argument in
this book.

- (a) He gives a new
explanation of
the propitiation
of God. (Chapter 1)

Bushnell opens the first chapter by explaining that while in his former work he showed Christ as a reconciling

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Horace Bushnell, Forgiveness and Law, p. 30.

power on men, now he intends to set forth reasons for believing that God is reconciled to men. The message of the gospel is mainly of the reconciliation of men to God. In launching out on this new line of thought Bushnell gives the key to it in the conviction that there is a practical identity between our moral natures and that of God. His first proposition in this chapter is that forgiveness by God and by men coincide in the New Testament. For instance we are to pray "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."¹ But is there propitiation in the forgiveness^{of} man and man? To simply say, "I forgive," may mean little or nothing. The Christian cannot forgive his enemy easily. If he had only a nature of love, he might, but he has a moral nature as well, and this has been outraged by the evil-doer. Now the Christian may be honest in his forgiveness, but seeing his former enemy, his disgust is aroused. The trouble is that the forgiving party was not properly propitiated, and so was not fully prepared to forgive. Bushnell lays down the principle of God being propitiated in this manner of man truly forgiving man. "First such a sympathy with the wrong-doing party as virtually takes his nature; and secondly a making cost in that nature by suffering, or expense, or pain-taking sacrifice and labor."² If the Christian endeavors

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Matthew 6: 12.

²
Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 40.

to help his enemy and makes him a friend, he will find that he is "at-one" with himself and his enemy also. The Christian is so far reconciled that he can completely forgive, even though his enemy may not be in a mood to be rightly forgiven. "Suffering, in short, is with all moral natures, the necessary correlate of forgiveness."¹ Thus propitiation instead of being a great theological mystery, becomes one of the experiences of daily life.

In the second section of this chapter, Bushnell further considers the analogy of our own propitiations. He tells us that we instinctively make sacrifices to gain our enemy, and in so doing we gain ourselves. In this discussion Bushnell declares that there could be no forgiveness on the ground of satisfaction,- the most that God could then do would be to admit that nothing was due. Bushnell here proceeds to consider several questions and objections. The first of these is "Did Christ suffer on the cross to propitiate His own feeling and prepare the way to forgive man?" He replies that we do not help our enemy to change our feelings, but the result of that help may change our attitude. An objection is that God always loves His adversary and does not need to love him more to forgive him. Propitiation does not increase the love of God, but removes His righteous antagonistic feelings against the sinner. Another objection is that God's

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Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 48.

holiness puts Him in a realm where all human analogies fail. Rather forgiveness itself must be the supreme joy of holiness. Another objection is that God in forgiving must consider His moral government. But first, forgiveness is a personal matter,- natural punishment for sin continues. Secondly, we have a part in God's government. Another objection is that Christ obtains forgiveness for us by what He does before God. This is an artificial distinction, suggesting two deities. Again it is said that God does not need to propitiate Himself. But it is necessary that He act to remove the offenses received from sinners and also to change His wounded feelings.

In the next section of this chapter Bushnell considers the Scriptural side of the problem. He makes the same observations here which he did in his previous book. In the Old Testament sacrifices, pain is a matter of indifference. There is no retributive quality in the sacrifice. There is no thought of payment for sin. Sacrifice is never offered as a legal substitution. There is no demand for blood as blood. But the meaning was that they offered up ~~what~~ what they prized most, namely life. These sacrifices of the Old Testament were figures of the true sacrifice of Christ. Bushnell quotes as a central text in this study the following, "Whom God has set forth¹ to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood." He

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¹
Romans 3: 25.

makes three points regarding this passage. (1) There is a propitiation in Christ's life and death which prepares a way for the forgiveness of sins. (2) It is God who makes propitiation. (3) This propitiation is received only by faith in the sacrifice of life which God has made.

In the fourth section he considers the objection to all propitiations. It is often argued that the fact of propitiation implies a lack of stability or immutability in God. But we must consider the propitiation not as something happening in time, but as part of God's eternal character. God allows sorrow to enter His life and ordains that it should belong to every moral nature.

In the last part of the chapter he discusses expiation. As in his previous work, Bushnell claims that expiation is not a Scriptural term, but heathenish. He also holds that no righteous God is propitiated by pains. Bushnell thinks that expiation as practiced by pagans has destroyed the moral integrity of their lives. There is no trace of expiation in the passover, nor any other rite in the Old Testament. Throughout, the atonement is lustral rather than expiatory. To think that God can be bought off by pains, Hushnell says, is a low view of propitiation.

(b) He explains how law is satisfied
in the Atonement.

Bushnell thinks that forgiveness puts a man personally right with God, but not necessarily with the law. What must he do to satisfy the law? Bushnell thinks that

punishment does not satisfy law, but a person satisfies it when he has a new character and so obeys it.

He begins his study with Christ and His commandments. Bushnell aims to prove "that what is called the law is to be consummated, brought to pass, fulfilled in Christ's commandments."¹ The real satisfaction of law is in its finally coming to fulfillment.

Bushnell next makes a study of the two Greek words used for law in the New Testament. The one, *nomos*, is "a rigidly impersonal, abstract, statutory code of conduct based in the everlasting, inherent, moral imperative."² On the other hand the commandment, *entole*, "enjoins in the sense of a personal authority."³ Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."⁴ Paul uses as equivalent for the commandment the term "promise."⁵ Then Jesus uses the term commandment again and again to show the new relation between Himself and His disciples in his farewell discourse.⁶

The law is not intended to result in any complete form of personal character. It uses intimidations for the enforcement of principles. The law is valuable as a

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 99.

² Ibid., p. 102.

³ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴ Matt. 11: 28-30.

⁵ Gal. 3: 14-19.

⁶ John 15: 10-15.

first stage of discipline. It works by penal enforcements, which make their appeal to self-interest, and is also for the most part negative. The law brings no inspirations, nor does it bring a person into friendship with God.

Christ in His commandments goes further than the law, "But I say unto you, love your enemies."¹ Jesus also expected the righteousness of His disciples to go beyond that of the Pharisees, who merely kept the letter of the law. Legal obedience is gone for the Christian, and by following the command of Jesus, he is free. The commandment of Jesus speaks directly of faith and offers inspiration and promise.

The Law and the Commandment have the same object, namely to make men righteous in character. The law is a factor in nature, the commandment is supernatural because it is spirit and truth. The Law will always go on condemning men, but by faith in the Commandments of Christ, they will come into a higher life with Him.

In the next section of chapter two, Bushnell considers some special analogies. He uses the mother and child, the school, labor, army life, and the state, to show how men may rise from their bondage under law into a new liberty in Christ. Just as in the case of the mother and child authority and love go hand in hand, so

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Matt. 5: 20.

the Law and the Commandment work in the life of a person to bring him into the obedience of liberty and love. "Every virtue begins at law--as a plant underground, till¹ it finally breaks up through, flowering into liberty." We should note that in these analogies the penal enforcements are corrective, never punitive. Thus it is with the law of God, it is preparatory to grace, "a tutor to² bring us unto Christ."

In the third section of this chapter, Bushnell endeavors to show that the gospel is a twofold way of discipline. His general proposition is somewhat complicated and is thus stated. "That our present state of life or probation, is a state of penally coercive discipline, in which the law, broken by sin, is sufficiently consecrated by Christ, incarnated into and co-operating with it, in His life and cross."³ Under this he makes three points. The first is an explanation of "penally coercive discipline." By this he means schooling, all that is promotive and corrective of character, or training toward God. Bushnell emphasizes the thought that the discipline and penalties of God are for our benefit and not for punishment. Law and grace work together in the soul of man for his salvation. As long as a person disobeys God, the

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 129.

² Gal. 3: 24.

³ Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 134.

law is piling up greater condemnation until finally he may see that the grace of God is his only means of escape.

Bushnell's second point in this section is that the sanctions of God's law are modified in this life for the sake of our probatory discipline. In the next life every man will receive strict justice, punishment according to his deeds. Always that sense of a future judgment is influencing the soul. Bushnell here criticizes the New England Theology which had taught that the Atonement was only for the elect, and again says that little ~~is~~ is gained by the claim that the death of Christ expresses the abhorrence of God for sin.

Bushnell's third point is that the coercive discipline we are under is consecrated by the incarnation of Christ. Christ is born into this coercive discipline and suffers in it for no sin of His. Humanity suffers generally and not according to its ~~desert~~ desert. The best and purest people seem to suffer most. So Christ suffered according to His purity and because of His great mind. Then also Christ suffers in a failing cause, because so many hated goodness. Bushnell mentions as times of suffering in the life of Christ, the temptation, His weeping over Jerusalem, His agony in the Garden, and His crucifixion.

In the fourth part of this chapter, Bushnell discusses texts of Scripture which bear upon his argument. He mentions one of the most difficult passages to reconcile with his thought, "Christ hath redeemed us from the

curse of the law, being made a curse for us."¹ Bushnell claims that this means that the curse of the law is not the justice of God, but the penal discipline under which we live. Again we read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes ye were healed."² Bushnell notes first that Christ has entered by His incarnation into the curse and helps lift the woes of transgression by His sympathy. Secondly, that no thought of compensation is being made here to God's justice. ~~He~~ He calls attention to this passage, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."³ Bushnell interprets this to mean Christ's union with us in sympathy for our sin. Again as in his previous book where he speaks of Christ bearing our sicknesses, Bushnell warns us against the thought of Christ literally doing this. Sympathy is meant. Then ~~as~~ as in the case of the scapegoat, deliverance from sin is the thought; so Christ delivers the believer from sin. The chapter may well be summed up in this sentence of Bushnell's. "The law and law-sanctions will be working faithfully on with all the gracious powers and tender motivations in Christ--in the

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¹
Gal. 3: 13.

²
I Peter 2: 24.

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II Cor. 5: 21.

one comprehensive purpose; even as the lightnings and the dews take part together in the growth of the world."¹

(c) He relates the Biblical doctrine of Justification by faith to his theory. (Chapter 3)

He first considers the latter part of the famous verse in Romans on Justification; "To declare I say, at this time, His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."² Bushnell interprets this as meaning "setting God in upon us in such a transforming power that we become new characterized from His righteousness."³ Bushnell thinks that we have been misled by the translation of *δικαιοσύνη* and its cognates, which always means moral righteousness, rather than legal justice. He also thinks that the interpretation of legal justification really does away with the necessity of faith and is also a legal falsity.

In the first main section of this chapter, Bushnell attempts to prove this proposition, "that the true Christian justification is that which makes righteous."⁴ Christ^{He} is the spring of character in all believing people. Bushnell speaks strongly against "legal fiction." He uses the term justice, as many do, as a legal term, hav-

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¹ Horace Bushnell, *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 176.

² Romans 3: 26.

³ and ⁴ Horace Bushnell, *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 178.

ing to do with external relationships largely. Bushnell gives his definition of faith as being not the assent to a creed or the belief in the facts of Christianity, but in the same words as in his previous book, "The trusting of one's self over, sinner to Saviour, to be in Him and of Him and new-charactered by Him; because it is only in that way that the power of Christ gets opportunity to work." This faith connects men again with the life of God and thus they become filled with His righteousness.

In the second section of chapter three, Bushnell considers the question of "imputation." He claims that his teaching does not confound justification with sanctification. He holds that a person is justified at once, but can be sanctified only in time. "One who is completely justified is only incipiently sanctified."² Bushnell denies the old form of imputed or surplus righteousness, claiming rather that a person comes by faith into new relation to God so that he is united to God. Then God's righteousness becomes his.

(d) He claims that the threefold doctrine of Christ concerning Himself throws light on the Atonement. (Ch. 4)

Bushnell so defines the Holy Spirit as to make Him identical with Christ. "He will go forth now, no more as in body, but as all-diffusive, everywhere present Spirit, reproving the world of

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H. Bushnell, *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 205.

²

Ibid., p. 211.

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."¹ Bushnell gives three articles which Christ states as His future work for mankind, "Of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged."²

Of the first article he says that the primary thing that Christ endeavors to do is to arouse in men's hearts a conviction of their sin. Bushnell thinks that there is no real sense of sin outside the Christian religion. It is not enough that men become aware of their sins, but they need a conviction of sin. When men realize that it was their brethren who murdered the Christ, they will have aroused in their hearts a conviction of their own sinfulness. Then they will be conscious of their guilt in not believing in the Christ.

The second article of Christ is "of righteousness," which His followers will appreciate far better when He is gone. Bushnell thinks that the righteous character of Christ has had a far greater influence upon mankind because of His departure from them. However Bushnell warns us that we should remember that there is no "Legal justification" in the righteousness promised here. The purpose of His death was to give us the power of righteousness.

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¹ Horace Bushnell, "Forgiveness and Law," p. 219.

² John 16: 9-11.

Article three is "of judgment," and Bushnell explains it in this way. God could not make men realize the baseness of sin by divine force, but only by goodness. By the majesty of the moral suffering of Christ men see the evil and unworthiness of sin, and are turned from it to seek Christ. We may sum up these three "articles" as follows. Bushnell holds that by the death of Christ a new sense of sin is awakened in His rejectors. Feeling their need of salvation they will turn to Christ in faith and be flooded with His righteousness, which will give them a new character. The life and death of Christ with its influence will gradually overcome the power of evil in the world and bring it to naught.

In summing up the thought in Forgiveness and Law, our main question is this, "Does it add to the doctrine of the Atonement set forth in the Vicarious Sacrifice, or is the teaching the same? We find a similar idea of Law in both. Bushnell teaches that the law convicts of sin and makes a person aware of his need of Christ as a Saviour. Although the title, "Law and Commandment," is used, the argument is practically the same as in the previous work. The law is satisfied by the sinner's becoming righteous and living in harmony with the law. His discussion of "Justification by Faith" is also similar to that in the Vicarious Sacrifice. In this age-long controversy he takes the view that the meaning of Justification is to make righteous rather than to declare righteous. This section has no vital relation to his main

position. In the last chapter Bushnell uses the words of Christ Himself, from John, the sixteenth chapter, to strengthen his argument. These verses show that Christ will be a powerful moral influence on the lives of men, "reproving" them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. However, these verses refer to the influence of Christ after His resurrection rather than to the significance of His death on the cross.

The main addition to Bushnell's argument is found in the first chapter. It is that God is propitiated, although the most marked change is that which takes place in the soul of man. As we have seen, he argues from human analogies. We need to perform some deed of kindness for our enemy to remove our natural aversion to him. Like us, God has wounded feelings and an antipathy to the sinner. To remove these He suffers for the sinner. Then He is in a position to freely forgive the person who turns to Him in faith. His theory remains in general the same, namely, that God in His love, suffers for sinful man and expresses that feeling in the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. The additional thought is that by that sacrifice He propitiates Himself as well as mankind.

**3. BUSHNELL'S VIEWS ON THE
ATONEMENT COMPARED WITH
THOSE OF THE NEW ENGLAND
THEOLOGY.**

**S. BUSHNELL'S VIEWS ON THE ATONEMENT
COMPARED WITH THOSE OF THE NEW
ENGLAND THEOLOGY.**

**A. The Views on the Atonement
Held by the New England School.**

- (1) There was no complete
theory of the Atonement
in the New England System.

We have already noted that Bushnell's independence of thought, and confidence in his powers to solve difficult problems were reasons for his writing on the Atonement, the New England views of which were being attacked by the Unitarians and other Liberals. Also we have seen that he believed that the method of hard and fast logic and exact definition of the old school were a failure. At the same time he believed that he had found a better way of arriving at truth, that of "expression," rather than of definition. His new theory of expression would make full allowance for the use of suggestion and imagination. Another reason for his attempting a satisfactory solution of the problem of the Atonement was that the New England theologians had not attempted a complete theory of this great truth. Bushnell writes, of the Atonement

as "a doctrine never yet fully matured."¹

We must remember that the New England thinkers had been busy with other problems. The founder of the school Jonathan Edwards, had made his chief aim the refuting of Arminianism and the re-establishment of Calvinism. To be sure, in doing this he touched upon the Atonement, but never attempted any complete explanation.

The doctrine of the Sovereignty of God was the cardinal principle of Jonathan Edwards. He also laid great emphasis on the total depravity of man. His essay on the freedom of the will did much to bring New England back to Calvinism. The "decrees" of God and the problem of responsibility, rather than the Atonement, also entered into his discussion.

Bellamy and Hopkins followed their leader in their attack on Arminianism and in the exaltation of God as Sovereign. They were in agreement with him, also, in the further consideration of virtue and depravity. Emmons had advocated a more moderate Calvinism. Yet he also had been chiefly engrossed with the same questions, the relation of sin to the nature of man, and of the sovereignty of God to the freedom of man. Regeneration was another doctrine on which he placed emphasis.

Finney assumed the freedom of the will. His main interest was in conversion and sanctification. He fol-

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Bushnell, H., The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 14.

lowe^d in many ways the thought of W. W. Taylor of New Haven. Dr. Taylor had led in the controversy regarding sin, total depravity, God's relation to sin, and regeneration.

Professor Park, the last of the New England School, wrote a book on the Atonement in 1860. Yet when we examine his work we find it a collection of discourses on the Atonement by New England theologians. He prefaces these sermons with an essay in which he gives the "Edward⁻ean" view, secured by searching the writings of Jonathan Edwards and selecting his statements concerning the Atonement. He does the same with Bellamy and Hopkins. The fourth authority whose views he takes is Stephen West, a close friend of Jonathan Edwards. To further set forth the New England teaching in regard to the Atonement, he presents sermons by Jonathan Edwards, Jr., John Smalley, and Nathanael Emmons; essays by Edward D. Griffin,^A Caleb Burge, and a dialogue written by William R. Weeks. While Prof. Park presents the Edwardean or New England doctrine of the Atonement, we find it to be a symposium of the ideas of New England theologians as expressed in passages of various sermons or essays. By so doing, he admits that there is no author of the New England School who has given a complete theory of this great truth.

(2) The Views on the Atonement
as given by the Earlier Leaders
of the New England School.

To learn the thought of the earlier leaders, we should begin with the founder of the School, Jonathan Edwards. We must remember that Edwards's¹ explanation of the Atonement has underlying it the conviction of the Sovereignty of God. Edwards presented the view of God as a great and autocratic Ruler, rather than as a Father. God is under no obligation to do anything for man. "That He wills to save man at all is an act of gratuitous condescension."¹ We must also notice the view of sin which Edwards holds. Sin is a very serious matter and man is totally depraved. Even the child is full of enmity against God. Sin is so serious a matter that it has an "infinite demerit and should be punished with an infinite punishment."² Edwards laid emphasis on the holiness of God and on the greatness, excellence, and majesty of His character which also required that the punishment of sin be infinite.

He taught that merit can be imputed to man in the same way that the influence of the patron can be transferred to the client. An illustration of this is the gaining favor for a son by a father of eminent character and reputation.³ In further explaining this, Edwards

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¹and 2

Thesis, p. 27.

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Edwards, Jonathan, Works, Vol. 7, p. 520.

makes the statement that God both treats believers as if they were righteous, and also regards them as righteous. Believers in Christ are righteous because they share in His justification. Edwards writes, "If a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth."¹ The later New England writers, however, gave up this theory of "imputation."

Edwards held that "Christ's satisfaction for sin was mainly by His death, but also by all the sufferings of His life."² He explains that we are delivered from Hell on the ground of our Lord's sufferings as a penalty, not because they are meritorious. The pains of Christ had no moral quality to them. They have "equality or equivalence to the punishment that the sinner deserved,----- Christ's sufferings do not satisfy by any excellence in them, but by a fulfillment." This is because of "His being accepted in suffering as the representative of the sinner."³ Edwards teaches that Christ bore the wrath of God in the fact that He endured the effects of that wrath. The Father dealt with the Son as if He had been very angry with Him. Yet this wrath was against our sins rather than against Christ. Edwards explains that in saying that Christ bare our sins he is using the expression in

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¹ Edwardsm Jonathan, Works, Vol. 3, p. 441.

² Thesis, p. 29.

³ Edwards, J., Miscellaneous Observations, pp. 551, 552.

its general meaning.¹ When he enters upon the exact meaning, it is that Christ endured the divine wrath against sin in the fact that He had such a clear and affecting view of "the ~~g~~readfulness of the punishment of sin."² This seems to be a sympathetic bearing of penalty. In regard to the "transference" of penalty to a substitute, Edwards accepts that only in the "general" sense. The offended party (God) is not satisfied by the sufferings of the mediator without the faith of the offending party.

Edwards condemns the distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ. He writes, "Indeed all obedience, considered under the notion of righteousness, is something active, something done in voluntary compliance with a command."³ The most essential part of our Lord's obedience consisted in His "voluntarily yielding Himself up to the terrible sufferings of the cross."⁴ These sufferings of Christ could be viewed in two ways. "As an act of obedience they were part of the price by which He purchased Heaven for His followers. Considered as satisfaction to God's offended justice they were part of Christ's bearing punishment in our stead."⁵ The pur-

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¹ Edwards, J., Miscellaneous Observations, p. 531.

² Ibid., p. 544.

³ Edwards, J., Works, Vol. 5, p. 403.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 8, p. 173.

⁵ Thesis, p. 29.

chase of our redemption was made by "Christ's obedience and righteousness."¹ According to Edwards we are admitted to Heaven on the ground of the merits of Christ. "It is only the obedience of Christ that is properly His righteousness."² This righteousness has merit because it has moral quality, and is a means of securing favor. While Edwards did not hold with the earlier Calvinists, that we are admitted to Heaven by Christ's having obeyed exactly the same precepts which we had broken, yet it was by His obeying the Father in laying down His life, that we receive positive blessings.

In the use of theological terms and in defining them, we should remember that Edwards makes a distinction between their precise and their general meaning. Because he sometimes uses these terms not in their stricter, but in their looser sense, he seems to contradict himself. However, his successors aimed "to employ their terms in the precise rather than in the general import of them."³

Prof. Park claims that Edwards lays a new emphasis on love in the Atonement. Yet he represents God as a being of holiness, justice, and wrath toward sinners. He is the great and glorious Sovereign of the Universe, who, however, does have a "benevolent" feeling toward his sub-

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¹
Thesis, p. 29.

²
Edwards, J.. Miscellaneous Observations, p. 551.

³
Park, E. A., The Atonement, p. xxiv.

jects. Where then is this emphasis on love of which Prof. Park speaks? It is the love which Christ Himself shows. "Christ's great love and pity to the elect was one source of His suffering. A strong exercise of love excites a lively idea of the object beloved,- Christ's love then brought his elect infinitely near to Him---It was the lively exercise of love and pity to those that the Father had given Him, that was one thing that occasioned so lively a view of the punishment they had exposed themselves to."¹ In this passage we may notice that Christ's love is particularly for the elect. Edwards taught that the Atonement of Christ was for the elect only. The later theologians of the New England School believed in a general atonement.

Bellamy laid as great an emphasis on the Sovereignty of God as did his predecessor. Such an exalted idea of God's Sovereignty is held by him that he even sees vindictive justice as an "amiable perfection in the Deity." With this teaching Bellamy lays emphasis on God as the Governor of the world. Man has infinite obligation to God as Governor, consequently the sin of man is infinitely wrong, and should be punished with the everlasting pains of Hell. Christ is the propitiation for sin by which God can forgive sins and yet be just. Thus the honor of His law is upheld. Bellamy thus expresses it, "What Christ

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Edwards, J., Miscellaneous Observations, p. 5.

has done, is, in fact, sufficient to open a door for God, through Him, to become reconcilable to the whole world. The sufferings of Christ, all things considered, have as much displayed God's hatred to sin, and as much secured the honor of His law, as if the whole world had been damned. God may now, therefore, through Jesus Christ, stand ready to pardon the whole world. There is nothing in the way. And the obedience of Christ has brought as much honor to God, and to His law, as the perfect obedience of Adam and of all his race would have done. The rights of the Godhead are as much asserted and maintained. So that there is nothing in the way, but that mankind may through Christ be received into full favor, and entitled to eternal life. God may stand ready to do it consistently with His honor."¹ We may note several distinct assertions in the above statement. One is that the Atonement displays God's hatred for sin. Another is that it secures the honor of God's law. This has been accomplished by the obedience of Christ. God's honor as a Lawgiver or Governor is emphasized here as elsewhere in Bellamy's writings. Bellamy also conceives of Christ's atonement as paying the debt of mankind. He taught that the Atonement is general instead of limiting it to the elect, as Edwards had done.

Samuel Hopkins laid an even greater emphasis on the

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Bellamy, J., Vol. 1, p. 292.

Sovereignty of God than his predecessors. He writes¹,
 "The sovereignty of God consists in His being above all
 obligation to His creatures."¹ Hopkins taught that Christ
 did not suffer the exact penalty of the guilty, but that
 the sufferings were equivalent to the penalty of the law.
 He held that the Atonement strictly speaking was accom-
 plished by the sufferings and death of Christ. He con-
 sidered that the obedience of Christ was no part of it.
 The Atonement of Christ leaves sinners still ill-deserving
 because they have an evil character. Hopkins is explicit
 in this teaching. He writes, "The sufferings of Christ
 do not make the least alteration or any abatement of his
 ill desert, as the sinner's own character is not hereby²
 made better."

The entire work in our behalf, the righteousness of
 Christ, includes His perfect obedience to the precepts.
 According to Hopkins, the Atonement delivered from the
 curse of the law, and procured remission of sins, but ac-
 complished no positive good. The positive benefits, eter-
 nal life and the capacity to enjoy happiness, Christ wins³
 "by His perfect and meritorious obedience." He also
 represents this obedience as honoring the law of God, and
 thus deserving a reward, which He receives in the salva-
 tion of the elect. The complete work of Christ, then,

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¹
 Hopkins, S., Works, Vol. 3, p. 565.

²
 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 342.

³
 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 345.

according to Hopkins, may be viewed as consisting of two parts, the first, or negative, accomplished by His sufferings; the second, or positive, by His meritorious obedience. He taught that Christ made a general atonement, but that it was efficacious only for those who accepted it.

At this point we may take notice of the views of Stephen West. He was a well known minister of the New England School, the successor of Jonathan Edwards at Stockbridge. He published an essay on "The Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement," in 1785.

Dr. West in his explanation of the Sovereignty of God teaches that the aim of the Creator is to manifest His attributes. He writes, "A display or manifestation of His own true and infinitely holy character was the chief¹ and ultimate end which God had in view in creation."

Continuing this line of argument, West maintains that the sufferings of the sinner "exhibit the righteous character² of God and prove Him to be a hater of iniquity." The design of the Atonement is to manifest the attributes of God in that it makes plain His hatred of sin. Likewise the Atonement honors His law by the infliction of the legal penalties. West defines the Atonement as "that which magnifies the broken law of God, and does it the same honor which would have been done by the execution of its pen-

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¹ West, S., Essay, p. 7.

² Ibid., p. 12.

alty whenever incurred."¹ Dr. West held that the principle end of the atonement was to manifest God's righteousness in delivering sinners from their righteous punishment. He does not deny the benefits of the active obedience of Christ, but claims that was not the chief purpose of the Atonement. West held that Christ did not literally suffer the penalty of the law, but that it is true that He suffered the curse of the law only in a "general" sense. According to this view, the "distributive" justice of God is not under any obligation to save the sinner. By "distributive justice" the New England divines mean the proper punishment or rewards due personal conduct. As Christ was not literally punished for our sins, West holds that our sins were not literally imputed to Him nor was His righteousness literally imputed to us. Hence, as our sins have not been literally punished in Christ we still deserve the penalty. Therefore God has honored the law sufficiently in the sufferings of Christ, and can now by His sovereign grace save sinners, who still deserve punishment. West held that the obedience of Christ was honored in our salvation, and because of that obedience we have "the happy and blessed fruits of Christ's glorious righteousness conferred" upon us."² While Dr. West first published his essay in 1785, he re-published it, with practically no change of position, in 1815. This second edi-

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¹ West, S., Essay, p. 158.

² Ibid., p. 177.

tion came out only eight years before Bushnell entered college, and connects the older views of the Atonement with those of Bushnell's time.

In the same year that Dr. West published his essay, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., President of Union College, delivered three sermons on the Atonement. Dr. Edwards argued that God must inflict the penalty for sin in order to maintain the authority of His law. Further he reminds us that the sinner can neither atone for his sins by repentance and reformation, nor can he endure to suffer the full penalty of sin. Yet atonement must be made by the sinner or someone else, otherwise God would be regardless of His own glory. The Atonement of Christ supports the authority of God's law and government. By it He is able to exercise His grace in freely forgiving those sinners that turn to Him. According to the "general or public" justice of God, "it is undoubtedly most conducive to the divine glory and general good of the created system that every believer should be pardoned; and therefore in the present sense of the word, it (pardon) is an act of justice."¹ According to this "general" justice, Edwards holds that "the glory of God and the greatest good of the moral system did require that Christ should become a substitute for sinners, and that His offered substitution

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Edwards, Jonathan, Jr., Sermon in The atonement, by

Park, p. 23.

should be accepted by God."¹

John Smalley, D.D., published two sermons on the Atonement, one year after those by Jonathan Edwards, Jr.

Smalley holds the twofold doctrine of the work of Christ, as do the other New England theologians. He teaches that the sufferings of Christ bring to the believer remission of sins and at the same time maintain the honor of the divine law and government. The second part of Christ's work is His active obedience which wins eternal life for His followers. He writes, "By this fulfilling all righteousness, a foundation was laid for God, to the eternal honor of His remunerating justice, to give grace and glory to all who believe in Christ."²

Smalley even goes so far as to say that God would gladly have saved the world without any atonement, if He could have done so consistently with just law and good government. Justice did not require that Christ should suffer, but His sufferings were consistent with justice. Smalley taught that the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to believers so that it becomes their own. He qualifies this by explaining that the righteousness of Christ is "so far reckoned to them as to render it consistent and honorable for God to be reconciled to them."³ Smalley lays emphasis upon

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¹ Park, The Atonement, p. 23.

² Ibid., p. 50.

³ Ibid., p. 55.

God as the Supreme Ruler. His law and government must be upheld by the punishment for sin. The penalty due the sinner is not actually suffered by Christ, but His vicarious sufferings honor the law of God. As Christ does not pay the actual debt of the sinner, there is need of the Grace ^{of} God in pardoning him. This teaching may be shown in these words, "God---as Supreme Ruler of the world---requiring Atonement in order to achieve the salvation of guilty men, for the support of public justice, and that He might be a terror to evil doers. We consider, moreover, that the demerit of sin is not at all taken away nor the need of pardoning mercy lessened by vicarious sufferings."¹

(3) Views of the Atonement expressed
by New England Theologians in
Bushnell's Time.

Prof. Park maintains that the New England theologians were in general agreement in all the doctrines which they set forth. Hence in giving their teaching on the Atonement, he begins with Jonathan Edwards, and then, taking his successors, selects sermons or passages to show that they agree substantially in their views. Mention has been made of Dr. West 's republishing his essay in 1815, shortly before Bushnell entered college. Let us now consider the opinions of leading New England theologians who first pub-

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Park, E. A., The Atonement, p. 60.

lished their thought on the Atonement after Bushnell had entered college.

Dr. Nathanael Emmons published sermons on the Atonement from the years 1800 to 1826. He was one of the most distinguished theologians of the New England School. We have already noticed his relation to the general development of that system of thought. Emmons declares that the Atonement was necessary, not on man's account, but on God's. This necessity originated entirely in the immutable justice of God. Emmons taught that sin is not a debt and cannot be paid by suffering. Yet the sufferings of Christ were necessary on God's account, to display His justice. As these sufferings did not pay the debt of the sinner, God is not "under obligation in point of justice to pardon sinners on account of His atonement."¹ God's forgiveness then is entirely by His grace, after He has "demonstrated to the world that He would by no means clear the guilty without an atonement for sin."² Emmons speaks definitely against any doctrine of imputed guilt or imputed righteousness. He differs from some of the New England School in holding that the obedience of Christ did not win eternal life for the believer, but only qualified our Lord to make atonement for sin.

Mention has been made that Emmons also differed

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¹
Thesis, p. 34.

²
Park, E. A., The Atonement, p. 131.

somewhat from his predecessors in his teaching concerning the depravity of human nature. He held that God had a right to require men to turn from their sins. Also in their regeneration, men are active, willing agents. Such views show him to be a more moderate Calvinist than Edwards.

Dr. E. D. Griffin wrote a long essay^a in 1819 "to reconcile the differences of Christians respecting the extent of the Atonement." He argues that the Atonement is merely the ground of release from the curse. Its purpose in the government of God is to prove that God would support the authority of His law by executing its penalty on transgressors. When sufferings were inflicted on the Son, the Protector of the law was satisfied. By Christ's humiliation believers are released from the penalty of sin. By His obedience, He obtained a reward in which His people were to share. Dr. Griffin draws a distinction between the obedience of Christ in being willing to suffer and in voluntarily offering Himself, and that obedience which obtains blessings for His people. Griffin holds that Christ must have received a reward because the Father required the service done for Himself. This reward was not for His sufferings, but for His obedience, and consisted in blessings for men. Griffin enumerates the parts of Christ's rewards thus, (1) "public recognition of Him and explanation of the design of His death which laid a foundation for faith, (2) the gift of faith to the elect, (3) the grant of all positive good for the use of men as pro-

bationers, (4) the administration of His Father's government."¹ It is interesting to note that Griffin denies legal imputation, but pleads for a practical one. He claimed^{ed} that the law "never demanded the death of the innocent for the guilty, but the death of the identical person who had sinned. The law was not satisfied by the death of Christ because the sinners had not themselves died, but the Protector of the law was satisfied and ready to exercise His pardoning grace.

In 1822, Dr. Caleb Burge published an essay on the "Scripture Doctrine of Atonement." In this he affirms the necessity of the Atonement because "sin is an offense against God in a public capacity, as the Supreme Governor of the Universe."² Burge argues that if God had forgiven sinners without an atonement, He would have been unjust to His holy law, to His Kingdom, and to Himself. When mankind saw that Christ was obliged to undergo such terrible sufferings that he might be pardoned, he would clearly see that God was determined to support His law and what a punishment would fall on the guilty. Out of respect to these sufferings of His Son, God can be just to Himself in pardoning sinners. Griffin is definite in his assertion that God does not pardon sinners because of the obedience of Christ, but because of His death. Christ has paid no man's debt, hence the salvation of man is the result of the grace of God. He also claims that God does not im-

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Park, E. A. The Atonement, p. 234. Ibid., p. 443.

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pute righteousness to the believer, because He must ever see him as he actually is. However, he claims that the death of Christ obtains for the Christian both pardon and eternal life. Griffin differs from some of his fellow theologians who held that all positive blessings were obtained by the active obedience of Christ.

In 1833, Dr. W. R. Weeks wrote a dialogue on the Atonement, which is used by Prof. Park to set forth the New England views on that doctrine. Dr. Weeks is certain that neither sin nor righteousness can be imputed or transferred from one person to another. He teaches that the death of Christ does not satisfy "distributive" justice, but "general or public" justice. The Supreme Ruler has threatened death as the penalty for sin. Yet He desires to save sinners. If He saves them without an Atonement, He not only dishonors Himself, but violates public justice. The great end of punishment is to maintain God's hatred of sin. By Christ's death the evil of sin is made more impressive than by the punishment of the whole world. By His death, Christ has magnified the law of God and made it "honorable," and "public" justice is satisfied. Now God can be just to His own character as the righteous Governor of the Universe, and yet forgive sinners.

Dr. Weeks at great length discusses the relation of the Atonement to the elect. He holds that Christ died for all men, but only those who accept His atonement are saved. He answers the question as to whether, then, Christ intended to save all men by these words, "He saved

all He intended to save."¹

Prof. Park as he discusses the theologians of the New England School admits that they were not in entire agreement. He even says that they are not always consistent with themselves. However he asserts that as independent thinkers they have approximated to a system which is harmonious with itself and also with the teachings of the Bible.

Dr. Park thus summarizes the points on which the New England theologians agree in regard to the Atonement.

(1) Christ suffered punishment in the general sense of that word, but His pains were not literally the penalty of the law. (2) Our Lord satisfied "general" justice, but not "distributive" justice. (3) The humiliation and death of our Lord were equivalent to the penalty of the law, and satisfied God who must maintain the honor of His law, (4) The active obedience "honored" the law, but was not a work of supererogation which was transferred or imputed to believers. (5) The "distributive" justice of God demanded the punishment of everyone who has sinned. (6) "The Atonement rendered it consistent and desirable for God to save all who exercise evangelical faith, yet it did not render it obligatory on Him."² (7) The Atonement was designed to remove all obstacles which the honor of the law and "distributive" justice placed in the way of the salvation of

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Park, E. A., The Atonement, p. 576.

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Ibid., p. x.

men, (8) The reason why some men are saved and others are not is found only in "the socereign, electing will of God"¹
 (9) The Atonement is necessary in order that God may pardon sin and bestow favors on believers.

B. The Points of Agreement between
 Bushnell's Theory and the Views
 of the New England School.

The points of agreement between Bushnell's theory of the Atonement and that of the New England School are not many and are of a general nature. As Bushnell has very little to say abot^u the sovereignty of God we may conclude that in all probablity^t he was a moderate Calvinist. He lays emphasis on the government of God and shows how the Atonement "honors" that government, but does so in a different way from the New England rheologians.

Bushnell agrees with the New England writers that sin is no light matter, but is silent as to any theory of total depravity. However he insists on the necessity of the Atonement, maintaining that there is no other remedy for sin. He is definite in his statement that "there is no remedy for sin in natural development nor in self-reform-²ation. Sin can only be overcome by supernatural power." He takes the position of a majority of the New England writers that sin can not be imputed to another. He states

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¹
 Park, E. A., The Atonement, p. xi.

²
 Thesis, p. 33.

that it is ridiculous to think that penalties should not be inflicted on a wrong-doer because they have been inflicted on a right doer.¹ He is opposed to any theory that Christ suffered the penalties of sin in any theologically fictitious sense. Bushnell is in agreement with Edwards and his followers that the punishment for sin will be eternal, quoting the words of Christ to support that teaching. However he claims that the punishment is finite, but endless.

When we consider other phases of the Atonement, we find that Bushnell agrees with Edwards that Christ is our representative and takes away our sin, but he differs from the latter as to the manner of taking away the sins.

Bushnell takes the view of the majority of the New England writers in regard to distributive justice, that no one can suffer the actual punishment of a wrong-doer, because he is not guilty of the sin. These all agree that Christ could not become guilty for man and bear his punishment. Bushnell thus argues that Christ could not be a literal substitute. He declares that the obedience of Christ honors the law of God, but his explanation is different from that of the New England School. Bushnell makes faith very prominent but describes the result of faith differently.

We have discovered that the points of agreement be-

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Thesis, p. 62.

tween Bushnell's theory of the Atonement and that of the New England School are not many. In some instances we shall find that the similarity in view is only superficial. A careful investigation will show that Bushnell, both in his use of terms and in his explanations, differs widely from the New England theologians.

C. The Points of Difference between the Two Systems.

One of the most important points of difference in the two doctrines of the Atonement is the idea of God set forth. Jonathan Edwards laid great emphasis on His Sovereignty. Perhaps without realizing it he has presented a picture of God as the great and autocratic Ruler or Governor of the Universe. God is under no obligation to man; He saves whom He will as "an act of gratuitous condescension." Sin against Him is an infinite demerit and must receive endless punishment. By magnifying the majesty and holiness of God, Edwards removed Him still further from man.

Doubtless without intending to do so, Edwards also separated Christ from God. He teaches that Christ bore the wrath of God. The Father dealt with the Son as if He were very angry with Him. One person is punishing another in this explanation.

Bellamy laid even greater emphasis on the majesty and honor of God as Governor. Hopkins taught that a Christian^a should willingly be damned for the glory of God. West believed that the display of His infinitely holy character

was the ultimate end which God had in view in the creation. The other New England writers, to a greater or less degree, stressed the Sovereignty of God, and thus give a similar impression of His aloofness.

On the other hand, Bushnell represents God, not so much as the Sovereign Ruler, but rather as the loving Father. God is not angry toward men, but loving. It is man who needs to be reconciled to God, not God to man. Bushnell states very plainly that he does not believe that the Atonement was to satisfy the wrath of God.

He goes still further in describing the love of God; he is convinced that it is a sacrificing, suffering love. He pictures God as sympathizing with men in all their sorrows, as suffering because of their sins. He tells us that God is not abstract justice as many theologians had described Him, but suffering love. Very graphically Bushnell states that "Christ crucified reveals the eternal cross in the heart of God."¹ This thought that God loves mankind so much, feels for them, suffers because of their sins, and sacrifices for their good, runs through Bushnell's works. In answer to the criticism that this must mean that God is unhappy, he replies that just as people find joy in sacrificing for those whom they love, so does God. In fact Bushnell goes so far as to argue that God suffers even according to His goodness.

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Thesis, p. 68.

Bushnell introduces a new idea in regard to the propitiation of God. He claims that there is a practical identity between our moral natures and that of God. Just as the Christian endeavors at cost to himself to win back his enemy, so God by His sacrifice, changes His feeling toward the sinner. This sacrifice or propitiation so far reconciles a person that he can forgive his enemy. This suggestion as to God propitiating Himself by His sacrifice for men is entirely different from any New England view.

Bushnell protests against the representation of God as a being of stern and abstract justice who stands apart from Christ. He holds that the relation between Father and Son is exceedingly close. He definitely says that Christ is not a mediator between God and man in the sense of being a third person. He is the revelation of the love which has always been in the heart of God. He is a manifestation of the Life of God. He is the Eternal Life.

In Bushnell's works on the Atonement, we find no teaching of "total depravity," which is so marked in the writings of the New England School. Yet he speaks of sin as a very serious matter, one which demands atonement. The punishment for sin, he says, is finite but endless. When men see the moral suffering of Christ on the cross they will be convicted of sin. Yet in the comparison of the writings of Bushnell with those of the New England system we find that he does not give as much space to sin, neither does he stress its guilt as they do.

As we consider other phases of the Atonement, we find

that Bushnell differs from his predecessors in regard to "justification by faith." He accepts neither the Protestant interpretation, "to declare righteous," nor the Catholic view, "to make righteous," in his first work on the Atonement. He endeavors to take a middle ground by coining a phrase, "to righteous." However, in "Forgiveness and Law," he claims that the true justification is "to make righteous." He holds that the righteousness of the New Testament is moral rather than legal. He is strongly opposed to "legal fiction." In his teaching in regard to "imputation," he differs radically from Edwards, but not so much from his successors as they had pretty much given up that doctrine. The explanation which Bushnell gives of imputation is that by faith the believer is united to God and receives from Him moral righteousness. He strongly emphasizes faith, defining it not so much as belief, as the means of union with Christ. This connection of faith with union with Christ and moral righteousness, is not found in the New England system. Bushnell, in agreement with his predecessors, teaches that the believer is justified at once, but only sanctified in time.

We have seen that the New England theology made much of God as Governor. They held that His "honor" must be upheld. Smalley went so far as to say that God would gladly have saved the world without any atonement, if He could have done so consistently with just law and good government. Bushnell warns us that we must be careful in using such a political analogy as government. He

claims that God's forgiveness of sins does no damage to His just government, because He forgives only when there has been a change in the soul of the sinner and he has become obedient to the law.

Bushnell further disagrees with the older theologians in holding that Christ suffers death as a satisfaction to justice. He claims that the antagonism between justice and mercy is not as serious as many think. Justice has no priority over mercy, but rather they are co-ordinate principles with God.

Bushnell tells us that the theologians in his day realized the difficulty in holding that Christ offered a literal satisfaction of God's justice. On this account they claimed that the death of Christ showed the same abhorrence of sin that God would have expressed by the punishment of the guilty. Bushnell claims that this view is a compromise which these theologians made because they realized the inconsistency of God's punishment of the innocent in place of the guilty. He sees no abhorrence of sin whatever in the death of Christ.

Bushnell makes the claim that Christ "honors" the law of God in a very different manner from that held by his predecessors. He restores men to the precept, so that they have a love both for the Law and the Lawgiver. Christ shows by His life that He is the incarnation of the moral nature of God. Also He reveals the righteous and loving character of God, thus honoring the law of God and enthroning it in the reverence of man.

Bushnell was not interested, as were Emmons and Taylor, in the relation of the sovereignty of God to the freedom of man in regeneration. Instead his emphasis is on the practical side. Men honor or come into harmony with the law of God when they are regenerated and obey the law. The real satisfaction of law is accomplished by a new character which comes to the believer through the power of Christ, the Regenerator. Bushnell thinks that the great work of Christ is not to "square" an account with God, nor to pay a debt, but to transform human character. This is a different satisfaction from that taught by his predecessors. Again Bushnell describes this regenerating work of Christ as the cleansing of the soul of man from sin.

In the use of the term "vicarious sacrifice," Bushnell frankly admits that he has a different meaning from the one usually accepted. He defines it as "coming into burden, pain, weariness, or even yielding of life"¹ for another. By this definition he avoids the meaning of complete substitution. On the other hand Edwards teaches that Christ was the substitute for the sinner, but qualifies his statement by saying that it is only true in a "general" sense.² Later New England theologians were definite in saying that Christ could not be a literal substitute for the sinner. Hopkins claimed that the sufferings of Christ were equivalent to the penalty. They all held

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¹
Thesis, p. 65.

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Thesis, p. 123.

that the death of Christ "honored" the law of God and made it possible to forgive sin without detriment to His government. Bushnell taught that Christ was not a literal substitute for the sinner, that His sufferings were not intended to be "equivalent" to the penalty, and that He "honored" the law only in fulfilling it Himself and helping others to fulfil it.

The New England theologians generally agreed that the death of Christ atoned for the past sins of the believer, but left him ill-deserving because his character was still evil. The positive benefits, eternal life and the finding of happiness, is gained for the believer by Christ's perfect obedience or righteousness. Bellamy refers to the Atonement as paying the debt of the sinner. Edwards agrees to this explanation, but objects to the terms "active and passive obedience."

Bushnell denies both of these explanations. He argues that Christ could not suffer in our stead, because He could not become guilty for us. Therefore neither the exact penalty nor any equivalent would free the sinner of guilt. What Christ actually did for us was "at the expense of great suffering and even of death itself to bring us out of our sins, and so out of their penalties; being Himself profoundly identified with our fallen state, and burdened in feeling with our evils." From this it would

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Thesis, p. 65

appear that Bushnell holds that Christ atones for our sins by entering our race and enduring its trials and by His deep sympathy with our best condition.

Bushnell is particularly opposed to the thought that the obedience of Christ can win blessings for the believer. The theory that Christ won a "surplus" of merit which could be transferred to His followers, Bushnell calls a fiction. He considers it unreasonable to think that Christ was "better than He ought to be on His own account," or that "goodness above all standards of good can be balanced against the sins of the world."¹ Instead Bushnell teaches that the believer becomes united by faith to Christ and thus becomes a member of God's Kingdom and enjoys its blessings.

Bushnell declares that his theory of the Atonement is not one of ^{"Moral Example" but of} "Moral Influence or Moral Power." His central thought is that the crucifixion of Christ is the expression of the heart of God suffering for mankind. By the compelling argument of the Cross, Christ draws men away from their sins and unto Himself. By faith they come into union with Him. In this way, Christ becomes the "moral" power of God which creates anew the character of the believer. By His ministry, His death, and His resurrection, Christ both awakens the guilt of the sinner, and as these events reveal the loving heart of God, draws

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Bushnell, Horace, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 57.

men from sin to the new life. The cross shows, not the hatred of God for sin, as Bellamy and other New England theologians taught, but the suffering love of God for man. Bushnell teaches that thus the heart of God appeals mightily to the hearts of men, and they are won to Him.

4. CONCLUSION.

4. CONCLUSION.

We have studied the vigorous and original personality of Horace Bushnell and have pictured his reaction to the system of theology which had been developing for many years in New England. We have seen that the scientific and philosophical thought of Bushnell's time was influencing that system and that Liberal thinkers were attacking it.

Bushnell, out of sympathy with the explanation by exact logic which marked the New England School, feels that he has a better method of arriving at truth.

Unitarians are attacking the ideas of the Atonement set forth by the orthodox churches, and as these ideas do not form a complete theory, Bushnell, with his new mode of "expression," attempts a full and satisfactory explanation of this doctrine.

He agrees with the New England theologians that the law and government of God are important considerations, and that there is no remedy for sin in self-reformation. He holds, as the School generally does, that sin cannot be imputed, and therefore that Christ cannot be a literal substitute, but is our Representative. He also thinks that punishment is eternal, but would add that it is finite.

In differing from his predecessors, Bushnell empha-

sizes the Fatherhood of God, rather than His Sovereignty. He brings the Father and Son very close together in their work for man. He teaches that Christ honors the law of God by bringing men to obey it. This He does because He is a regenerating power.

Bushnell taught that the sufferings of Christ were not equivalent to the penalty of sinners but revealed the love of God. Christ suffered deeply in His sympathy for mankind. Bushnell denies that Christ can win merit for us by His obedience.

He claims that God propitiates Himself by His sacrifice, and that the cross of Christ shows the love of God rather than God's hatred of sin. "Such a God in love must be such a Saviour in suffering."¹ The shining tokens of love and sacrifice which appear in Christ's life and death reveal the heart of God in such deep passion for man that He is stirred to say, "I will arise and go unto my Father."²

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¹ Bushnell, Horace, The Vicarious Sacrifice, p. 47.

² Luke 15: 18.

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