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JOHN À LASCO.

THE name of John à Lasco is not so familiar to the readers of Church History, as are the names of many others who took prominent parts in the Great Reformation. There must be reasons for this, arising probably out of the nature of the places and circumstances in which he labored. He was not put by Providence so prominently before the Christendom of his day as were some others who were placed at the political and religious centres of the great nations of Europe. But not one of them was more deservedly honored and beloved by the people for whom he labored, than à Lasco was by the Reformed of East Friesland, the Refugees from Holland and France in London, or by the true Christians of Poland, whom he served in the evening of his life. If we simply look at the man, and compare him with those with whom he was associated in work for Christ's Church, whose names are familiar to, and held in grateful remembrance by, the Protestant world to-day, we shall say that he was the peer of the best of them. We need only to look candidly at the man and his work to be convinced of the monstrous injustice of assigning him to a very inferior place, or of allowing that he is forgotten because he was unworthy of remembrance. À Lasco's name and work ought not to be forgotten. He was richly furnished by nature, education, and grace with most excellent gifts. The result was a well-

V.

HORACE BUSHNELL.\*

DR. BUSHNELL made for himself a place in letters, society, and religion, which not only justifies a competent memoir, but makes it full of interest and profit, even if it be occasionally enigmatical. No more suitable persons to write it could be found than the very accomplished ladies who constitute his surviving family. In their tender and admiring sketches we detect signs of the heredity of genius; also of the model husband and father in the model Christian household. They have enlisted the aid of appreciating friends and coadjutors of the distinguished subject of the memoir; especially the more eminent of those who supported him in the great doctrinal and ecclesiastical conflicts excited by his polemical publications. His own letters, and the copious extracts from his writings, give it a sufficient flavor of autobiography, to heighten its interest. They make it almost such a portraiture of his life, aims, gifts, and influence, as he himself might have drawn. On the whole, the book enhances our estimate of Dr. Bushnell, as it opens to us more fully his interior and riper life, in the free play of his communings with his family, his friends, and his God. That, so far as the protracted conflicts, resulting from his stupendous attempts to disintegrate and reconstruct some cardinal Christian doctrines, are concerned, the case should be so put as to give all honor to him, and scant justice to his opponents, is only natural. It presents the unaffected view inevitable to the respected authors, with their surroundings and perspective. Moreover, with the most scrupulous intent of avoiding all injustice to any, to vindicate his assailants was not their proper office. If more needs to be said to set them in a true light, it, of right, devolves on others.

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\* "Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell." New York: Harper and Brothers.

The formative influences which operated upon a genius so original and unique, not only to shape him into the man he was, but to impart that bias to his religious convictions and culture which determined his peculiar career, should not be overlooked. Finding his early experience and training in a Connecticut agricultural town and family, duplicated in our own, even down to certain unusual details; some of these moulding influences stand very vividly before us. We recall the puritanical, almost Jewish, Sabbath observance; church-going through wintry blasts into the unwarmed "meeting-house," to hear theology reasoned out through two sermons; the drill in the Shorter Catechism; the common school with its rough oaken seats, and sometimes rougher teachers; the toilsome industry which extorted a frugal subsistence from rocky soils; or by the slow process of handiwork, in producing what steam, electricity, and machinery will now yield in vastly greater profusion, and superior quality, to a tithe of the labor. We now seem to hear the rattle of the household spinning-wheel, to produce the thread or yarn, for the very weaving of which was paid double what the same amount of cloth already finished, and better fitted for the same use, would now cost. It is scarcely possible for those whose lives do not run back of the half century now closing, to conceive of the severe style of life and manners then prevalent from dire necessity. The most life-like picture of it, by Dr. Bushnell, in his address on the "Age of Homespun," before an agricultural fair in his native county, quoted in this Memoir, sets it before the "generation following" as none without his sharp experience of it, and his power of word-painting, could have done.

Dr. Bushnell, born in the year 1802, entered Yale College in 1823; toughened by his previous rugged, but well-disciplined life, for energetic and successful work as a student. Here he was *facile princeps* both as an intellectual and physical athlete. He had previously joined the church, and made a solemn consecration of himself to God. In college, however, he lapsed into deadness and darkness, but not into vice or immorality. After a period of teaching and successful editing of the *New York Journal of Commerce*, he began the study of law, and in due time became a tutor in his *Alma Mater*, where he still further prosecuted his legal studies, and became prepared for

admission to the Bar. Toward the close of his tutorship he was overtaken by the great revival of 1831, so celebrated in the religious annals of that college. This divine breath re-kindled his religious feelings, and if it did not solve his doubts, at least put them for the time in abeyance. It led him to change his profession, and enter upon study preparatory to the sacred ministry, in the Yale Theological Seminary, in the autumn of 1831. In the tutorship we, being then a student, first knew of him, and, without intimacy, continued to know him, in different ways, and on different sides, through his life. We too participated in the same great awakening in which the "still small voice" of the Spirit was so mighty, that for days the usual din of conversation at meals in the great dining-hall was hushed into very whispers. We entered the same seminary a year later, and afterward had our experience in the tutorship of the college. Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor was the professor of theology, the great light of the seminary, the acknowledged head of what was then known as the New Divinity party, in the zenith of his fame and influence; of imperial power of intellect, person, and manners, to charm young men, and make him pre-eminent among his brethren. For ourselves he had other attractions. From him we had received baptism, and he had been the revered pastor of our childhood.

Coming thus disciplined to his studies for the ministry, Mr. Bushnell brought to the work intense intellectual activity, application, and fecundity: an imagination of rare exuberance; a ready faculty of intuition, sufficient in his estimation to supersede the utility of logic as a law to discursive thought, and to overshadow the light of mental and moral philosophy (pp. 62-3-4); a quick insight into men and things; a sagacity in practical affairs seldom surpassed; a strong emotional nature; great will-force; a proud and independent spirit, self-asserting and self-reliant, not only to the right extent of calling no man master, but still further, of seldom allowing any man or men of the past or present to be his helpers. With one or two exceptions he little cared, or felt the need to learn, the judgments of the great masters of human thought, or of the theology of the Church itself, as embodied in its treatises and creeds.

Our limits compel us to minimize even the outline of antecedent and contemporaneous polemics, doctrine, and life which brought into being the New Haven school. Without this, its position, merits, and defects, and those of its great founder and expositor (Dr. Taylor), cannot be understood; and, unless these are in some degree understood, the formative influence of his live lecture-room upon Dr. Bushnell's development, interacting with all that he brought to it, cannot be seen. We can barely intimate some salient points.

It is not strange that in the wake of the elder Edwards' treatises on the Will, Original Sin, and the Nature of Virtue, a succession of acute, if rather narrow, thinkers should have arisen, who treated theology from the side of psychology and metaphysics, often characterized by a wiry astuteness, but more and more aloof from the exegetical, christological, and historical methods. Account for it as we may, this was narrowed and intensified by the younger Edwards, who, inheriting more than his father's dialectic keenness and subtlety, lacked his breadth of view and his wealth of imagination and emotion. His analysis of the Atonement as a mere expedient of divine benevolence to promote greater happiness in the universe than would result from the punishment of those saved through it, so largely adopted in New England, was followed by a decreasing prominence of Christ as the central element in all good preaching, conversion, holy living, and the entire Christian consciousness. Not that there was any denial or conscious undervaluation of Christ and His cross, but that other matters crept too much into the foreground.

The theological mind tasked itself in endless discussions about the human will and its power—independent and dependent—to comply with the conditions of salvation; and these as related to predestination, election, divine sovereignty, and decrees. Incidentally, discussion might circle around the Trinity, Incarnation, and other topics. But it centred here, running into such collateral or involved questions as the perfect ability and free-agency, otherwise called natural ability, of the sinner to obey the commands of God on the one hand, and the relation of his activity and destiny to God's sovereign and unfrustrable decree on the other.

At length the pivotal point of conversion came widely to be

esteemed and treated as not primarily faith in Christ and submission to God's righteousness in Him, but submission to God's sovereignty; to His election or decree in determining their destiny. This befitted a corresponding theory of the nature of virtue, resolving it into a sort of superhuman or contra-rational readiness for self-immolation. The essence of right feeling and principle was resolved by Dr. Samuel Hopkins and his successors into "disinterested benevolence," interpreted and applied in the slang phrase of the day as a "willingness to be damned for the glory of God." If this was in any way a caricature, there was something often set forth as the essence of genuine conversion and Christian piety, which, if more decent and refined in form, might as readily be mistaken for it as one photograph of a man for another. It takes strong cases to illustrate principles. But that this is no fancy sketch, let an extract from the late Dr. Henry B. Smith's article on the "Theological System of Emmons" attest. Even in his extremest views, this divine had a considerable following. That in greater or less measure it became the fashion to place submission to the divine destination in front of submission to Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," needs no proof to him whose memory recalls much preaching and teaching of that era. Others can satisfy themselves on this point, by looking at the accounts of revivals near the beginning of this century in the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* and elsewhere. He will see that they largely fix conviction of sin in self-condemnation for enmity to the divine decrees and election, and speak of submission to the divine sovereignty in conversion as the grand product and criterion of the new birth; these being very largely in place of the law which slays, and Christ who makes alive. But to our quotation from Dr. Smith—beyond all writers that we have known, evincing a masterly insight into New England theology:

"Dr. Emmons was the keenest of the old-school divines of New England, and, in some points, the forerunner of its new school. He believed in the divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, and the Trinity—rejecting, however, in opposition to Hopkins, the eternal generation of the Son, and even stigmatizing it as eternal nonsense. He carried divine sovereignty to its acme, while he maintained that man has natural ability to frustrate the divine decrees. He pressed the divine efficiency to an extreme which few Calvinists have dared to do, making it extend as creative to all events and all the acts of the creature, sin not excepted; and, at the same time, he held to the entire freedom

and responsibility of the creature. So strictly did he believe that the glory of God is the great end of creation, that he also asserted that sin is necessary to the greatest good, and that a willingness to be lost is the chief test of regeneration. His ethical theory enforced an impartial and disinterested benevolence as the essence of true virtue—a benevolence so comprehensive as to include all the good of all beings, and so disinterested that all self-love, if not repudiated, is merged in this universal good-will. Of the 'five points' of the Calvinistic System—excepting that of a limited atonement—he was so constant an advocate, that they formed the staple of his Sunday afternoon inferences from his Sunday morning discourses. The decrees he declared to be the fundamental doctrine of 'the Gospel.' He *proved* that 'it is absolutely necessary to approve of the doctrine of reprobation in order to be saved,' (ii. 402). (See "Faith and Philosophy," by Henry B. Smith, D.D., LL.D., p. 219).

Dr. Taylor and his coadjutors found, or cut, their way out of this arctic system, parts of which had already been strenuously opposed by his theological teachers, President Dwight, Smalley, and others. Unhappily this way was not that of adequately lifting Christ to the forefront, as the grand objective and subjective power of God unto salvation, to be offered as such to the sinner, lost and helpless in himself, in place of the hyper-calvinistic predestination which before had largely usurped his prerogative. He rather insisted, first of all, on the plenary ability of the sinner to obey God in repentance and conversion, and on such an explication of the divine agency, sovereignty, and predestination as no way practically or theoretically hindered the instant exercise of it in full obedience to the Gospel. He maintained this plenary ability of the sinner, *propriis viribus* to turn to God, although insisting that he never *would* do this unmoved by the Holy Spirit. He accordingly maintained the absolute autonomy of the human will, its full power of contrary choice; limited all moral quality to acts of choice; substituted for the "disinterested benevolence" theory of virtue the opposite view, that "self-love, or the desire of happiness, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which supremely fix on any object."—*Christian Spectator*, 1829, p. 24. This absolute autonomy of the will was made fundamental in the theodicy of the scheme. It was no novelty for it to account for the origin and present degree of sin by the supposed uncontrollable nature of free agency. It is not our purpose here to criticise this system. We wish simply to show the influences acting on Dr. Bushnell's mind at this formative period; and especially to note, that human ability and self-love had come in place of the divine sovereignty and disin-

terested benevolence before dominant, and that practically each stood too much where Christ ought to stand, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

This system came in various degrees athwart, not only the forms of "New England theology" before described—once much idolized, now acknowledged to be "provincial" by Dr. Leonard Bacon ("Life," pp. 245-6), but the simple Calvinism of the Shorter Catechism, then in general use in New England, as also the "Old Calvinism" of the Presbyterian Church, and of New England before the last hundred years.

When we consider that Dr. Bushnell, who was getting already deep in Coleridge, found the controversies without and within the lecture-room, thus rife over what he calls—

"The Theologic wars of only the century past—the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians; the Arminianizers and the true Calvinists; the Pelagians and Augustinians; the Tasters and the Exercisers; exercisers by Divine efficiency and by human self-efficiency; the love-to-being-in-general virtue; the willingness to be damned virtue, and the love to one's greatest happiness virtue; no ability, all ability, and moral and natural ability distinguished; disciples by a new creating act of Omnipotence, and by change of governing purpose," etc. ("Christ in Theology," pp. 5-6).

—It is not surprising that with his mental constitution and training, he should recoil from them as too "mechanical."

It would be a mistake to suppose that much stalwart piety, however often one-sided or ungenial, did not flourish under the hyper-calvinistic regimen before depicted, among a people sturdy enough for a time to bear it, and finding withal—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,  
In the believer's ear;"

in the Bible which they faithfully read; in their books of devotion which they carefully studied; in parts of the Shorter Catechism, familiar as household words; in the hymns in which they made melody in their hearts unto God; in sermons which still lifted up Christ and His cross, though too much as a background, when they should have been a foreground to God's sovereignty and man's need. Otherwise a system so repellent had sooner become intolerable. We are the last to leave room for a moment's suspicion, even by implication, that we do not consider predestination and divine sovereignty, decrees, and election of eminent importance to a sound theology, and, when rightly used, a strong support of Christian

resignation, hope, and trust. We believe all this. But we do not believe that they are to be put foremost in answer to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" On the other hand, we are of opinion that this then new theology for a time, even in what we think its exaggeration of human ability, served to open the way for the free course of the Gospel and revivals, by breaking the dead-lock into which these iron-clad metaphysics had brought it. But while it gave movement, it was movement of unrest rather than of poise between progression and permanence. Human ability could never stop short of either lowering the standard of piety to its own measure, or finding its strength in conscious weakness, becoming thus empowered to "do all things through Christ strengthening" it.

It must be confessed, too, that the style of theologizing and philosophizing in these successive schools and controversies, was too much in the way of scholastic webs of keen logical deduction from inadequate premises; and too little in the way of that intuitive insight or beholding of God and the unfoldings of Him, as also of primary, moral, and religious truths, in the light of nature, of conscience, of revelation, and of the Spirit. It is by intuition that we get the first premises for all reasoning. Logic rightly applied affords the laws or tests of sound reasoning from such premises. Now, right understanding and progress in knowledge, divine or human, depend upon the due equipoise of the intuitive and discursive methods—avoiding excess or defect of either. Those who err on the extreme of exalting intuition and depreciating logic, are likely to run into mysticism, high or low, to mistake vague glimpses for well-defined and authenticated truth, to exalt the unproved, and indemonstrable truths of their own party or sect (*idola tribus*), to the rank of intuitive truths. Those who run to excess of logic, instead of *intuing* those divine objects and first truths which alone form the adequate materials and sources for logical deduction, as well as spiritual insight and feeling, go on deducing abstraction from abstraction, till thus drawn out to a ghostly thinness, they can sustain only a starveling and sepulchral piety. By this remorseless process the prayers of the unregenerate were often proved to a Q. E. D., to be only adding to sin, and hindering salvation, so that souls

conscious of being unconverted, or in fear of being so, were manacled by these split-hairs of logic in their very attempts to call on God ; so held fast in impenitence, or in a thrall-like spirit of bondage. It must be confessed that logic was overdone, intuition too much narrowed in the schools and controversies with which Dr. Bushnell's forming theology came in contact.\* This accounts for their failing to have the intuitional theory of the nature of right. All this must be borne in mind, as we find him rebounding from it to a reliance on intuition and contempt of logic, while he certainly brought the person of Christ into the foreground, but unhappily not as a propitiatory offering for sin ; so in this way feeling for Him, if haply he might find Him.

It cannot be overlooked, withal, that about this time arose distempered views of revivals, to which we may again recur ; bitter controversies about new measures and old measures for their production ; a morbid growth of societies for effecting moral reforms by pledges to abstain from tobacco, meit, tea, coffee, also for abolishing slavery and other evils. These had sprung up in the wake of the Total Abstinence Society, that had effected a most beneficent disuse, in place of the enormous abuse, of intoxicating drinks. They were coarse, denunciatory, overbearing, and divisive in their methods ; till pastors, congregations, and well-conducted people began to be stunned and staggered, by what Dr. Nathaniel Hewit styled "the everlasting ding-dong of moral machinery." The class of finer minds was large and growing, that sympathized with Bushnell in a recoil from these abnormities, sometimes

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\* Emmons, and his followers after him, had a regulation style of sermons which consisted in establishing some thesis, and drawing a string of inferences from it ; the former part sometimes much shorter, sometimes the two parts about equal in length. Sometimes establishing the thesis occupied the morning sermon, the inferences that of the afternoon. Can this generation understand the intellectual drill of rural congregations that could enjoy this double portion of abstract discussion Sabbath after Sabbath, morning and afternoon ? Dr. Emmons, preaching in New Haven once, drew a large concourse on account of his celebrity, who were on the stretch to catch his words, as they were spoken in a low tone. Professor Kingsley, after the service, congratulated him that he had an audience so attentive ; to which he curtly replied : "I always find that people will attend, if you give them anything to attend to." Being asked why most ministers have so few inferences in their sermons, he answered, "Because they have nothing to infer from." A minister of this school reading a sermon with a long chain of inferences at a ministerial meeting, called forth the criticism that his "sermon was like the beast in Revelation, whose power was in his tail."

swollen to monstrosities. It is proper to add, that Dr. Taylor, and most of those in accord and in controversy with him, had a keen disrelish of all this. Sporadic cases of perfectionism also broke out, one of which, in the seminary itself, was Noyes, afterwards head of the Oneida Community.

In the midst of, and co-working with all this, the admiring study of Coleridge became a powerful factor in his development. He tells us, "By and by it fell to me to begin the reading of Coleridge. For a whole half year I was buried under his 'Aids to Reflection.'" He was unsparing in his criticism and condemnation of most authors, and even thought the world would be the better if a considerable part of its great libraries were burned. When once "quietly asked what authors he did like, he mentioned two or three, but finally demolished them all but Coleridge." Says his friend, Rev. J. H. Twichell, "I have often heard him say, he was more indebted to Coleridge than to any extra-Scriptural author" ("Life," pp. 208-9 and 498). This is saying a great deal, and probably accounts for a great deal.

We have no space to set forth the prodigious influence exerted by Coleridge's writings upon many leaders of American thought who became enchanted with him, in the formative period of their thinking and opinions from forty to fifty years ago; much less to explain the rationale of it, or of its varied effects on different minds. We must now content ourselves with tracing some of the influences of the great poet-philosopher upon one who, though no admirer of philosophy, was very much of a poet, even if he never wrote in verse. Dr. Bushnell was in the highest sense an original thinker, though the germs of many of his peculiar opinions appear in the author he most studied and admired; even as not a few of Coleridge's own can be traced to Schelling, and back to Kant.

Beginning with Coleridge's terrible denunciations of Paley's "Moral Philosophy" as to its founding virtue in pleasure, happiness, or expediency, we never knew one charged from this electric battery, who did not feel a counter shock on hearing the analysis of the subject given by Dr. Taylor at the opposite pole. Here was usually the entering wedge of differences between him and his pupils who had studied Coleridge. This, however, led to opposite results in different

cases, in regard to the atonement; in some, to the conclusion that the intrinsic righteousness or "ethical justice of God" demands satisfaction by a sacrificial atonement in order to warrant the pardon of the sinner; in others, as Dr. Bushnell, substantially to the contrary conclusion of Coleridge himself. (See "Aids to Reflection," pp. 191-202; also, Bushnell's "Christ in Theology," p. 233).

If we look for the germs of Dr. Bushnell's thinking on the will, its self-determining and self-originating power on the one hand, its fallen, diseased, enslaved state on the other, we have only to examine Coleridge's pregnant and inspiring discourse on this and related subjects. We can quote here only a single extract from him on these subjects:

"Often have I heard it said by advocates for the Socinian Scheme: True! we are all sinners; but even in the Old Testament God has promised forgiveness on repentance. One of the Fathers (I forget which) supplies the retort—True! God has promised pardon on penitence; but has He promised penitence on sin? 'He that repenteth shall be forgiven;' but where is it said, 'He that sinneth shall repent'? But repentance, perhaps, the repentance required in Scripture, *the passing into a new mind*, into a new and contrary principle of action, this *METANOIA*, is in the sinner's own power? at his own liking? He has but to open his eyes to the sin, and the tears are close at hand to wash it away! Verily, the exploded tenet of *Transubstantiation* is scarcely at greater variance with the common sense and experience of mankind, or borders more closely on a contradiction in terms, than this volunteer *Transmentation*, this self-change, as the easy means of self-salvation!" ("Aids to Reflection," Burlington Edition, pp. 82-3).

This has flashed a flood of light on more than one soul bewildered in its struggles to realize in himself the theory, that he was able to make himself a Christian, while it has proved a turning point and guide-board for his whole after career. It is suggestive of that title of one of Dr. Bushnell's remarkable sermons, "Duty not measured by Ability." ("Sermons on New Life," p. 364).

The key to his book on "Nature and Supernatural," its error and its vastly preponderating truths, is found in such passages as the following:

"Nature is the term in which we comprehend all things that are representable in the forms of time and space, and subjected to the relations of cause and effect; and the cause of whose existence therefore is to be sought for perpetually in something antecedent. It follows, therefore, that whatever originates its own acts, or in any sense contains in itself the cause of its own state, must be spiritual, and consequently, *supernatural*; yet not on that account necessarily *miraculous*. And such must the responsible WILL in us be, if it be at all." ("Aids," p. 155).

The vice of this definition of the supernatural is, that the demonstration or admission of its accuracy establishes nothing in respect to any divine interposition in revelation, miracles, grace, inspiration. The human will, and all that in it which is thus named supernatural, might exist and act if there were not a single work of God in Creation, Providence, or Redemption. The self-originating power of the human will simply shows the possibility of works of God above nature defined as including all created forces and objects, even those possessing will and reason; yet while above, working on, by and through them, even as man by virtue of his reason and will acts above and upon, in and through, natural objects and forces. Yet, notwithstanding this unsatisfactory definition originating as it did, Dr. Bushnell in his work, as a whole, maintains the very highest kind of genuine supernaturalism—even to the acceptance and endorsement of modern miracles after the manner of Edward Irving and his followers. This appears from the chapter entitled "Miracles and Spiritual Gifts are not Discontinued." Taken for all in all, this is a noble book.

The seeds of Dr. Bushnell's views on Inspiration, the Trinity, Incarnation, Mysticism, and Dogma, can also be found in the works of Coleridge, and the transcendental, ideal, and pantheistic authors by whom Coleridge himself was largely affected; and to whom, as well as other mystic, quietistic, and Platonic divines and religionists, his own writings were a pathway. All this, we repeat, no way detracts from Dr. Bushnell's originality. But it does help explain the predominating bias it received amid the chaos of influences around him. And we find here far more than elsewhere, a chief genetic force in his future development, too important to be overlooked.

After nearly two years of preparatory study, he became pastor of the North, now Park Congregational Church in Hartford, Conn.—in many respects a highly promising field for an able young minister. It was agitated by the Old and New School, and collateral controversies of the day, as they then raged in Connecticut, the two parties being nearly equal. It included some chief pillars of the Old School Theological Seminary then in a neighboring town, now in the city itself, as well as

strong supporters of the New Haven School. Indeed it was one chief motive for the selection of Mr. Bushnell, that he was not specially committed to either side, but occupying a position partly in accord, partly at variance with both, being largely unsettled, and feeling his way to more determinate and satisfactory ground. He says of himself at this time :

"I had many and great difficulties on my hands, in respect to the Gospel truths, which are now gone. . . . I was coming into religion on the side of philosophy ; and, of course, had small conception of it as a faith and a supernatural gift to the race. Now it is a faith luminous, glorious, vital, and clear, and, of course, it is as little a philosophy. I confess with some mortification, so deep was I in the beggarly elements of the school, that I did not really expect to remain in the ministry long," ("Life," p. 68).

Those who appreciate his antecedents and these conditions, will easily see why this was so. So far as the Old School side became associated in his mind with those harsher forms of hyper-calvinism in New England which we have noted, or even the views of Edwards on the Will, or those developed from the "love to being in general" theory of virtue—all so entirely in the teeth of the teachings of Coleridge, and the poetic anti-sensationalism of his own nature—he was, of course, repelled by it. With the bias of the other side favorable to greater freedom and attempted improvements in theology, he of course sympathized. And yet with the views of the former, as shown in actual life and experience, he had a large sympathy.

In a review in 1853 of a pastorate of twenty years, he said :

"Indeed I had a certain peculiar sympathy with my Old School brethren, especially in all points where it was contrasted with the flashiness of a super-active, all-to-do-manner, such as then distinguished the movement party of the times. I loved their deep drawn sentiments, and the sense of God that reverberated in their Christian expressions. I was drawn to their prayers; and to them personally by their prayers; and it has always been my conviction that if they had been a little more Old School, if they had been able to comprehend in their antiquity more than one century, they would have been as much drawn to me as I was to them." (*Id.*, p. 231).

The allusion here is obvious. After his grand attempt to reconstruct Christian theology, made a few years previously, he became more acquainted with the great historic creeds of Christendom. He persuaded himself that his unfoldings of the fundamentals of the Christian faith were far nearer ancient Catholic doctrine, than the forms in which the metaphysical theologians of New England, whether Old or New side, or what

he called "the much debated subtilities of our New England rationalism," had presented them. In other words, he was, in his own view, more Old School and orthodox than those who impeached his orthodoxy. How far he was right or wrong in this may yet appear.

In close affiliation with his attitude of mind toward the theological controversies of the time was his position respecting the peculiar revivalism of the period, and long afterward. In regard to this, our own memory corroborates the substantial justice of what we will quote from this review of his ministry. It reminds us of what Asahel Nettleton, the prince of revival preachers of this century, who never failed to strengthen pastors, and the permanent in religious institutions where he labored, said, in answer to our request that he would visit our own pastoral charge :

"I should be glad to comply with your request, but dare not. The public mind is corrupted in regard to revivals. One cannot be plowing, sowing, and tilling the ground, so preparing for harvest, without some one being after him and thrusting a sickle into his heels, even if he gather only weeds and thistles."

As having collided with this same distempered state of the churches, Dr. Bushnell says :

"The only difficulty I have ever encountered in my ministry, that cost me a real and deep trial of feeling, related to the matter of Evangelist preachers, and what may be called the machinery system of revivals. Things had come to such a pitch in the churches, by the tenacity of the revival system, that the permanent was sacrificed to the casual, the ordinary lost and swallowed up in the extraordinary, and Christian piety itself reduced to a kind of campaigning or stage-effect exercise. The spirit of the pastor was broken, and his powers crippled by a lack of expectation ; for it was becoming a fixed impression that effect was to be looked for only under instrumentalities that are extraordinary. He was coming to be scarcely more than a church clock for beating time and marking the years, while the effective ministry of the word was to be dispensed by a class of professional revivalists. . . . I took my ground cautiously as I knew how, and spoke my convictions. The result was painful for a time. . . . My sole object was to raise a distinction between the reviving of religion when it wants reviving, and a religion which places everything in scenes or spiritual campaigns, and tests all Christian exercise by the standards of the extraordinary. I am not sure that I have ever made myself entirely clear." (pp. 282-3).

Much of what is best in his famous Andover discourse on *Dogma vs. Spirit*, is in a like vein. Although the prevalent evils in the churches are less in this line than in the earlier part of this half century, they have not wholly ceased—whatever others may have come in. The logical, which sooner or later is apt to be the practical outcome, in such cases, led

him to see the great importance of Family religion, and of the right Christian nurture of children, to the growth of a stable and symmetrical piety, and the normal fruit of stated ministrations and ordinances, without the sleight-of-hand processes of some professional revivalists, which, so often, under the name of religious revival, give more fleshly titillation than spiritual quickening. Out of this came his volume on "Christian Nurture." This, although at first thinking it the innovation it was so largely taken to be, he afterward judged to be the recovery of an older doctrine and practice of New England, and the Church universal as well, which had nearly perished under that distempered revivalism and subjectivity of conversion by spasmodic will-force of its subject, to which we have adverted. This book of Dr. Bushnell, along with its great merits, was vitiated, not only by an excessive naturalism, but by the representation of instantaneous regeneration by the immediate act of the Holy Ghost, as being by an "ictic stroke," and the like. But with more truth than fiction, Dr. Bushnell has described the current order of things which his little treatise was meant to counteract as :

"A type of religion which approaches strict individualism, which practically hangs, all power and progress on adult conversions, which flowered out in the brilliant era of Burchard and Knapp, and is now dying under mildew or passing into seed"; also as in fact a "novelty just a hundred years old," being that which was derisively called 'New Light' in its day, and which is now really taken to be synonymous with antiquity and all orthodoxy" ("Life," p. 180).

This protest against excessive "individualism" in our conception of Christian doctrine and life, which had long been a growing feature of New England theology, weakening the conception of representative headship and community of life between Adam and his descendants, Christ and His people, parents and children, articulated what ripened into a fixed conviction, and potent factor, in his religious thinking—the "corporate" working of sin and grace among men. In its way it was another instance of the attempted recovering, in a partial and distorted way, of a truth which was grievously fading out of sight in Dr. Bushnell's surroundings. This was cordially recognized in leading Presbyterian reviews of the book.

But we must hasten onward to the climacteric theological development of his life, in its scope and aim, and the doctrinal and ecclesiastical conflicts consequent upon it, we were about to say, eclipsing all that preceded or followed it in Connecticut, if not in New England and the entire Congregational communion—the Unitarian defection excepted. It is necessary to premise here, the fermentation of his mind over unsettled questions in Divinity went on till the year 1848, which his wife says was “the central point in his life.” It was “a year of great experiences, great thoughts, great labors,” approached “through mental struggles, trials, and practical endeavor.” He fell to reading such devout mystic and quietistic writings as Fénelon’s, Upham’s “Interior Life” and “Life of Madam Guyon,” a sequel not unnatural to such antecedents. Early in the year light broke in upon him with some suddenness indeed, but not therefore suggestive of any “ictic stroke.” Referring to this as late as 1871, he said:

“I seemed to pass a boundary. I had never been very legal in my Christian life, but now I passed from those partial seeings, glimpses, and doubts, into clearer knowledge of God and his inspirations, which I have never wholly lost. The change was into faith—a sense of the freeness of God, and the ease of approach to Him.” Again he said of this, “I was set on by the personal discovery of Christ, and of God as represented in Him” Elsewhere he explains his meaning, in giving his view of faith. He says: “Christian faith is the faith of a transaction. It is not the committing of one’s thought in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one’s being to a *being*, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed forever.” “It gives you God, fills you with God in immediate experimental knowledge.” This “private experience” his biographer declares “not less than an inspiration and a revelation enabling him to spiritually discern spiritual things.”

Thus prepared, he was meditating the expression of his vision to the world (pp. 191–94). The opportunity came in invitations, to preach the *Concio ad Clerum* before the General Association of Connecticut on the Divinity of Christ at the Yale College commencement, and to address the Divinity Schools at Harvard and Andover, during the same summer. These he accepted, discoursing on the Trinity at New Haven, the Atonement at Harvard, and Dogma and Spirit at Andover. These discourses he afterward published in a book entitled “God in Christ,” prefaced by a brilliant, but extravagant Introduction, in which he sought to cover his positions already much assailed, by the most startling paradoxes in regard to language, logic, propositions, and creeds, as a means of ex-

pressing truth; which he argued is capable of due expression only in contradictions. While the first effect of this was to daze and bewilder his critics by its splendor and audacity, the effect of a calmer second thought was, to deepen the wide dissatisfaction and distrust caused by the original discourses.

Indeed the part undertaken by Dr. Bushnell was in its nature formidable and impossible, however noble in aim, and whatever special fitness for it may have grown out of his magnetic personality, and his peculiar stand-point. He hoped, in his discourses, especially that before the Harvard Divinity School, to act as "mediator" between the contending parties, especially between the utterly estranged parties known as orthodox and Unitarian. There was much to allure him to this undertaking. He had seen the defects, whether real or imaginary, of the contending schools among the orthodox, especially those of the various types of the "New England theology" of the century immediately preceding. He partially sympathized with the Unitarians in some recoil, but not in their extreme revolt, from what he took for the popular orthodoxy. He hoped to lead both sides, or rather all sides, to see their respective defects, and the groundlessness of their antagonisms in logic and "propositional theology" by the light and heat of those non-logical, intuitional, all-penetrating, and all-comprehending "visions," "inspirations," "revelations," which fuse all contraries into unity, and blend all the hues of the prism into one colorless ray. He was on the mount of vision, and took in, with an all-inclusive glance, the minima of truth, if not the greatness of the errors, of the short-sighted mortals engaged in small word-fights below. His friend and former neighbor, Bishop Burgess, cautioned him, should he accept the invitation to make the address at Harvard, in most fit and solemn terms, concerning the difficulty of the "attempt to reconcile them (Unitarians) to the truth without sacrificing the truth to them" ("Life," pp. 194-5).

The book drew forth criticisms of varying ability and severity, but with scarcely an exception in different degrees condemnatory, from nearly every important centre and organ of theological opinion in the country. Even the eulogies of Unitarians had a strong infusion of censure. The complaints were so loud, that his own Ministerial Association, made up

largely of personal friends, were constrained to investigate the book. They decided, by a large majority, that its errors, however serious, were "not fundamental," and that there was no cause for bringing its author to trial. This decision excited profound and extensive discontent. It called forth an earnest and well-argued remonstrance from the sister Association of Fairfield West, followed by a petition, from the same body, to the General Association of the State. This body strongly reëffirmed the utterances of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism on the points treated by Dr. Bushnell, and pronounced the denial of them heresy. It sustained the cause of the remonstrants and petitioners. Dr. Bushnell next published his argument in vindication of his books presented to his own Association, in an enlarged and elaborated form, under the title "Christ in Theology"—declaring in the preface that the completion of the series required a third volume, under the title, "Theology in New England," designed to annihilate it, by showing its inconsistencies, or rather the disagreements of its authors, and schools, each with itself, and each with all—a process which, as will appear, surely could be applied to himself with a tenfold fatality.\* In this book the exceptionable matter of the *God in Christ* was more fully explained and defended, but not retracted or mitigated.

Fairfield West Association deeming silent acquiescence in this state of the case indefensible, issued an appeal to the other Associations of the State united in the General Association, which it placed before that body itself in 1852, founded on the contents of both volumes, especially the later one.

We shall briefly state the substance of their allegations,

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\* No defence is so cheap and futile as showing up differences among different adversaries. In this way Bossuet undertook to demolish Protestantism, and the fire has been returned in Edgar's "Variations of Popery." The differences may respect only accidents, not essentials: like the uniforms of an army—fighting for the same great principles. Differences between different branches of Republican or Democratic parties, do not prove that there are no common principles in which all factions within each of these respective bodies agree. The principal defence of Dr. B.'s book attempted, was the effort of his "anonymous friend, C. C.," to prove that his critics were at variance among themselves on some points. Some of Dr. B.'s friends lauded him for this, as almost another Pascal. The discrepancies, however, were shown to be almost wholly verbal, in sound rather than in sense. Such a defence may possibly annoy; "weak things have stings;" it does not refute. If it did, it would furnish a key to an easy refutation of Christianity itself. This is one thing. The self-contradictions of an individual in undermining and reconstructing the faith of Christendom, or of his own communion, are another.

and cite a few only of the passages they cited from Dr. Bushnell's two books in support of them, leaving them, with the briefest possible explanatory comment, to speak for themselves. They alleged his contemptuous denial of any Trinity beyond the blankest Sabellianism, and his charging those who held to a proper tri-personality in the Godhead with being heretics; that he reduced it to a mere instrumental revelation of God, in terms sometimes suggestive of its manifesting Him by a sort of pantheistic evolution, in which the so-called persons are merely the *dramatis personæ* for dramatizing God to us. In that bewitching phrase of which he was rarest master, he says of the persons: "Each and all together dramatize and bring forth into life about us that Infinite One, who, to our mere thought, were no better than Brahma sleeping on eternity, and the stars" ("God in Christ," p. 173). To some taste of this sort of thinking, especially as given forth by Schelling, Coleridge had served as an introduction.\*

\* He declared the "horror of Sabellianism that has kept the Church for so many ages asserting and re-asserting it as a test of orthodoxy that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit—a kind of theological distemper of which it is impossible to speak with respect" ("Christ in Theology," p. 162). He says, p. 133: "My position required me to controvert all arguments which prove or disprove an immanent Trinity." "Ceasing to conceive a Trinity in act, we began to assert a Trinity of persons in the divine essence itself, which is plain Tritheism" (*Id.*, p. 172). On the next page he charges that this language as used by Fairfield West, and as by them "understood and meant, is simple heresy." The men who framed the documents issued by Fairfield West, so far from all this, held to the eternal generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit, according to the Westminster Confession, and Nicæan Creed. They believed this was the Scriptural representation, and that to abandon it, and retain the tri-personality without a tendency to tritheistic conceptions, is difficult. We have seen before that Dr. Emmons with his remorseless logic, discarded the eternal generation as "eternal nonsense." In this he did not differ from later N. E. theologians. Prof. Moses Stuart, of Andover, controverted the doctrine as advanced by Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, in his "Letters on Unitarianism." Dr. Miller replied to this in a considerable volume, alleging, among other things, the "Tritheism" of Prof. Stuart's views. Dr. Bushnell contended that his Instrumental Trinity, involved in God's revelation of Himself, came nearer the eternal filiation and procession of the ancient creeds, and made *Chris.* a truer word, *λογος*, than the definitions of the Trinity current around him which discarded "eternal generation." These he charged with a tritheistic learning. In this he was not and is not alone. But he was greatly mistaken in imputing to the Fairfield men any tritheistic leaning, much more, "tritheism"—even according to his own standards. When, too, in his exposition of a Trinity consisting of God's expressions of Himself, in his "God in Christ," he used such language as this: "Conceive of him (God) as creating the world, or creating worlds, if you please, *from eternity*. In so doing he only represents, *produces*, or outwardly expresses himself" (p. 146); also, (p. 177): "If God has been *eternally revealed or revealing Himself to created minds*—it is likely always to have been, and always to be, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." It is no wonder that some of his critics saw a tinge of pantheism, or at least of the pantheistic, here.

This Appeal also further insisted, that he had grievously impugned the Incarnation, not only in denying the distinct personality of the Son, but also in denying to Christ a proper human soul. Indeed, he asserted that such a human soul would imply a distinct human personality, and therefore two persons, as well as natures, in Christ. He cast contemptuous doubts on the whole matter of the time of the beginning, and the eternal continuance of the Incarnation, in such terms as the following :

“That theologian must be gifted with a remarkable facility of faith who has never yet found a difficulty in supposing, either that the one God, or that an eternal person of the Divine Three, the Son of God, underwent a permanent change of state before all worlds, in the year 1 of our Christian era ; that in this particular speck of the system of the universe, at a certain date in the parish register, if I may so speak, of the town of Bethlehem, he entered into union with humanity, and is hereafter and forever to reign over the known universe of angels and all the populations of the sky, in the humanity then assumed and shortly after glorified” (*Id.*, p. 112).

Such views of the constitution of Christ’s person, and of its being undistinguishable from that of the Father, not only amount to a long stride toward Unitarianism, but prepare the way for that further advance involved in his views of the direct substitution of Christ’s sufferings for the punishment of the believing sinner.

He declared that “the willingness of God to accept the woes of innocence instead of the woes of guilt, would only indicate the confusion or loss of all moral distinctions ; a readiness to be satisfied with the stipulated quantum of woe, and let justice perish by a double sacrifice—first by releasing the pains of guilt, and again by receiving the pains of holiness” (p. 271). Again, “Take what view we may of the three Persons, He (Christ) is not *other* than God. Then if we hold this point firmly, and do not intermit our faith—to say that God, by acting on Himself, by acting right and left on Himself, satisfies His own justice, and works out the terms or even the awards of government wholly within the circle of Deity without passing out of that circle, will appear to every one to be the simplest form of absurdity” (p. 229). “The whole scheme of suffering in Christ substituted directly for penal suffering in us, is a bare assumption justified by no Scripture authority whatever” (p. 284). “Objective forensic justification is nothing, in fact, but a mode of conceiving the inward subjective deliverance. One is in real truth the other ; just as condemnation passed for sin is a state of being called the state of condemnation or spiritual death” (p. 288). “The forensic justification many speak of and think of, regarding nothing else, is yet only an objective conception of an inward subjective change, which, on that account, is called justification of life” (p. 289).

But while he thus eliminates from the Christian system objective justification through the sufferings and righteousness of Christ vicariously applied as being absurd and monstrous, he nevertheless insists that the Scriptures exhibit the subject in this abhorrent way, and that the soul must work itself and

according to their altar-forms, in order to Christian life and growth.

"It is necessary that Christ, or the given historic matter of His life and death, should be set before us in the objective mystic forms of the altar—an offering, a sacrifice rendered up to God, a propitiation for our sins" (p. 247). God offers Christ to us in this form, although "historically asserted, it would be untrue." "He calls the death of Christ a sacrifice, an offering, a propitiation; declares the remission of sins in His blood; represents Him as bearing the sins of mankind in the way of vicarious substitution; calls Him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; and then He invites us to come and exercise faith in Him as being all these, and so a complete salvation" (p. 241). "The true evangelism goes to Christ in perfect simplicity, to believe in Him as the propitiation, the sin-offering, the expiatory sacrifice, the blood of remission; taking these objective forms according to their most natural power and expression to hang itself on them as the altar of peace and forgiveness" (p. 255). "I, coinciding in the speculative absurdity of imputation, undertake to show how these objective conceptions get their proper validity, and enter, even as necessary elements, into the practical economy of the Christian life" (p. 333). "The most impotent, unreal, and inefficacious of all forms of thought are commonly subjective" (p. 248). "And now there is nothing left for him (the Unitarian) for a Gospel, but to fall to being reconciled to God, or propitiated subjectively toward Him, which is about the same kind of operation as regards success that it would be if one were to think only in prayer of prevailing with himself" (p. 254). These are only a fragment of the citations of like effect in the "Appeal of Fairfield West," which might be easily duplicated from his later works, that, along with some modifications of these views, expressly disclaim their abandonment. He does, however, at a later period speak of these books as "green" (p. 553).

All improvements upon these views, real or supposed, in his later publications, are construed by him not as any surrender, but an enlargement of them. This we think true, properly explained. There is no other way of reaching the correction of errors—always the result of narrow and insufficient insight—but by an enlargement of view. Thus do we learn that the sun's rising is only apparent, not real. If Dr. Bushnell really renounced any of these errors, because in a fuller light he came to see their falsity, of which we have occasional intimations, it would have been no humiliation, but the very crown of his nobility, and better for him and all parties to say so, fully and plainly.

For the simple fact is, that the method of conceiving and treating the fundamentals of divinity and soteriology set forth and insisted on by Dr. Bushnell is absolutely, if not to his mind, yet to the normal human intelligence, a sheer impossibility. It teaches that the soul gets its spiritual life and growth by resting on what, so far from being true, or believed to be so, is "the simplest form of absurdity," and "involves the loss or confusion of all moral distinctions in God." This is simply impossible. No rational being can be edified, or work itself in

holiness, by trust in what is, and it knows to be, absurd, immoral, illusive. Such a process is turning reason into unreason, the truth into a lie, while "no lie is of the truth." No distinction between the "theology of intellect" and "the theology of feeling" can alter this. That cannot be true, or edifying to one's feeling, which is false or monstrous to his intellect. To suppose this, is to suppose that sensibility is above reason as the light and guide of the soul; that feeling, and not intelligence, is the proper receptacle and touch-stone of truth; while, in reality, all proper feeling must be excited by the truth apprehended aright by the reason. It supposes the "loss or confusion of moral distinctions" not only, but of truth and falsehood, vision and blindness. No distinction or confusion of objective and subjective helps the case. An objective sacrifice, or offering of Christ, in expiation of our sin, and satisfaction of divine justice, is not the objective form of an inward faith, or subjective state of reconciliation to God, founded on its being "the simplest form of absurdity." One part of this is a direct negation of the other. Both of two contradictions cannot be true. If this be a principle of logic, which Dr. Bushnell decried, it is none the less an everlasting truth which no breath of genius can extinguish any more than a puff can put out the sun.

Such a presentation of Christian doctrine, required and brought forth for its defence, a system of outworks in depreciation of language, logic, and creeds, as utterly incompetent vehicles, organs, expressions, or tests of truth, doctrine, or opinion. The Fairfield West Association duly emphasized this in their Appeal.\*

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\* In the introduction to his "God in Christ" he tells us: "We never come so near to a well-rounded view of any truth as when it is offered paradoxically; that is, under contradictions" (p. 55). "No good writer, who is occupied simply in expressing truth, is ever afraid of inconsistencies or self-contradictions in his language. It is nothing to him that a quirk of logic can bring him into absurdity" (p. 57). He disparages "clear writers" (p. 87). "Logic itself is a defective and deceitful instrument" (p. 59). But he confesses that he "did not hesitate to make a free use of logic as a negative and destructive instrument" against his adversaries ("Christ in Theology," p. 91). "So far from suffering even the least consciousness of constraint or oppression, under any creed, I have been readier to accept as great a number as fell in my way, for when they are subjected to the deepest chemistry of thought, that which descends to the point of relationship between the form of truth and its interior, formless nature, they become thereupon so elastic, and run so freely into each other, that one seldom need have any difficulty in accepting as many as are offered him" ("God in Christ," p. 82. See also "Christ in Theology," p. 53). "Scientific or propositional theology" is "dogma" (*Id.*, p. 326). He expresses "the painful suspicion that what we call our Christianity is a

Notwithstanding the magic power of Dr. Bushnell's genius and personal fascination, this appeal voiced a wide feeling and produced a profound impression. A large majority of the Congregational Associations of the State demanded that the propounder of such views should be put on trial, and the question tested whether the promulgation of sentiments so contrary to the principles on which the fellowship of Connecticut and New England churches was based, should pass without ecclesiastical rebuke, or hindrance to their propagation. It was, in different forms, brought before successive General Associations, which, disclaiming judicial functions, even in respect to questions concerning their own conditions of membership, nevertheless advised that all obstacles to a trial before the proper tribunal be removed. In the considerable likelihood of such a trial of its pastor before the Hartford North Consociation, to which his church belonged, it withdrew from that body, and placed itself among the independent churches of the State. Thus Dr. Bushnell, to use his own phrase, "carried his point," by

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product only of the organizing force of human dogmatism" ("Theology," *Id.*, p. 70). "The dogmatizer solidifies the smoke he is in by the concentrative force of his own dullness, becoming the most precise of teachers, because he is so mystified by his own vagueness that he hews it into solid blocks of knowledge—which these others accept, in the certainty that they must be solid, because of the exactness of their shapes" (*Id.*, p. 71). The Gospel "requires for an inlet not reason, or logic, or a scientific power, so much as a right sensibility" ("God in Christ," p. 302). No figment "is so vacant of meaning as that dead body of abstractions called theology; which, professing to give us the contents of God's truth, puts us off, too generally, with the mere exuvie of reason; which extinguishes the living fires of truth to show us the figures it can draw in the ashes" (*Id.*, p. 106). "Our dogma even goes beyond the Scripture in asserting the metaphysical Personality of the Spirit. We call him a Person, insist on his personality," etc. (*Id.*, pp. 349-50). "The manner in which dogmatism necessitates division may be well enough illustrated by the mournful separation which has taken place in the New England Churches. Had we been embodied in the simple love of God, under and over such a badge, for example, as the Apostles' Creed, it is very probable to me that the cause of the division would never have existed. But we had an article which asserted a metaphysical Trinity, and this made the assertion of a metaphysical unity inevitable, nay, more, even desirable. So we had a theory of atonement, another of depravity, another of regeneration, or the ingeneration of character, which required the appearance, so to speak, of antagonistic theories" (*Id.*, pp. 303-9). If there was something that startled in such utterances, perhaps the disavowal of responsibility for them was still more startling. He says: "I seem, too, as regards the views presented, to have had about the same agency in forming them that I have in preparing the blood I circulate, and the anatomic frame I occupy. They are not my choice or invention so much as a necessary growth, whose process I can hardly trace myself. . . . Though a man's opinions are of vastly greater moment than his looks, yet, if he is equally simple in them, as in his growth, and equally subject to his law, he is responsible only in the same degree, and ought not, in fact, to suffer any greater concern about their reception than about the judgments passed on his person" (*Id.*, pp. 97-8).

escaping trial. What might have occurred had there been a trial we dare not say. When all efforts to bring the matter to a fair trial had failed, Fairfield West made a final attempt to have the certificates of good standing either discontinued, or stript of all express or implied force as certificates of orthodoxy—a step which the Memoir, with less than its usual good taste and dignity, styles the “last gun.” The most important result of the application was, that Dr. Bushnell, being a member of the body, now assured of immunity from ecclesiastical process, administered a severe rebuke to it for not having sooner shut the door against his assailants (“Life,” pp. 341-4). It was meant as a testimony of the views of its authors as to the necessary logical and prospective effect of what had been done, or left undone, in the case. As to its insight and foresight of the situation, the course of things in the late Congregational Council at St. Louis, are a strong indication.

But, although “carrying his point,” so far as to avoid formal ecclesiastical trial, the result of which would have probably been nothing more than admonition sufficient to prevent his case from serving as a sheltering precedent for a like treatment of the doctrines before recognized as fundamental among orthodox or Trinitarian Congregationalists, yet the “victory” was far from complete. It still, as the Memoir very faithfully states, left him under a cloud of distrust and alienation, amounting almost to isolation, from the great body of his brethren, in and out of the State. This was very painful to him. The other principal ministers and churches in Hartford stood aloof. For a time this was the attitude of the great body of the ministers and churches. A few, however, who had always viewed him from his best doctrinal side, and also felt to the full the spell of his genius, did not thus estimate the enormous drawbacks and counter-statements, which, to the eyes of others, disowned and undermined truths most fundamental, and constrained them, however reluctantly, to insist that some arrest should be put upon the propagation of such sentiments by ministers acting as Christian teachers under the commission and authority of the Congregational body. Though, for many reasons, largely in sympathy with, and even admiring, some of Dr. Bushnell’s criticisms on certain phases of the prevalent forms of religious doctrine and life,

and eagerly seeking their cure ; though we agreed with him in part in the diagnosis of the disease ; yet, when it came to proposing a removal of it by destroying foundations after the manner indicated, there was no alternative. "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen, when we say that, after an acquaintance, now no longer small, with Christian pastors and polemics, ecclesiastical and doctrinal, we have yet to find an abler, more single-minded, candid, self-denying body of men than those who took the lead in these movements. If ever men were free from all sinister taint of selfishness or fanaticism in any undertaking, such were these: especially some of these, long since passed from their "good fight" to take their diadems. We have felt it necessary to let them, "though dead, yet speak" a little of what they said while on earth, on the part they bore in matters of which this volume treats, but could not speak for them. Whoever will study the documents which they issued will have no difficulty in estimating the spirit and power of their authors, the great influence they exerted, or why, notwithstanding this, no serious answer to them was made, or even attempted.\*

But in this exigency, painful as it was to take action thus adverse to one on many accounts beloved and admired, they could "know no man after the flesh." With untold reluctance, labor, anxiety, cost of so much that was dear, they went forward to the end. They discharged their consciences—with what effect it is given us to know only in part. The leaders on the other side of this conflict consisted largely of those endeared, to me at least, by life-long ties, tenderest of all outside of my own household. I can see how, looking more at Dr. Bushnell on sides which satisfy and delight, and less on those which appall and confound, than did others, they should have advocated a course so different from that which seemed to very many imperative. I hope and pray that the policy which, then inaugurated, has gained increasing headway since, of preventing the trial of ministers who furnish strong

\* I will add that the whole movement was largely guided and inspired by a pastor whose associations had been entirely with Yale College—in no way with East Windsor—as student in College, Divinity School, tutor, and member of its governing corporation. He was, beyond all men that I have ever known, remarkable for blending in his composition calmness, serenity, candor, judicial grasp and fairness, an intuitive

*prima facie* ground for trial, will not issue in the evils to the old loved churches of my nativity and nurture which has been so much predicted.\*

Dr. Bushnell's health began to give way soon after these events, doubtless owing largely to the exhausting strain upon his powers, of these publications and the conflicts consequent upon them, preceded and accompanied as they were by herculean labors, in season and out of season, in his congregation, and elsewhere on high occasions. He was, ere long, forced to resign his pastorate, discoursing in public afterward only occasionally. He devoted the strength left him to the preparation of treatises and volumes of sermons for the press. Some of these sermons are remarkable, not only for poetic richness and original thought, but for their quickening inspirations and spiritual stimulus. He published two works on the Atonement, seeking to make some advance on his former positions, which had been so much impugned, but without professedly giving them up. They at least showed a healthful unrest with his original position. To his treatise on the "Supernatural" we have before called attention. Whatever the faults of his theology, his works constitute a monument of his industry and genius which few are able to leave.

During these remaining years, the chastening and mellowing effect of this great affliction was apparent. He grew more devout, rising more and more to the highest mystic standard of face to face communion with God, and of living by faith, in, and from, and through, and unto Christ, formed within him the hope of glory. His solemn charge to a friend in 1870 was, "Set your heart like a flint against every suggestion that

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wisdom and tact—all which, taken together, commanded the confidence of all that knew him: made him mighty in counsel and debate, and a leader in every deliberative body of which he was long a member. Unambitious, he has left no monument of authorship behind him. Loving and lovely, he is embalmed in the affectionate remembrance of those who loved and revered him. I mean THEOPHILUS SMITH—rightly so named, Lover of God. I would say no less, *at inno pectore*, of the venerable NOAH PORTER, father of the President of Yale College, who sustained a like relation to Dr. Bushnell's supporters. Seldom do we find a closer match. They were even finest types of the then rival clergy of Connecticut.

\* I trust that events will prove the absence of any just occasion for the following, cut from the *N. Y. Graphic*, not the only daily secular paper of that city which had articles in a like strain: "If there still remain any orthodox believers in Plymouth Church they must have been shocked by the declarations of the Rev. Mr. Beecher last Sunday (July 4, 1880). 'I don't hold the theory of the Atonement,' said that gifted,

chcapers the blood of the dear, great Lamb, and you will as surely get the meaning of Christ crucified as that he left his life in the world" (p. 519). This is in the true tone of his later life. He ripened in charity with men. He also showed that great power over men, and in affairs, which secured for the city of Hartford the public park which bears his name, and the location of the State House on its present site, in reversal of his original advice, accepted by the people, that it be put upon Bushnell Park.

Meanwhile, how was it in respect to the continuance of his painful isolation from his brethren in the ministry and the churches? In the year 1854 he made strenuous efforts, during a season of awakening in the Hartford churches, to effect a reconciliation with the Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D., the oldest pastor in Hartford and vicinity, justly distinguished for his great ministry, who had been greatly estranged from him on account of the doctrines of the books we have noted. Dr. Hawes declares himself "in agreement with the great majority who have read your (Dr. B.'s) books and have expressed their judgment respecting the doctrines they contain." Their breach was finally healed on the declaration of Dr. Bushnell to Dr. Hawes that he accepted the Trinity as defined in the Westminster Confession, and the twenty-fifth answer of the Shorter Catechism regarding the office-work of "Christ as a priest," in precisely the sense given it by Jonathan Edwards, the younger, in his second sermon on the Atonement. "I could also accept the thirty-third answer, on the subject of Justification by Faith, without any such peremptory denial of the imputed righteousness as is common with the ministry of New England, and certainly without any qualification that would not leave it standing as a most practical Christian truth" ("Life," pp. 335-6). Dr. Hawes accepted this basis, still protesting his disapproval of "the main teachings of Dr. B.'s book." A reconciliation and kindly relations were thus estab-

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but most erratic, preacher. 'I reject the Mosaic economy. I hold a grander theory. If the records of God's work in the infantile period of the world are applied to us, all will go over. It is a gigantic lie that men were created and then fell: that in Adam and Eve the human race fell. The system of the Old Testament is not the system for to-day.' Mr. Beecher has a perfect right to say what he pleases, and his people have an equal right to applaud him if they agree with him. But one who declares that the Book of Genesis 'is a gigantic lie,' and who rejects the doctrine of the Atonement, is a very queer sort of a Christian preacher. What are the other Congregationalist preachers going to do about it?"

lished. Begun here, and on this foundation, the wall of separation between him and numerous others from whom he had been estranged, gave way. His friendly brotherhood with many who never ceased to condemn and deplore the teachings of his book was reestablished. As he after this seldom protruded these views, and almost never without some considerable apparent modification, while his manifestations of religious feeling seemed strongly permeated and inspired by evangelical truth, nay, sublimed by the highest forms of it, most of his orthodox brethren became ready to accept this, if not as a formal recantation, yet as precluding the need of it, or of any minute inquisition for proofs of the need of it. We learn, however, from this Memoir (p. 338), that this Hawes letter was "considered by some of his Unitarian friends as equivalent to a recantation of a part of his former statements, or at least as a yielding of new ground which he had occupied. That he did not consider it so himself, we have his own most unequivocal assertion."

We agree with the biographers that the following passage in one of his letters to Dr. Hawes furnishes the key to his position in this matter :

"You have no right to require *under* given standards that all my reasonings, solutions, and the like shall accord with yours, or that they should not be contrary to yours, and even contrary, *in your view*, to the standards assented to" (p. 338).

We do not doubt that it was all solved by his theory that truth finds its adequate expression in contradiction—a theory filtrated down from the suicidal antinomies of Kant through Schelling's identity of bi-polar opposites, of subject and object in the Absolute perceived by his famous "intellectual intuition," till, through Coleridge, it passed into Bushnell's susceptible and prolific mind. Coleridge indeed asserts it to be "one of the distinguishing characters of *ideas*, . . . that, . . . as expressed in words, it (the idea) is always and necessarily a contradiction in terms" ("Church and State," p. 12). It is hardly worth while to inquire whether any contradiction of former statements by one in the toils of such a theory is or is not a recantation. Could he not "accept as many creeds as are offered him" without conscious inconsistency? Probably a chief charm of this new organum for grasping truth in contradictions was, that it afforded a solution of the controversy between the orthodox and Unitarians. It conceded the validity of the Socinian's objection to the real objective vicarious sacrifice of Christ in

satisfaction of divine justice. It conceded to the orthodox the practical truth of the same as necessary to the support of the Christian life. So they could clasp hands across the chasm, the denials and affirmations of each being made contradictory truths in this amazing dialectic, of which Charles Hodge well observed, "logic is its sword and mysticism its shield."

Yet, while this is the residuum left us, after a sifting of Dr. Bushnell's *speculations* as such, his life, especially the latter part of it, shows that his real faith in Christ was not in him, as a mere power of subjective renovation, but that, in order to its being this inward quickener, he looked to Christ as an objective offering or sacrifice for sin, through which, being freely forgiven and accepted of God, we come into cordial relations of love to, and trust in, Him. So, "having these promises, we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." So justification by faith is the root and support of evangelical holiness. We believe that this was his real creed, however, by his "chemistry of thought," of paradoxes, antilogies, and contradictions, he persuaded himself that what his soul and all souls must trust in and live by, was the "simplest form of absurdity" to the speculative reason. The evidence is that the soul cannot live and comfort and edify itself by treating as true what it sees to be absurd and false. It must if it live, live after all, in such a case on the faith of the truth of what it has argued to be false. This is nothing strange. Men are often mastered by truths which they do not master, nay, even think they reject.

Philosophical idealists are always practical realists. The idealist clergyman whose horse was stolen, was not comforted by being told that "he still had his horse, because he had the idea of him." Men who deny true and proper causality, freedom, good or ill-desert, will show in their thoughts, words, and acts that they believe them and act upon them, even while they think to deny them. Arminians will show in their prayers and hymns that they implicitly believe what they speculatively think they reject as absurd. Dr. Bushnell fully shows, by adopting the "altar form" as the support and aliment of his soul's life, that it was the deepest reality for him, however discredited at the ordeal of his logical reason. He evinced this no less in his successive efforts to elaborate a

nearer approach to objective atonement or propitiation, even without express retraction of his former deliverances. So long as this view of Christ, as objectively bearing our sins, maintains its place in the hymnology and prayers of the Church of all ages, it is futile and even fatuous to denounce it as absurd or untrue. It is quite certain that in religion and elsewhere the practical, working beliefs of good men are far more trustworthy than their definitions and explanations of them, or their deductions from and speculations about them.

This does not alter the fact, that the manner of dealing with these truths, on which we think he lived, by Dr. Bushnell, was every way to be deplored, evil in itself, and evil in its effects. We have known of no conversions of Unitarians, for whose benefit this attempted reconstruction of Christian doctrine was so largely intended, by means of his treatment of them. His most intimate and copious correspondent, from the time of his address at Harvard on the Atonement, to the end of his life, was Dr. Bartol, one of the choicest of Unitarians. He often chides his friend, and the body to which he belonged, as being "too generally naturalistic in their views, failing in adequate conceptions of sin and grace" (see p. 231). On the other hand, if the Unitarians have not been lifted up toward orthodoxy, what of any tokens of approximation from the other side? Is there cause of apprehension here? We hope not. According to Dr. Bartol, Dr. Bushnell "revolted from the notion, now so much discussed, of everlasting punishment." In this, and in the relaxation of old standards of doctrine, not merely in the provincial New England, but, if we may so speak, the Catholic Evangelical, forms, he has had a large following. This is not due exclusively to his influence. But that there has, from one cause and another, been a sloughing off of that encasement or incrustation of Christian doctrine, long idolized as "the New England theology," but, for some time past, justly discarded by some of the great names of Congregationalism as "provincial" rather than catholic, is generally recognized. Within due bounds, and in the right direction, this might be well. We shall be glad if it be succeeded by a return to that more ancient form of Christian doctrine, which Dr. Bushnell claimed to have reached, rather than by growing naturalism, working further doctrinal and ecclesiastical disintegration—from which, O our

God, "spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to reproach!" That Dr. Bushnell should have devoted his great gifts so largely to that work of theological reconstruction for which he was so poorly fitted, instead of further multiplying those magnificent prose-poems given forth from the press, pulpit, and rostrum, in which he had no peer, is to be regretted. That he was thus an instrument of consuming some wood, hay, and stubble, with which the wit of men had overlaid Christian truth and life; and that he thus brought the person of Christ into new prominence, is, we hope, justly claimed. That he did so much to undermine and confuse the true conception of the Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, of language, logic, and creeds, we lament.

We were about to close by saying in substance what we find better said by his intimate friend, Dr. Austin Phelps, of Andover: "He could afford, therefore, to speak very genially of his opponents. They were, in his view, unconscious workers with him as far as they knew. The difference between him and them was only that he knew much more" (p. 339). Says Dr. Bushnell: "All such inferences" as they (common theologians) draw from texts of Scripture, "I say are easy. It requires the least possible insight to draw them; and the less of insight one has, the more likely he is to draw them" ("Christ in Theology," p. 97).

Surely, on such a height, all polemics and combatants, creeds, conflicts, and differences must look petty and insignificant; none the less so, if the exalted spectator is somewhat bewildered and giddy with his elevation. It must be confessed that humility was not the element most conspicuous in Dr. Bushnell's character. But it is a pleasing compensation for this that it was so free from "envy, malice, and uncharitableness" toward men; so filled, despite all unhappy speculations, with all the fulness of God in Christ. Few have so much of that creative imagination which makes it "a vision and faculty divine." He was more of a seer than a constructive reasoner. Doubtless any obliquities or shadows that marred his beholdings here are now cleared away in the immediate vision of God and the Lamb.

LYMAN H. ATWATER.