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ARTICLE VI.

HOPKINSIANISM.

BY REV. ENOCH POND, D.D., PROFESSOR IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

HOPKINSIANISM is Calvinism, in distinction from every form and shade of Arminianism; and yet not Calvinism, in precisely the sense of Calvin, or of the Westminster Confession of faith. It is a modification of some of the points of old Calvinism, presenting them, as its abettors think, in a more reasonable, consistent, and scriptural point of light. These modifications originated in New England, more than a hundred years ago. They commenced with the first President Edwards, and were still further unfolded in the teachings of his pupils and followers, Hopkins, Bellamy, West, the younger Edwards, Dr. Emmons, and Dr. Spring.

The name "Hopkinsian" is derived from Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, R. I., and was fastened upon those who sympathized with him, not by himself, but by an opponent. It originated, as Dr. Hopkins tells the story, in this wise: "In the latter part of the year 1769, Mr. William Hart of Saybrook, published a dialogue, under the following title: 'Brief Remarks on a Number of false Positions, and dangerous Errors, which are spreading in the Country; collected out of sundry Discourses lately published by Dr. Whittaker and Mr. Hopkins.' Soon after, there was a small pamphlet published, which was doubtless written by the same Mr. Hart, in which the doctrines which I, and others who agreed with me, had published, were misrepresented and set in a ridiculous light; and with a particular design to disgrace me before the public, he called them *Hopkintonian doctrines*. This is the origin of the epithet; and since that time, all who embrace the Calvinistic doctrines as published by President Edwards, Dr. Bellamy, Dr. West of Stockbridge, and myself, have been called Hopkintonians or Hopkinsians.

Thus, without designing it, I am become the head of a denomination, which has since greatly increased, in which thousands are included, ministers and others, who, I believe, are the most sound and consistent Calvinists.”

In the year 1796, Dr. Hopkins says again: “About forty years ago, there were but few, perhaps not more than four or five, who espoused the sentiments which have since been called *Edwardean* and *New Divinity*, and still later (after some improvements made upon them), *Hopkinsian sentiments*. But these sentiments have so spread since that time, that there are now more than a hundred ministers in the United States, who espouse the same sentiments; and the number appears to be fast increasing.”¹

Some have doubted whether President Edwards had much to do in originating the Hopkinsian peculiarities; but we have here the testimony of Dr. Hopkins to this effect. We have also the testimony of his own published writings, and of his son. The late Dr. Edwards has an entire Article entitled, “Remarks on the Improvements made in Theology by President Edwards.”² The topics mentioned by Dr. Edwards, on which his father was supposed to have shed new light, were the following: The ultimate end of God in creation; liberty and necessity; the nature of true virtue or holiness, as consisting in disinterested love; the origin of moral evil; the doctrine of atonement; Adam’s sin and Christ’s righteousness; the state of the unregenerate, their use of means, and the directions proper to be addressed to them; also the nature of regeneration, and of true experimental religion. Some of these topics were very fully discussed by Edwards himself; others were treated more at large by his followers.

Previous to the time of Edwards, the subject of *moral agency* had not been thoroughly investigated, and was not understood. Certain things were supposed to be involved in freedom of will, which are not involved in it; and from this mistaken supposition resulted consequences unfavora-

¹ Autobiography, pp. 96, 102.

² Works, Vol. I. p. 481.

ble to the truth. Up to this period, for example, freedom of will was supposed by many to imply *indifference* of will, or that fallen man is not the subject of any controlling, natural bias to evil. Hence, those who held the doctrine of natural depravity were charged with denying the freedom of the will.

It was formerly insisted, too, that freedom of action necessarily implies *contingency* of action, or that there can be no previous certainty, or moral necessity, relative to the actions of free agents. Hence, many were led to argue, from the conscious freedom of man, against the doctrines of God's foreknowledge and decrees; while others, who admitted these doctrines, felt constrained, on this account, to deny the freedom of the will.

It was moreover asserted by Arminians, and admitted by some distinguished Calvinists, in the days of Edwards, that freedom of will necessarily implies *a self-determining power of the will*. Calvinists, who made this admission, felt the necessity of maintaining, in opposition to materialists and fatalists, the proper freedom of the will; and they knew not how to do it but by admitting that the will determines itself, or that man originates his own volitions, independent of any external cause.¹

It was under these circumstances, that Edwards undertook his celebrated treatise on "The Freedom of the Will." Never was a work of the kind more needed, and few works have ever exerted a greater or better influence. In this work (after occupying a few sections with his definitions of terms) President Edwards goes on to show — in opposition

¹ The younger Edwards, speaking of the state of things in the religious world, at the time when his father commenced writing his treatise on the will, says: "The Calvinists themselves began to be ashamed of their own cause, and to give it up, so far at least as relates to liberty and necessity. This was true especially of Doctors Watts and Doddridge, who, in their day, were accounted leaders of the Calvinists. They must needs bow in the house of Rimmon, and admit the *self-determining power*, which, once admitted, and pursued to its ultimate results, entirely overthrows the doctrines of regeneration, of our dependence for renewing and sanctifying grace, of absolute decrees, of the saint's perseverance, and of all the other doctrines of grace." — Works, Vol. I. p. 482

to Arminians, Pelagians, and Infidels — that liberty of will does not imply indifference of will, or contingency, or a self-determining power, but merely *choice*, or *the power of choice*, “without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause or original of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition.” In other words, President Edwards maintained that freedom is an *essential property of will*. He insisted that “wherever there is volition, there is free action; wherever there is spontaneity, there is liberty; however and by whomsoever that liberty and spontaneity are caused.”

This is not the place in which to examine minutely the arguments of Edwards, or to point out the manner in which he disposed of the objections of his subtle adversaries. Suffice it to say that, in the opinion of no less a man than Dugald Stewart, his arguments “were never answered, and never will be;” and his replies to objections were such that, after long and frequent discussion, the fairness and conclusiveness of them have not been successfully impeached.

We have dwelt so long on Edwards’s improvements in regard to this one topic of moral agency, that we shall not have time to touch upon some others, which were elaborated solely or chiefly by himself. His treatise on “Original Sin” was, perhaps, less satisfactory to most of his followers, than any of his works; and yet he scarcely differed from the views now prevailing among the orthodox of New England, except in a single point, viz. the constituted *oneness* of Adam and his posterity, so that they literally “sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.” Few among us at the present day would say, we imagine, as much as this. Yet we all say, with Edwards, that there is, in the posterity of Adam universally, and as a consequence of his first transgression, a prevailing *bias* or *tendency* to sin, through the influence of which they are from the first corrupted; sin is natural to them; and they go on sinning, and only sinning, until they are renewed by sovereign grace. To establish this fundamental doctrine, in opposition to Taylor, Whitby, and others, who denied it, was the main design of Edwards’s

treatise; and, although some who revere his name would not adopt his entire phraseology on the subject, yet all agree in regarding his work as, perhaps, the ablest defence of human depravity, and of the connection of this depravity with the first sin of Adam, that was ever written.

Some of the topics referred to by Dr. Edwards were discussed more fully by the followers of his father, than by himself. Thus the difficult question as to the origin of evil, and the reasons why it is suffered to exist, was treated with much ability by Bellamy and Hopkins. Bellamy's "Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin" is a work very generally known. In the year 1759, Hopkins published three sermons on the same subject, which have been less read, but are equally satisfactory.

But it is time that we consider more particularly some of the main points of the Hopkinsian theology.

As the peculiarities of the Hopkinsians were of gradual development, there was not, and could not have been, an entire agreement among the leaders in this movement. Hopkins, though a favorite pupil of the elder Edwards, did not adopt all his statements; nor was Emmons an exact follower of Hopkins; nor do those at the present day who accept, in general, the views of these great theologians, feel bound to follow them implicitly. Freedom of speech and of opinion has always been cultivated among them; and hence, of necessity, there has been, and is, some variety of statement. In presenting an abstract of their opinions, we shall confine ourselves to a few leading points, on which, it is supposed, there is a substantial agreement.¹

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

The sovereignty of God belongs to him as the Supreme Disposer, and consists in his perfect right, and perfect ability, to do as he pleases. He sits upon the throne of the

¹ We use the word "Hopkinsian" in this Article, not in an ultra and restricted sense, but in its original application, as including all those who adopt, in general the New England explanations, in distinction from those of the older Calvinism.

universe, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion," where he reigns supreme and alone, doing all his pleasure. Job understood this doctrine when he said: "God is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." Nebuchadnezzar understood it, when he said of the Most High: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Still better is the doctrine expressed by Jehovah himself: "I, even I am he, and there is no god with me. I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." "I am God, and there is none else; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."¹

God is a sovereign in his *purposes*. They are eternal and immutable like himself. They are from everlasting to everlasting, neither needing nor suffering any change. They are also strictly universal, extending to all beings and worlds, to all creatures and events, to everything that was, or is, or is to come, throughout his immense dominions.

God is a sovereign also in his *providence*. His providence is the great revealer and executor of his purposes. He is rolling along the vast wheel of his providence in its appointed course; never disappointed or defeated in any of his plans; upholding, controlling, and governing all things. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. i. 11).

God is a sovereign, too, in the dispensations of his *grace*. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. ix. 18). He takes one and leaves another, saves one and destroys another, as seemeth good in his sight. Nor is he under obligations to explain to his creatures, any further than he pleases, the reasons of his dispensations. These are among the secret things,

¹ Job. xxiii. 13; Dan. iv. 35; Deut. xxxii. 39; Isa. xlv. 9.

which belong only to himself. "He giveth not account of any of his matters" (Job xxxiii. 13).

Still, there is nothing arbitrary or oppressive in the sovereignty of God, or in his mode of executing it. It is an infinitely wise and benevolent sovereignty. Like himself, it is holy, just, and good. He has the best reasons for all his purposes and dispensations, though these, for the present, may be a secret to us. He is aiming, in all, at the noblest ends, by the wisest means. He is promoting, by all, his own highest glory, and the greatest possible good.

Nor is there aught in the sovereignty of God which allies it to the doctrine of heathen fate. The fates of the heathen were an endless relentless chain of causes and effects; holding everything by an invincible, physical necessity; binding alike both gods and men. The sovereign purposes of God are the plans of an infinitely wise and good being, freely adopted and freely executed; not merely leaving, but securing, his intelligent creatures in the exercise of a free, responsible agency. But this brings us to another point of Hopkinsian divinity.

THE DOCTRINE OF FREE-AGENCY.

We have already given some account of the labors of the first President Edwards, in this department of theology. His great work on the "Freedom of the Will," was designed to remove certain objections which had long been urged against the Calvinistic doctrines. And most effectually it did remove them. They could no more stand the fire of his logic, to use the language of Isaac Taylor, "than a citadel of rooks could maintain its integrity against a volley of musketry." He exposed to contempt, in all their evasions, the Arminian notions of contingency, and indifferency, and a self-determining power, as being essential to freedom of action.

Hopkinsians of a later day would not hold themselves responsible for every statement in Edwards on the Will. Owing to a defective mental philosophy, some of his expressions are ambiguous, and may be interpreted to signify the

very opposite of what the author probably intended.¹ Still, as to the conclusiveness of the reasoning, and the correctness and value of the work as a whole, there has been but one opinion. By all Hopkinsian teachers of theology, it has been used as a text-book, from the time of its publication to the present hour; and distant be the day when it shall lose its place and its authority in our theological schools.

We need not dwell longer on this topic, or go into more particular explanations. Whatever may have been thought and said as to the bearing of some parts of the Hopkinsian system on the question of free-agency, the fact is undeniable that there have been no more strenuous advocates for a full, unembarrassed human freedom, than are to be found among theologians of this class. With united voice they would adopt the language of a venerable Hopkinsian teacher, who once addressed his pupils in the following terms: "We wish you to feel the importance of maintaining steadfastly, and under all circumstances, the unembarrassed free-agency of man. Whatever else you may deny, be sure that you hold fast to this. Whatever theories you may be led to form, or views of doctrine you may embrace, be sure that you make room for this. Abandon the free, responsible agency of man, and the very foundations of religion and morality are all broken up. The purposes of God become fixed fate; man is converted into a sort of intellectual automaton; the sense whether of good or ill desert, is but a vulgar prejudice; moral distinctions are obliterated; virtue and vice are but mere names; and there is nought left on which so much as a theory of religion and morality can be based. Again then I say, whatever else you hold or deny, hold fast the free, responsible agency of man."

¹ Pres. Edwards followed Locke in referring all our mental phenomena to the *understanding and the will*; ignoring entirely the great central department of the sensibilities. In consequence of this we find him referring, sometimes to the understanding, and sometimes to the will, what clearly belongs to the sensibilities. In this mistake he was followed by most of the earlier Hopkinsian writers.

THE NATURE OF SIN.

There is a difference of opinion on this point, between Hopkinsians and the generality of old-school Calvinists. The latter make two kinds of sin, original and actual, the sin of nature and of practice; whereas the former hold that all sin is of an active nature — an actual transgression of God's holy law. All sin, they say, is, purely or partially, directly or indirectly, *voluntary*.

By this, however, they do not mean that sin attaches only to our executive volitions and outward actions, but use the term "voluntary" in a much wider sense. Our resolutions, our purposes, our intentions, our preferences, our wishes, our moral affections, our desires — such of them, at least, as are not instinctive — are as really voluntary as our executive volitions, and are either holy or sinful, as they conform or not to the standard of God's law.

Nor do these writers understand that sin is *altogether* of a voluntary character. Many of our sinful affections and actions are in their nature complex, partly intellectual, partly sentient, and but partially voluntary. Take the sin of intemperance, or any form of sensual indulgence. Here are improper thoughts involved, which are intellectual; inflamed appetites, which are sentient; and the choice to gratify them, which is voluntary. And so of fraud, theft, murder, and many other sins. They are of a complex character. When strictly analyzed, although the voluntary element enters into them, and makes them sinful, they are found to be but partially voluntary.¹

Many of our mental affections are holy or sinful, because they are, to some extent, under the direction of the will. This is true of our trains of thought. These are so far under the control of the will, that improper thoughts, when indulged, become sinful thoughts. And the same is true of our sentient feelings. We are commanded to be of good cheer, to rejoice

¹ Many of our holy affections are in like manner complex. Take *repentance* for an example. This involves conviction of sin, which is chiefly intellectual; sorrow for sin, which is sentient; and a turning away from sin, which is voluntary.

in the Lord, and to sympathise with those around us, in their sorrows and joys. The states of mind here indicated are chiefly sentient; but being more or less under the control of the will, they are with propriety enjoined upon us. When duly exhibited, they are right; when otherwise, they are sinful.

These explanations will show how much is intended, when it is said that all sin is, in its nature, active; that it is, purely or partially, directly or indirectly, voluntary. It is not meant that all our sinful affections are purely voluntary; but that into them all the voluntary element enters, so as to make them active, and give them a moral and a sinful character.

In proof that all sin is, in the sense explained, active and voluntary, the following considerations have been urged :

1. All sin is positively prohibited in the scriptures. We are commanded to be holy; we are forbidden to be sinful: "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." This is the substance of all the commands and prohibitions of the Bible. Now though there are various things involved in these commands and prohibitions, they are all addressed, obviously, to our *active natures*, and the things required or forbidden imply an exercise of will. The imperative phraseology: *Do this, Do that*, or *Thou shalt not do this, Thou shalt not do that*, implies that there is something to be done, or not done; something in which the subject is supposed to be voluntary. Unless, therefore, some form of sin can be pointed out which God has not prohibited, and which cannot with propriety be prohibited, we are bound to believe that all sin is alike in one respect: it is, in its nature, active.

2. Not only does God prohibit every form of sin, he uses all proper *motives* with his sinful creatures, to induce them to forsake their sins and become holy. He invites them, entreats them, pleads and reasons with them, and urges every motive which ought to have influence upon their minds and hearts. Now all this necessarily implies that in sinning and repenting, men are voluntary; that sin is, in its very nature, active. On any other supposition, motives would be quite

out of place, and all attempts at persuasion would be impertinent.

3. In proof of the active nature of sin, an appeal has been made to the testimony of conscience. It is assumed that conscience approves of whatever is holy within us, and condemns what is sinful. But does conscience approve or condemn us, do we feel worthy of praise or blame, reward or punishment, for that in which we have had no active concern? Let any person make the experiment. Let him try it on himself, or on another. The African may feel sometimes, perhaps, that his complexion is his misfortune; but endeavor to impress upon him a sense of guilt, and make him feel that he is to blame, and deserving of punishment, for the color of his skin; and see if you can succeed in the undertaking. But why not? The most ignorant African has sense enough to reply: "I did not make the color of my skin. I had no active concern in it. How, then, am I to blame for it?" This is a subject on which the common sense of all men speaks out; and to force a theological dogma, or a philosophical speculation, in opposition to common sense, is to encounter an invincible assailant.

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret. No man ever felt himself blameworthy, no man's conscience ever approved or condemned him, for that in which he was not himself active. It follows, since conscience does condemn us for whatever is morally wrong or sinful within us, that sin, in all its forms and degrees, is active.

4. It is further urged, in proof of the same point, that it is for their *deeds* only that men are to give an account in the day of judgment. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he *hath done*, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). "Who shall render to every man according to *his deeds*" (Rom. ii. 6). "Then shall he reward every man according to *his works*" (Matt. xvi. 27). All persons who believe in a coming judgment suppose that men will be called to an account there for their sins, and for all their sins. But if this be true, then it follows, from the

passages quoted, that all their sins fall under the category of *works, deeds* ; which is but saying that in all their sins they are voluntary and active.

5. The apostle John has given us a definition of sin, in which the same view is presented. "Sin is a transgression of the law." And lest this might not be sufficiently explicit, he tells us, in the same verse, what he means by transgression. It is *actively to commit sin*. "He that *commit-teth* sin transgresseth also the law" (1 John iii. 4). If John understood aright the nature of sin, this surely ought to settle the question.

6. It is still further said, in illustration of the views which have been presented, that as all holy affections are, in essence, love — supreme love to God, and impartial, disinterested love to the creatures of God, so all sin may be resolved into *selfishness*. By selfishness is meant, not that instinctive desire of happiness which is a mere feeling, which no one can or should repress ; nor that love of ourselves which we are bound to exercise, as constituting a part of the great whole ; nor that care and interest which every one is bound to take in respect to his own proper concerns, without needlessly interfering with those of others ; but by selfishness is meant a *supreme love of self* ; a setting up of self above everything else, making it a central point, and estimating other objects as they bear upon this. Selfishness, in this sense, is the opposite of that holy, disinterested love, which is "the bond of perfectness," "the fulfilling of the law," and on which "hang all the law and the prophets," and consequently may be regarded as comprising all sin. As every holy affection may be resolved into love, so envy, avarice, pride, revenge, and every other sinful affection may be resolved into selfishness. But selfishness, certainly, is an active principle. A dormant, passive, inert selfishness is a contradiction in terms.

The importance of the views here expressed, in regard to the active nature of sin, will more fully appear, as we proceed with this discussion. At present, we turn to a kindred topic of great interest :

THE ATONEMENT.

Our older standard authors have little to say, in terms, respecting the atonement. The word seldom occurs in their writings, except in reference to the typical atonements of the Old Testament. They merge what is now technically called the atonement in the more general subject of redemption. And since the atonement has come to be separately discussed, there is not an entire agreement among evangelical Christians with regard to its nature and efficiency. The old-school Calvinists consider the atonement of Christ as consisting in his personal obedience and death; the latter availing to the believer as the ground of his forgiveness, the former as the ground of his reward. But Hopkinsian writers, while they attach an indispensable importance to the perfect obedience of Christ as a prerequisite to the atonement,—as that without which no atonement could have been made,—still regard the atonement as consisting essentially in his sufferings and death. In proof of this position, several considerations have been urged.

In the first place, Christ's obedience could not meet the chief *necessity* of an atonement. That which is needed is something to sustain law; something to stand in place of the threatened penalty of the law; something which will answer all the purposes of moral government *as well* as the execution of the penalty. An expedient of this nature would be an atonement; anything short of it would not be. Now it is obvious that the perfect holiness of Christ was no substitute for the penalty threatened to transgressors. It was not adapted to be. It could not be. There was need of suffering here. The penalty of the law consists in suffering, and an equivalent, a substitute, must be of the same nature.

A like view is presented in the typical atonements of the Old Testament. These all prefigured the atonement of Christ, and may be supposed, so far as they go, to prefigure it accurately. Now it was indispensable to the acceptableness of an offering under the law, that the animal offered should be perfect in its kind. It must be without spot or

blemish; thus indicating the necessity of the perfect holiness of Christ. Still, the typical atonement did not consist in the spotlessness of the lamb, but in the shedding of its blood. It was the blood, emphatically, which made the atonement. So the atonement of Christ prefigured by that of the law, must be supposed to consist in the shedding of his blood.

The same view is presented in numerous passages of scripture. The utmost stress is everywhere laid in the scriptures upon the cross, the blood, the death of Christ, as that in which the expiation, the atonement, properly consists. To quote passages in proof of this point would be superfluous. Christ is said to have been a sacrifice, an offering, an oblation, a propitiation for sin. He is said to have suffered for our sins, to have died for our sins, to have been delivered for our offences, and to have been made a curse for us in hanging on a tree. The strongest expressions are used in different parts of the Bible to set forth the nature of Christ's atonement, as consisting in his sufferings and death.

And while so great stress is laid on the death of Christ, we find his obedience spoken of in only a few instances; and in most of these, if not all (as the connection shows), the reference is to what has been called his *passive* obedience, or his obedience unto death. "Yet learned he obedience by the things that he *suffered*" (Heb. v. 8). "Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient *unto death*" (Phil. ii. 8). "By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). These are the only passages in the Bible, in which the obedience of Christ is spoken of. The first two refer, certainly, to his obedience in suffering; and by the most judicious commentators, the last passage quoted is interpreted in the same way.

There is a difference, also, between Hopkinsians and other Calvinists as to the *efficacy* of the atonement, or the manner in which it avails to our justification. Some have believed that, by suffering for us, Christ literally *paid our debt to divine justice*. So taught Anselm, in the twelfth

century, and Aquinas in the thirteenth, and many others of later date, in both the Romish and Protestant churches. But to this theory there are insuperable objections. In the first place, the demands of governmental justice against us are not of the nature of a debt, and cannot be cancelled as such. And then if they were so, and the atonement of Christ had cancelled the debt, we should owe nothing to the law. The law would no longer have any demands against us. We should need no forgiveness, nor would forgiveness be possible; as nought would remain to be forgiven.

Some have said that the death of Christ availed to make an atonement for sinners, not by paying a literal debt, but by his suffering for them the strict and proper *penalty of the law*. But to this statement there are also serious objections. The first grows out of the very nature of the penalty in question. This is *eternal death*—an eternal separation from God and from all good—the eternal destruction of body and soul in hell. It involves all the agonies of the bottomless pit; not the least part of which are the direct results of *present personal sin and guilt*;—the indulgence of the most hateful, painful passions; the stings and reproaches of conscience; dissatisfaction with God and his government; and a perpetual, burning sense of his displeasure. Did our Saviour suffer all these, or any of them? Being perfectly holy, was it possible that he should? How could such a being endure the pangs of unsated malice, envy and revenge? How could he suffer from the stings and reproaches of conscience? In other words, how could he suffer the pains and agonies of the bottomless pit, which go to constitute the proper penalty of the law?

But suppose that Christ did suffer all this. Suppose him to have suffered, not only as much as all his elect would suffer in hell forever, but the *very same*, “agony for agony, and groan for groan;” would he even then have suffered the proper penalty of the law? Manifestly not; and for the very sufficient reason that he was not the *transgressor* of the law. The penalty of the law is denounced upon the

transgressor, and upon no one else. "In the day that thou eatest thereof *thou* shalt surely die." "The soul that sinneth *it* shall die." Such is the language which the law uses, in setting forth its penalty; and we see, from the very terms employed, that the *penalty* can fall upon none but the transgressor. Another may step in and endure a full *equivalent*, and so make a full expiation; but the proper penalty he cannot endure, even though he should suffer in kind and amount the same.

There is yet another objection to the theory in question — the same as that before considered. If Christ has suffered the full penalty of the law for us, then the law has no further demands against us. We need no forgiveness, nor is forgiveness possible. There is nothing left to be forgiven. Forgiveness is a remission of the incurred penalty of the law. But the penalty, on the supposition, has all been endured. It no longer remains to be remitted. God will not exact it twice; nor can he remit it, when it is no longer due.

But if the death of Christ did not avail to make an atonement, either by paying our debt to justice, or by his suffering for us the proper penalty of the law, how did it avail? In what does its atoning virtue or efficacy consist? Hopkinsians answer these questions by saying that, although Christ did not suffer the proper penalty of the law, he suffered a full *equivalent* for the penalty — a complete governmental *substitute for it*. His sufferings and death in our room and stead as fully sustain the authority of law, as fully meet the demands of justice, as fully answer all the purposes of the divine government, as would the infliction of the penalty itself; and consequently they are a complete *substitute for the penalty*, or in other words, a complete atonement.

It is believed by all evangelical Christians, that Christ's death was *vicarious*, or that he died as a *substitute*. But a substitute how, and for what? Not that he endured the proper penalty of the law for us, but an adequate *substitute for that penalty*; so that the penalty itself may now be safely and consistently remitted. Were the penalty all borne, nothing would be left to be remitted. But as it has not

been borne, but only a governmental substitute for it, as it has not been removed, but only a way opened in which it may be; there is as much need of forgiveness, and as much to be forgiven, as though the Saviour had not died.

It is claimed as an advantage of this view of the atonement, that it makes it, as to its sufficiency, *universal*. The other view goes to limit the atonement; and so it is understood by those in general who advocate it. Christ would not endure the full penalty of the law for those whom it was not his purpose to save; and who, of course, would not be benefitted by his death. And yet the scriptures assure us that, as to its nature and sufficiency, the atonement of Christ is universal. It was made for all men. He "died for all;" he "gave himself a ransom for all;" he "tasted death for every man;" he "is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world."¹ Christ's atonement is as sufficient for one as for another. It is sufficient for all who will embrace it, and rest upon it.

Accordingly, the invitations of the gospel are sounded forth indiscriminately to all men. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" "look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" "whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." Such, clearly, is the scriptural view, as to the extent and sufficiency of the atonement; and such is the view presented in the Hopkinsian or governmental theory. This makes the atonement universal in its very nature. There is nothing to limit it but the sovereign pleasure of him who made it, or to whom it was made.

Another advantage of this theory is, that it harmonizes entirely the idea of a full and complete atonement, with that of *free grace* in forgiveness or justification. On the other theories noticed, these ideas can never be reconciled. If Christ paid our whole debt to justice, or suffered for us the full penalty of the law, then, supposing forgiveness possible (which it is not), certainly there could be no grace in

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 2.

it. There might be grace in providing the substitute, but none in remitting a debt which had been fully cancelled, or a penalty which had been already endured. But on the other theory, the penalty of the law has not been endured, but only a governmental equivalent. Hence, as before remarked, there is as much need of forgiveness, and as much to be forgiven, and *as much grace in bestowing pardon*, as though the Saviour had not died. On this ground, the sinner is "justified freely *by grace*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 4).

The views of Hopkinsians as to the nature of sin (of which we have before spoken), give a peculiarity to their ideas on another subject, viz. :

NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

Those who hold to two kinds of sin, original and actual, the sin of nature and the sin of practice, regard the former of these as *innate*. It is born with us. It attaches to the very nature and constitution of the soul, and, is with the strictest propriety, called our *sin of nature*. It lies back of everything active within us, and is the prolific fountain of corruption, out of which all actual transgression flows.

Such views of natural depravity, Hopkinsian writers, of course, do not accept. They believe in the doctrine of natural as well as entire depravity; that sin is natural to us; that we are the subject of a natural bias or tendency to evil, under the influence of which we sin, and only sin, until we are renewed by sovereign grace.

Hopkinsians believe that, in our fallen state, we have a *nature to sin*; nor would they object to the phrase *sinful nature*, if by this is meant an *active nature*; something which stirs itself spontaneously, actively, within us, and consists in an active sinning against God. But to the doctrine of a sinful nature which is not active, which is back of everything active within us, the source of all actual transgression, and without a change of which no right action can be performed, they have strong objections.

They find no ground in the scriptures or in their own

consciousness, for these two kinds of sin; for the one of which we feel guilty, and are conscious of deserving blame and punishment, but for the other of which we feel no guilt, since in it we have had no active concern.

Then the theory here examined makes God the responsible author of sin, at least of that sin which attaches to our nature, and is the source and fountain of all the rest. If God is not its responsible author, who is? Certainly we have had no active concern in its origination. It was born with us; it attaches to the very constitution of our souls; and must be charged, for aught we see, upon the great author of our being.

Also the theory under consideration divests us entirely and confessedly of every kind of ability to do our duty. We are utterly disabled. Until our natures are changed, and in this change of nature we are entirely passive, we can no more perform a good action than we can fly without wings, or work miracles.

Hence, the Bible, on this ground, is utterly in fault, in requiring sinners to do their duty, and in threatening them so severely in case they refuse to comply. It is in fault, too, in using motives with sinners to induce them to do what they have no ability of any kind to perform.

On this ground, ministers have little or nothing to do for the sinner, unless it be to condole with him, pray for him, and commend him to the mercy of God, who, peradventure, may have mercy upon him. Certainly, ministers can give no directions to the sinner, according to this theory, except that he use means with such a nature as he has, and wait and pray for God to change it.

It is further objected to the theory in question, that it is inconsistent with facts recorded in the scriptures. This theory accounts for all sin, by referring it to a sinful nature, and denies that actual sin can be conceived of as possible, on any other supposition. How, then, are we to account for the first sin of the rebel angels; and for that of our first parents? Did their first sin arise from a sinful nature? And if so, how was this sinful nature acquired?

But it is needless to pursue this theory of depravity further. It is a theory, not of the Bible, but of the schools. It is a philosophical theory, or rather a very unphilosophical one, of stating and defending some of the doctrines of the gospel. It is believed that the Hopkinsian view of sin and depravity, as before explained, runs clear of all the above objections, and is in strict accordance with the Bible, with sound philosophy, and with common sense.

NATURAL AND MORAL ABILITY AND INABILITY.

Another peculiarity of the Hopkinsians consists in their cognizance and use of the very important distinction between natural and moral ability and inability. They cannot be said to have originated this distinction, because it is as old, probably, as the use of words. We find it in all languages, ancient and modern. We find it in all books, and in reference to all sorts of subjects; so that those who are inclined to repudiate it, find it next to impossible to succeed. The *μη δύναμαι* of the Greek, the *non possum* of the Latin, the *ne puis pas* of the French, the little *cannot* of the English, are continually used in two different senses; the one expressing what is called a *moral*, the other a *natural* inability; the one a mere inability of disposition and will, the other an inability extraneous to the will, and over which the will has no power. We ask a pious friend to lift for us a thousand pounds. He replies: "I cannot do it." We ask him to go to some place of amusement on the Sabbath; he replies again: "I cannot do it." In both cases he pleads, and pleads properly (as terms are used) an inability. But who does not see that here are two kinds of inability? Our friend has no natural power to lift a thousand pounds. He could not do it, if he would. He *has* the natural power to comply with the other request, and only lacks the willing mind.

We ask a companion who is walking with us in the field to leap to the top of a precipice fifty feet high. He says "I cannot." But having clambered to the top, we ask him to leap down; he says again "I cannot." In both cases,

his answer is the same in terms. He is unable either to leap up, or to leap down. But clearly, the inability in the two cases is not of the same nature. Our friend could not leap up the precipice, if he would; but he could break his neck by leaping down, if he was so inclined.

The distinction here illustrated is that between natural and moral ability and inability. It is a distinction, as we said, which runs through all languages and all books. It recurs continually in common conversation. Not one of us passes a single day, unless we pass it in utter solitude, without repeatedly using the words *can* and *cannot* in the two senses above indicated.

This distinction shows itself very often in the Bible, and that, too, in reference to a great variety of subjects. In the following passages, the inability spoken of is natural: "When Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim that he *could not see*" (1 Sam. iii. 2). "The magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but *they could not*" (Ex. viii. 18). The men in the ship with Jonah, "rowed hard to bring it to the land but *they could not*" (John. i. 13).

In the following passages, an entirely different kind of inability is spoken of. Joseph's brethren "hated him, and *could not speak peaceably unto him*" (Gen. xxxvii. 4). "We *cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv. 20). "I have married a wife, and therefore I *cannot come*" (Luke xiv. 20). In each of these cases there is obviously no lack of capacity, of natural power. The inability is wholly of a moral nature, the inability of will.

In establishing the fact of the distinction in question, we have indicated, to some extent, the nature and grounds of it. Natural ability has respect to the natural capacity or faculties of an individual. Moral ability has respect to the disposition, the concurrent will, or (which is the same) to the predominant motive, with which the will always coincides. We have the natural ability to do whatever is within the reach of our natural capacity, faculties, or powers — those with which the God of nature has endowed us. We have moral ability to

do whatever, under the influence of the predominant motive, we are inclined, disposed, or willing to perform.

Calvinists of the old school deny the natural ability of the sinner to turn to God, and do his duty. He is utterly incapacitated for the performance of right actions. His very nature is sinful, and must be changed, before he can do anything that God shall approve.

From views such as these, Hopkinsian writers dissent. They assert, as strongly as any others, the entire sinfulness of the natural man; but his sinfulness does not destroy the faculties of moral agency, but rather implies them. He is still a free, moral, responsible agent, and as such is naturally capable of doing his duty. His inability to perform it is wholly of the moral kind — the same which Joseph's brethren felt when "they hated him, and *could not* speak peaceably unto him;" the same which Peter and John were under, when they "*could not* but speak the things which they they had seen and heard."

It is objected to what we have called natural ability that, if possessed at all, it must be a useless, worthless endowment; since, unless united with moral ability, or a moving, concurrent will, it accomplishes nothing in a way of action. It is admitted that mere natural ability, or faculties alone, accomplish nothing. Still it does not follow that this kind of ability is of no importance. Are not our faculties of body and mind important to us? What could we do, or how subsist as moral beings, without them? If mere natural ability accomplishes nothing, in a way of action, it is certain that nothing can be accomplished without it.

Besides, this kind of ability constitutes the ground and the measure of our moral obligation. We are morally bound to do, and God justly holds us responsible for doing, all the good which he has given us the natural ability, the capacity, to accomplish. We may not do this, or any part of it; but our neglect does not release us from the bonds of obligation. As God has given us our faculties, he may justly require us to exercise them all in his service. And this is all that he *can* justly require. Should he command us to exert powers

which he had not given us ; should he command us to love him with more than all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, the requisition would be unreasonable.

It may be further remarked, that natural ability is essential to free-agency, and is the ground of it. We must have the power to choose and refuse, to turn this way, that, or the other, to act differently from what we do, or how can we be said to act freely ?

There are others who would exclude *moral* ability and inability, at least from the nomenclature of theology. If the moral *cannot* is no other than a *will not*, then why not drop it altogether, and use *will not* in its stead ?

To this we answer, first of all, that the *moral cannot* is found in all parts of the Bible ; so that without recognizing the distinction between natural and moral inability, the Bible cannot be rightly interpreted or understood.

Nor is this phraseology peculiar to the Bible. It is found, as we have said, in all languages and in all books. It occurs continually in common conversation, and in reference to all subjects. Hence, to exclude it altogether from theology, would be to render the language of theology entirely different, in this respect, from any other language.

Besides, there is a *propriety* in this peculiar phraseology. This is evident from the general currency which it has obtained. It is also evident from the facts of the case. A moral inability is a real inability ; very different in its nature from a natural inability, but not the less real. In every case of moral inability, though there may be the requisite faculties, there is wanting the predominant motive and the concurrent will, without which no action will be performed.

It should be further remarked, that the *moral cannot* is not altogether synonymous with *will not*. *It expresses indisposition, aversion, unwillingness, with much greater emphasis and strength. It is sometimes said of sinners that they *will not* come to Christ ; but when their criminal aversion to him is to be set forth in all its energy, the *moral cannot* is used : " No man *can* come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It would but feebly set forth the moral

perfection of an angel, to say that he *will not* sin against God. We rather say, he *cannot*. It would be an equally inadequate use of terms to say of Satan, that he *will not* submit to God, and return to his duty. He *cannot*. Yet in both these cases, the *cannot* is altogether of a moral nature.

We have the strongest use of the *moral cannot*, when it is applied, as it often is in the scriptures, to the Supreme Being: "Your new moons and solemn assemblies I *cannot* away with" (Isa. i. 13). "In hope of eternal life which God, that *cannot* lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2). "He abideth faithful; he *cannot* deny himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). In each of these cases, the *cannot* expresses, not the want of natural ability, but the infinite aversion of the mind of God to everything that is wrong. It would be no honor to the Supreme Being to deny his natural ability to do wrong; for if he has no natural ability, or (which is the same) no faculties, no capacity, to do wrong, he has none to do right, or to do anything of a moral nature. But we do honor God, when we deny his moral ability to do wrong; for this implies that, though naturally able, as a moral agent, to do wrong, he never *will* do it; he is infinitely and immutably averse to it.

Hopkinsians attach a high importance to the maintenance of the distinction here insisted on, and that for several reasons. In the first place, without a knowledge of this distinction, the case of the sinner under the gospel cannot be rightly understood. He is represented in scripture as being, in some sense, *unable* to come to Christ and to do his duty. But how unable? If *naturally* unable, then he has a sufficient excuse for not doing his duty; the same that he has for not lifting the mountains or creating worlds. But if his inability is altogether an aversion of will, constituting a rooted disinclination to come to Christ and do his duty, then he has no good excuse. An inability of this kind is obviously criminal; and the greater it is, the more criminal.

Again, without maintaining the distinction here insisted on, it is impossible, with any show of consistency, to give the right *directions* to the inquiring sinner. Those who

regard his inability as natural, one which he has no power of any kind to overcome, can only direct him to read and pray, and use means with such a heart as he has; while those who take the other view, will feel no hesitation in directing him, as God does, to make to himself a new heart and a new spirit; to repent of sin, and believe the gospel.

It may be further said that, without understanding the distinction in question, our need of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of his operations, cannot be rightly understood. We need the Holy Spirit, not to increase our natural ability, or to give us any new faculties or natural powers. Our difficulty lies, not in the want of faculties, but in the abuse of them. We need the influences of the Holy Spirit to overcome our *moral inability* — the natural aversion of our hearts to God. We need these influences to make us *willing* in the day of God's power — willing to use the faculties which God has given us, in his service and for his glory.

We only add that the distinction here illustrated requires to be understood, since without it, it is impossible to refute the cavils of the captious, or to justify the ways of God to man. Not a few of these objections which are urged against God and the claims of his gospel, owe all their plausibility to a confounding of the distinction between natural and moral ability and inability. "I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed;" requiring more of creatures than they have any power to perform, and then punishing them for not fulfilling a requirement so unreasonable. Now what shall be said to objections such as these? How shall they be met and answered, but by recurring to the obvious distinction between natural and moral ability? God does *not* require of his creatures beyond what they have the natural ability, the capacity, the faculties to perform. He justly blames them, and will punish them, unless they repent, not for failing to perform impossibilities, but for *the perverseness of their hearts*, which renders them morally unable to submit to his will and obey his gospel.

REGENERATION AND THE MEANS OF IT.

Those persons who believe in the active nature of sin and of holiness will also believe, if they are consistent, in the active nature of regeneration; and this constitutes another peculiarity of the Hopkinsian theology.

The advocates of a passive sinful nature make regeneration a passive change. It is a change wrought in the soul by the new creative power of the Holy Spirit, with which the subject of it has no active concern. It is a change, too, without which no duty can be acceptably performed, and nothing really good can be done. By the very nature of his depravity, the sinner is entirely disabled, and can only wait, either stolidly or anxiously, as the case may be, for the Spirit's power to be exerted, to take away the heart of stone and give the heart of flesh.

From such views of regeneration, Hopkinsian writers dissent. They regard the heart—in the moral, spiritual sense of the term—as belonging, not to the substance or faculties of the soul, but to its affections. The sinful heart is made up of sinful exercises or affections; the holy heart, of holy affections; and a change of heart is a change in the affections, from those which are sinful to those which are holy.¹ Of course, it is an active change. It is the first yielding of the sinner to the motives and influences of the gospel; the first turning of his heart from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God. The change is wrought in the soul by the power of truth and of the Holy Ghost, but in perfect consistency with the free and natural actings of the human mind; so that, while it may be truly said that God gives the new heart and the new spirit, it may be said as truly that the sinner makes to himself a new heart and a new spirit, and comes, of his own accord, into the embrace of the gospel. — The arguments by which Hopkinsians maintain these views of regeneration are the following:

¹ We use the word regeneration here in the larger sense, as synonymous with the new birth, a change of heart, conversion, etc.

1. Regeneration may be supposed to be, as to its nature, *the opposite of the fall*. And as the fall of man consisted in his yielding to the seductions of the tempter, and beginning actively to commit sin, so his regeneration consists in his yielding to the motives of the gospel, and beginning actively to love and serve God.

2. Truth, motives, moral considerations, are represented in scripture as the means, the instrumental causes of regeneration. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*" (1 Pet. i. 23). "I have begotten you *through the gospel*" (1 Cor. iv. 15). But moral considerations are addressed, of course, to the *active* nature of man. Motives have no power or tendency to bring about a physical change, or one in which the subject is passive, but only those in which he is active.

3. God exhorts and commands sinners to make to themselves new hearts, or (which is the same) to become regenerate persons: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. xviii. 31). "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked" (Deut. x. 16).

4. God not only commands sinners to make to themselves new hearts, but severely threatens them in case they do not comply. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, *ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God*" (Matt. xviii. 3). "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts, *lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it*" (Jer. iv. 4).

5. Christ sends forth his ambassadors for this very purpose, that they may urge men to repent and turn to God, or (which is the same) to become new creatures.

6. The apostles and first preachers of the gospel engaged in this work without the least seeming embarrassment from their philosophy. They besought sinners, in Christ's stead, to become reconciled to God. They cried in the ears of guilty and lost men: "Come, come, for all things are now ready." And if any did not come, they told them plainly it was because they would not.

7. An appeal is made, on this question, to the *conscious*

experience of all truly regenerated persons. Christ has various methods of dealing with men, in preparing them for his spiritual kingdom; and yet they all enter the kingdom by the same narrow gate — *conversion* or *regeneration*. And of what are they sensible in conversion? What kind of a change is it, so far as their consciousness extends? Have any new faculties been imparted? Have they been physically wrought over into some other kind of creatures? Have they been sensible of any constraint upon the free and regular exercise of their natural powers? Nothing of all this. But they are conscious, in some way, of *giving their hearts to God*; of yielding, in some form, to the motives and influences of the gospel. They are conscious, now, of freely, spontaneously loving God, of submitting to God, of turning away from former sins, and putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. They feel that they have experienced a great and glorious change; but it has been a change (so far as their consciousness can reach) in the free exercises of their own minds and hearts; a change in the affections from sin to holiness; a change from the love of self and the world, to the love of God, and the things of his kingdom. Such is the change which they have experienced, and the consciousness of it leads them to hope that they have truly passed from death unto life. The view of regeneration here exhibited is thought to be one of great practical importance, more especially to ministers. In the belief of it, the minister of Christ may go to his fellow men on the subject of religion, as he would on any other important subject, and instruct, and warn, and endeavor to persuade them, feeling that the point urged was one in which they were to be active, and in reference to which persuasion was pertinent and necessary. Thus, obviously, the apostles addressed their hearers. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Repent ye and believe the gospel." They felt no more embarrassment in calling sinners to repentance than in calling Christians to the performance of any spiritual duty.

But let the other view be taken. Let it be settled in a

minister's mind that the sinner is passive in regeneration; that a change must be wrought in him, in which he is to have no active concern, before he can perform any spiritual duty; and what can such a minister say to impenitent men on the great subject of the soul's salvation. He may pity them, and pray for them. He may direct them to pray and use means with such hearts as they have, and wait for a change. But he cannot urge them to immediate repentance, or to the direct performance of any spiritual duty. Or if he does address them in exhortations such as these, it will be with a secret feeling that his exhortations are inconsistent with his belief; and in such a state of mind they will lack heart and earnestness, and will not be likely to do much good.

In this view, we are constrained to regard the doctrine of passive regeneration as one calculated to strip the gospel minister of his armor, and to clog and embarrass him in his master's work; at the same time, it is calculated to fill the mouths of sinners with excuses and objections, and furnish them with new refuges of lies, under cover of which they may sleep themselves into perdition.

It is painful to look back a generation or two, and see how good men have been hampered with this notion of passive regeneration, and what strange and unscriptural directions, under the influence of it, have been given to the impenitent. The following passage, addressed to sinners, is from Boston's "Four-fold State":

"Though you cannot recover yourselves, *nor take hold of the saving help offered to you in the gospel*, yet, even by the power of nature, you may use the *outward and ordinary means*, whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined sinners, who are utterly unable to recover themselves out of the state of sin and wrath. You may and can, if you please, do many things that would set you *in a fair way* for help from the Lord Jesus Christ. Though you cannot cure yourselves, yet you may come to the pool, where many such diseased persons as you are have been cured. And though you have none to put you

into the pool, yet you may lie at the side of it; and who knows but the Lord may return and leave a blessing behind him?"

So Mr. Willison, in his "Sacramental Directory," says to impenitent souls, and says it with a view to their coming to the Lord's table: "Stir up yourselves to take hold of Christ, when he is so near, and in your offer. Strive earnestly, while there is an ark prepared, and a window opened in the side of it, and the hand of mercy is put forth to pull in shelterless doves that can find no rest elsewhere. Strive to come near, by the wings of faith; *make your nest beside the hole's mouth*; be not found hovering without, lest the flood wash you away, and ye perish miserably. Try, O poor soul, if you can get a grip of Christ, especially upon a sacramental occasion, when you are nearer to him than at other times. You must not sit still, and do nothing, but *use all means in your power. Hoist up the sails, then, and wait for the gales.*"

Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, in his sermon on the "Assurance of Faith," says: "Let us store our minds with the pure and precious truths of God, and acquaint ourselves with those things which are to be believed. And having thus laid in the seed into the soil of our hearts, let us look heavenward, and *wait for a shower of the Spirit's influences*. They that offered sacrifices of old, though they could not make fire come down from heaven and consume the victim, yet they could fetch the bullock out of the stall, or the lamb out of the fold; they could bind it with cords to the horns of the altar; they could gather sticks and lay in proper fuel; and, *having done their part*, they could look up to heaven for the celestial fire to set all on a flame together. In like manner, I say, *do what is incumbent on you*; gather your sticks, lay in the proper fuel, and store your minds with the materials of faith, which you are daily reading or hearing in the word."

We can hardly conceive of instructions to impenitent souls more directly at variance with the gospel, than those which have been here introduced. Yet these were the

instructions of eminent Christian teachers, gifted and godly men, whose minds had been warped from the simplicity of faith by the then commonly received dogmas of natural inability and passive regeneration. And it is mainly owing to the efforts of Hopkinsians, that like instructions are not given to sinners now. The whole subject of means and of directions to be given to the impenitent was very fully discussed, from fifty to a hundred years ago, by Hopkins, Bellamy, Spring of Newburyport, Emmons, and several others, who passed under the general name of Hopkinsians. In the year 1761, Dr. Mayhew, of Boston, published a volume of sermons, in which he endeavored to show that there are promises in scripture to the doings of the unregenerate. Dr. Hopkins replied to these sermons. This brought him into controversy, not directly with Dr. Mayhew, but with several Calvinistic ministers, as Mr. Mills of Ripton, Conn., Mr. Hart of Saybrook, and Dr. Hemmenway of Wells, Me. In 1784, Dr. Spring, of Newburyport, published his "Dialogue on Duty," in which he strenuously controverted a sermon by Dr. Tappan, afterwards Hollis Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, on the same subject. Dr. Tappan maintained that "persons in a state of unrenewed nature may perform some things," such as attending on the means of grace, "which are their duty, or which, in some respects, are truly right." This Dr. Spring denied; not meaning to deny that it is the duty of *all men*, whether saints or sinners, to attend upon the means of grace. But then, they must attend with right affections, and from right motives. They must read and hear the gospel right; must pray right; must perform every duty in such a spirit and manner as God has required and will accept. In other words, it is the duty of all men to submit to God, to become new creatures, and to use the means of grace in the only way in which it is possible for a sinner to use them, by *yielding to them at once*, and giving the heart to God. It was by discussions such as these, on the part of Hopkinsians, that the subject of regeneration, and the means of it, were rescued from previous perversions, and brought out into the clear light of the gospel.

PERSEVERANCE.

The views of Hopkinsians as to the nature of sin and of regeneration lead to some peculiarities of statement in regard to *perseverance*. If regeneration is a passive change, in which the subject of it receives a new nature, a something which he had no power of any kind to secure, and, when once secured, which he cannot lose; then his perseverance becomes a natural necessity. He cannot fall away, if he would. He is in no danger of final apostasy, and needs no warnings or exhortations to preserve him from it.

But such, obviously, is not the scriptural view of Christian perseverance, nor is it the view taken by Hopkinsian writers. They believe assuredly that the true Christian will persevere. He will endure to the end, and be finally saved. This is secured by declarations and promises which can never fail. But then *how* shall he persevere, and *why*? Not because he cannot possibly fall away, and is in no danger of it; but because, by the grace of God, *he will be kept*, and kept in the free and active exercise of his own intellectual and moral powers. His perseverance, at every step, is an *active* perseverance; a holding on, and a pressing on, in the divine life, a growing up in a meetness for the heavenly world.

But if this is the scriptural idea of perseverance, then the Christian needs *motives* to induce him to persevere, and just such motives as are set before him in the gospel. How is he to persevere *actively*, but under the influence of motives such as these? He needs to be plied with injunctions, exhortations, persuasions, warnings. He needs to be told of the *necessity* of an active, patient, unfailing perseverance. He must endure to the end, if he would be saved. He must be faithful unto death, if he would inherit a crown of life. He needs to be told, not only of the sin and guilt of a final apostasy, but of its terrible consequences. "If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." If the righteous man turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and persist in it, he shall surely die." He needs warnings more awful even than

these. He needs to be told that, "if those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, that it will be impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

If the children of God were kept passively, and not actively; if they were so kept that they could by no possibility fall away; inducements, warnings, such as these would be impertinent. There would be no place or use for them. But if the Christian's perseverance is, from first to last, an *active* perseverance; if he is to be kept, if kept at all, in the free exercise of his own faculties and powers; then, as before remarked, he must have motives. The end in view cannot be attained without them. And it is altogether pertinent and consistent for the inspired writers to present and urge just such motives as those which have been brought into view.

Most of the objections urged against the doctrine of perseverance are entirely obviated by the explanations which have here been given. It cannot be said, for example, that this doctrine is inconsistent with human freedom; for it teaches, on the very face of it, that Christians are, and must be free. They must persevere freely and actively, or not at all.

Neither can it be said that this doctrine is inconsistent with the use of motives, or religious means. On the contrary, it implies that there *must be* means. How shall Christians hold on their way, persevering actively, voluntarily in the exercise of religion, but under the influence of appropriate means—the means of grace?

Nor is the doctrine at all inconsistent with those scriptures, which represent believers as *liable* to fall away, and in actual danger of so doing. For those who hold the doctrine truly, insist that Christians *are* liable to fall; that in themselves they are in danger of falling; that they have need to be exhorted, persuaded, threatened, warned; and

that their only security is in the promise and grace of God.

It is sometimes said that this doctrine must be of an *immoral* tendency ; that those who regard themselves as converted, feeling sure of heaven, will give loose to their evil propensities, and plunge into sin. It is possible, indeed, for the hypocrite and self-deceiver to pervert the doctrine of perseverance in this way. But then, such persons would soon discover themselves ; the mask of hypocrisy would be taken off ; and their real character would be known. A real, sincere Christian — one who has the *heart* of a Christian — can never so abuse a precious doctrine of God's grace. He rather exclaims, with Paul : " How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein ? " Such an one will be melted under a sense of the divine goodness and grace, and will regard the promises of perseverance not as an inducement to negligence and sloth, but rather as an encouragement to struggle on in the Christian race, to fight the good fight of faith, and thus prepare for the rest of God's people. This, indeed, is the very purpose for which the promises of perseverance were made to us, — to operate as motives of encouragement ; and thus they will be received and acted upon by all who are truly the children of God.

The doctrine of perseverance, rightly understood, is a great and precious truth of the gospel. It is so *theologically*. It forms an indispensable link in a chain of connected doctrines, commonly called the doctrines of grace — a chain reaching from eternity to eternity, from the sovereign election of the believer before the world began to his final glorification in heaven. " For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here, at the end of the golden chain, hangs the perseverance and final glorification of the saints : " Whom he justified, *them he also glorified.*"

This is a precious doctrine, too, in its practical influences.

It is one full of encouragement to the tried, afflicted, tempted, and sometimes almost despairing, people of God. We can have no better encouragement in any great undertaking than the assurance of success. With such assurances, persons often accomplish that which they would not have dared to attempt without them. But the Christian, when pressing through the narrow gate, and entering upon the work of preparation for heaven, engages in a great and difficult undertaking. Beset with enemies, within and without, and in the midst of temptation, trial, and conflict, he is pressing his way onward and upward to glory. And now, for his encouragement, he hears a voice calling out to him from the skies: "Struggle on; never give over; hold fast that thou hast; fight the good fight of faith; and you shall be sustained; you shall be carried through; you shall come off a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, through him who hath loved you and died for you." And now what precious encouragement is here! What a motive to perseverance! Who would not lay hold of it, and make the most of it? Who would recklessly cast it from him, and endeavor, without it, to win his way to heaven?

We have thus endeavored, briefly indeed, to sketch some of the leading peculiarities of what has been called Hopkinsianism. The intelligent reader will perceive that, while it sets forth prominently all the great points of Calvinism, it is Calvinism of a peculiar type. It differs variously from the Calvinism of the seventeenth century, and is, as its friends insist, an improvement upon it. It presents many of the old Calvinistic doctrines in a more reasonable and scriptural point of light, and frees them from objections which had been urged against them.

These new explanations, as before stated, originated in New England more than a hundred years ago; and though they have spread far and wide throughout the land, and throughout the Protestant Christian world, still, New England has been the principal seat and focus of them. Here they have prevailed more generally than elsewhere, and

here, it might be expected, their influence would be manifested. And this leads to an objection which has been persistently urged against them, with the consideration of which this Article must close.

It has long been insisted by our brethren of the old Calvinistic school, and more especially those in the Presbyterian Church, that the introduction of Unitarianism into New England was owing to the prevalence of the Hopkinsian theology. This, it is said, was a loosening and letting down of the bars of Calvinism; and these once let down, errors in doctrine came in like a flood. Let us look, then, at this subject a moment historically.

There was no Unitarianism in New England, of any kind, so far as we have the means of knowing, until subsequent to the great revival of 1740. It was not long after the close of the revival, that Arianism began to creep in privily among us. And who brought it in? Who were the Arians of that period? Were they among the friends and promoters of the revival — the pupils and followers of President Edwards? *Not, we venture to say, in a single instance.* So far from this, the Arians of that day were, to a man, of the opposite class. They had been settled as Calvinists, or moderately so, but in their zeal against the revivalists — against vital spiritual religion, and its most earnest supporters — they had swerved from the faith, and were secretly introducing another gospel. They called themselves Arminians, but were really Arians, or semi-Arians. We do not now recollect a church, where the doctrines of Edwards and his followers were preached, from sixty to ninety years ago, which has since become Unitarian; while it would be easy to mention scores of churches, which once called themselves Calvinistic, in distinction from Edwardean or Hopkinsian, which first became Arminian in doctrine, and lax in discipline, and over which Unitarian ministers have long since been established.¹

¹ Among the earliest Arian ministers in New England, according to the first President Adams, were the Rev. Messrs. Bryant of Braintree, Chauncey and

The doctrinal influences which led to the corruption of a portion of our churches are very manifest. These corruptions resulted from the notion of a *physical depravity* in fallen man, and a consequent *natural inability* to love God and perform spiritual duties. It was because the sinner was regarded as altogether *unable* to turn to God, that he was urged to *use means* in an unregenerate way. To what else should he be urged? To repent of his sins and perform spiritual duties he had no ability of any kind; and what should he do, or be directed to do, but to use means with such a heart as he had. It was this state of things which led to the discussions before spoken of, respecting unregenerate means and doings.

It was under the influence of the same notion of inability that the sinner was urged, in many instances, to come to the Lord's table, as a means of conversion; "to come to the pipes," as one expresses it, "through which the healing waters of salvation are ordinarily conveyed to the soul."

And when, in consequence of such instructions, unconverted men had been committed to the churches, they soon found their way to the pulpits; and so the ministry and church were corrupted together. There can be no doubt that our ministers and churches were *spiritually* corrupted, years before they were doctrinally corrupted. Arminianism and Unitarianism were in the heart before they took possession of the head.

From this account of the matter, which no one acquainted with our religious history can doubt, we see how utterly unfounded is the charge that Unitarianism came into our churches in consequence of the Edwardean or Hopkinsian theology. It was introduced rather in *spite* of this theology than by means of it. It was introduced under the influence of some of the mistaken assumptions of the old Calvinistic faith.

Of the theology which has been sketched in the foregoing

Mayhew of Boston, Shute and Gay of Hingham, and Brown of Cohasset: all of them opposers of the revival, of Edwards, and his followers. See his Letter to Dr. Moore.

pages, no intelligent Christian, we are sure, has any reason to be afraid. Without pretending to a uniformity in all things, it may be described, in general, as that theology which began to be taught by President Edwards, and has been followed up by such men as Bellamy and Hopkins and the younger Edwards, and West of Stockbridge, and Smalley, Spring, Emmons, Austin, Griffin, Worcester, and Dwight. It is the theology which has been preached in nearly all our revivals for the last fifty or sixty years; which has filled up our churches with young and active members; which has aroused and sustained the spirit of missions; which has fostered and directed nearly all the charitable enterprises of the age; which, so far from conniving at essential errors, has ever been foremost to expose and withstand them; which, while it claims to be the same as the theology of the apostles, has produced, in no stinted measure, the same blessed results. Let this theology be preserved in its purity, and preached in fidelity, free from all foreign admixtures and adulterations, and, we repeat, no intelligent Christian has any reason to be afraid of it. "Wisdom is justified of her children." "The tree is known by its fruits.