New England Baptist Alvah Hovey (1820-1903): Another Chapter in Baptist Edwardsianism

by Matthew C. Shrader[1]

Historians have noted the influence of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) upon Baptists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] Sometimes this influence came from reading Edwards directly and sometimes this influence came through Edwards's followers. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Edwards was mediated to Baptists in large measure through the writings of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and his evangelical Calvinism.[3] There were other mediators, however. For instance, some have noted the influence of Isaac Backus (1724-1806) in a variety of areas.[4] A lesser known but no less important inroad of Edwardsianism was through the moderate Calvinism of influential "New Divinity" men such as Jonathan Maxcy (1768-

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[2] E.g., Tom J. Nettles, "Edwards and His Impact on Baptists," *The Founders Journal* 53 (Summer 2003): 1–18; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 278–86; Douglas A. Sweeney, "Evangelical Tradition in America," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 227; Michael A. G. Haykin, "Great Admirers of the Transatlantic Divinity: Some Chapters in the Story of Baptist Edwardsianism," in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197–207, 306–11.

[3] See especially, Tom J. Nettles, "The Influence of Jonathan Edwards on Andrew Fuller," *Eusebeia* 8 (Spring 2008): 97–116; Chris Chun, "'Sense of the Heart': Jonathan Edwards' Legacy in the Writings of Andrew Fuller," *Eusebeia* 8 (Spring 2008): 117–34; Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[4] See especially the discussion of literature in Brandon J. O'Brien, "The Edwardsean Isaac Backus: The Significance of Jonathan Edwards in Backus's Theology, History, and Defense of Religious Liberty" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2013), 18–32.

1820), James Mims (1817-1855), and William Johnson (1782-1862).[5] These moderate theologies were occupied with the charge against Calvinism of arbitrariness in God's election and with the charge that atonement in a Calvinistic system was based on a "legal fiction." Yet more still can be said about the influence of Edwardsianism on later nineteenth-century Baptist theology, particularly in New England.

It was in New England during a highpoint of the New England Theology[6] that the first Baptist seminary in America, Newton Theological Institute, was founded in 1825. In important ways this school was modeled on the Congregationalist school, Andover Theological Seminary

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[5] Gregory A. Wills, "SBJT Forum: Overlooked Shapers of Evangelicalism," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3 (Spring 1999): 87–91. Wills's section is in response to the question: "What do you consider to be an unrecognized influence in the development of Baptist theology?" Also see Holifield, *Theology in America*, 282–86; Haykin, "Great Admirers of the Transatlantic Divinity," 204–7.

[6] For some more details on this tradition and Hovey's relation to it, see Matthew C. Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity: Alvah Hovey and the Problem of Authority Within the Context of Nineteenth-Century Northern Baptists" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2019), 49–57. Edwardsianism institutionalized, developed, and fragmented in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The broadest camps, "New School" and "Old School," demarcated general divisions between those who held to more traditional forms of Calvinism (Old School) and those who modified their Calvinism (New School). For some historical introduction, see George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970); Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 253–329, esp. 264; Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Holifield, *Theology in America*, 341–94. More precise than the New School was the New England Theology (which tradition will be of most interest to this study). Doug Sweeney's explanation is helpful here: "Technically speaking, 'the New England Theology' was the tradition of Protestant thought that stemmed from the work of Jonathan Edwards and flourished in New England during the first half of the nineteenth century. As distinguished from the rest of New England theology, '*the* New England Theology' was uniquely Edwardsian. A tradition of variations on certain key Edwardsian themes, it represented the first indigenous theological movement in America." Douglas A. Sweeney, "Edwards and His Mantle: The Historiography of the New England Theology," *The New England Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (March 1998): 97, fn 1. Sweeney's essay is an essential overview of the historiography. For further explanations of the New England Theology, see Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo, *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 13–24; Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, "Introduction," in *After Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1–16. Even more precise than New School and New England Theology would be other identifiable groups, such as the "New Haven Theology" of Nathanial William Taylor (1786-1858), the "New Divinity," "Tasters," and "Exercisers." For overviews of each of these movements (and others), see the essays in Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

(both in the Boston area).[7] Andover was a later follower of the Edwardsian New England Theology largely through the influence of Edwards Amasa Park (1808-1900), who has been described as "The Last Edwardsian."[8] During the nineteenth century Newton Theological Institute was regularly recognized as the premier American Baptist seminary. Yet, its geographical setting in New England, especially its close proximity to Andover, and how this may have influenced late-nineteenth century Baptist theology have not been addressed. This essay seeks to add a chapter to the study of Baptist Edwardsianism by exploring various aspects of the theology of long-time Newton professor Alvah Hovey (1820-1903). Hovey was a pervasive and authoritative voice within nineteenth-century Baptist life and his views represent much about Baptist thought.

This essay will survey Hovey's life, importance, and connections to New England Theology as well as provide an exposition of relative theological points within Hovey's published works. The argument is that Hovey's theology contains Edwardsian themes which can conceivably be due to his close personal connection to significant New England Edwardsians and by his similar theological concerns, though it would be unfair to say he followed any specific Edwardsian school. As was true of many Edwardsians, Hovey was especially hesitant to accept Adamic imputation and espoused a theory of the atonement that contained clear governmental

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[7] The two schools eventually merged in 1965 and became Andover Newton Theological School, which only recently closed in 2017 as it was merged into Yale Divinity School. For a history, see Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *A School of the Church: Andover Newton across Two Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). Also see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 41–48.

[8] Charles Phillips, "Edwards Amasa Park: The Last Edwardsian," in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 151–61, 298–301; Daniel W. Cooley, "The New England Theology and the Atonement: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2014); Charles Phillips, *Edwards Amasa Park: The Last Edwardsean*, New Directions in Jonathan Edwards Studies (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2018).

themes. Finally, the recognition of Hovey's Edwardsianism combined with his pervasive influence are suggestive for both Baptist and Edwards studies.

Alvah Hovey, Baptist Theology, and New England

This section has three aims: to give pertinent biographical data of Hovey's life, to make plain his prominence within nineteenth-century Baptist theology, and to note his personal interactions with the theology of New England.

Alvah Hovey grew up on a farm in Thetford, Vermont.[9] The Hoveys were well aware of their roots in colonial America and in the religious atmospheres of the Awakenings in New

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[9] For more details on Hovey's early childhood and time at Dartmouth College, see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 25–41. Biographical information is reliant upon George Hovey, ed., *Alvah Hovey: His Life and Letters* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1928). Hovey also wrote a short treatise for his children, which is still extant in his collected papers: Alvah Hovey, "Narrative for My Children (Autobiographical Essay)," n.d., Alvah Hovey Papers, The Divinity Library, Yale Divinity School. Other helpful, though limited, sources include William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 546–7; Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists: Traced by Their Vital Principles and Practices from the Time of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the Year 1886* (New York: Bryan, Taylor, & Co., 1887), 874–5; John M. English, "Alvah Hovey, D.D., LL.D.," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 56 (July 1899): 579–83; Henry Melville King, "Alvah Hovey and Foreign Missions: An Address Delivered at the Memorial Service Held in Honor of Alvah Hovey, D.D. LL.D., in Tremont Temple, Boston, September 28, 1903," *n.p.* (n.d.): 1–12; Henry G. Weston, "Dr. Hovey as an Author," *Watchman* (September 17, 1903): 11–12; John M. English, "Dr. Hovey as a Teacher," *Watchman* (September 17, 1903): 10–11; William Newton Clarke, "Dr. Hovey as a Theologian," *Watchman* (September 17, 1903): 12–13; George E. Horr, "Dr. Hovey and Educational Work," *Watchman* (September 17, 1903): 13–14; Cephas B. Crane, "Dr. Hovey with His Friends," *The Newtonian* 2, no. 3 (June 1904): 95–101; Henry Melville King, "Alvah Hovey as Theologian and Teacher," *Review & Expositor* 1 (1904): 161–76; A. H. Newman, "Recent Changes in the Theology of the Baptists," *American Journal of Theology* 10 (October 1906): 587–609; *The Hovey Book: Describing the English Ancestry and American Descendants of Daniel Hovey of Ipswich, Massachusetts: Compiled and Published under the Auspices of the Daniel Hovey Association, with an Introductory Chapter by the President* (Haverhill, MA: Press of Lewis R. Hovey, 1913), 321–23; Richard Donald Pierce, ed., *A General Catalogue of The Newton Theological Institution 1826-1943: With Biographical Sketches of Professors and Students in Andover Theological Seminary 1931-1943* (Newton Centre, MA: The Newton Theological Institution, 1943), 65; Norman H. Maring, "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible, 1865-1918, Part I," *Foundations* 1, no. 3 (July 1958): 52–75; Norman H. Maring, "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible, 1865-1918, Part II," *Foundations* 1, no. 4 (October 1958): 30–61; James Leo Garrett Jr., "Sources of Authority in Baptist Thought," *Baptist History and Heritage* 13, no. 3 (July 1978): 41–49; William H. Brackney, *The Baptists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988), 28, 66, 194–5; T. R. McKibbens, "Hovey, Alvah (1820-1903)," in *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 146–7; William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1999), 217; Bendroth, *A School of the Church*, 35–7; Winthrop S. Hudson, "Shifting Patterns of Church Order in the Twentieth Century," *American Baptist Quarterly* 30 (Fall/Winter 2011): 320–37; Jeffrey Paul Straub, *The Making of a Battle Royal: The Rise of Liberalism in Northern Baptist Life, 1870-1920*, Monographs in Baptist History (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 45–46.

England. Hovey was educated at Dartmouth College and Newton Theological Institute. At Dartmouth, he received solid academic training and built a friendship with Nathan Lord, the president of Dartmouth College and a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. Hovey never expressed what theological influence that Dartmouth had upon him, but he did express gratitude for an education in modern and biblical languages. When it came to his theological convictions these were shaped most significantly by his time (1845-1848) at Newton. The three major influences were Irah Chase (1793-1864), Barnas Sears (1802-1880), and Horatio Hackett (1808-1875).[10] Not only was Newton modeled after Andover but many of its professors were Andover graduates. Hovey several times mentioned the influences of his predecessors at Newton and expressed his appreciation for both their method and their content.[11]

After Hovey's formal education he pastored a church in New Gloucester, Maine for a year before returning to Newton as an instructor. He began teaching in 1849 and continued until his death in 1903. In the more than half century that he was at the school he held the various positions of Instructor in Hebrew, Librarian, Professor of Biblical Literature and Interpretation, Professor of Church History, Professor of Christian Theology, Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics, Professor of Biblical Interpretation of the New Testament, President (1868-1898), and Professor of Introductions and Apologetics.[12]

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[10] On the founding of Newton and the influence of Chase, Sears, and Hackett on Hovey, see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 41–48.

[11] Alvah Hovey, *Historical Address Delivered at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Newton Theological Institution, June 8, 1875* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1875); Alvah Hovey, "Dr. Hackett at Newton," in *Memorials of Horatio Balch Hackett*, ed. George H. Whittemore (Rochester: E. R. Andrews, 1876), 227–38; Alvah Hovey, *Barnas Sears, a Christian Educator: His Making and Work* (New York: Silver, Burdett, 1902).

[12] Hovey also spent time (November 1861-September 1862) in Europe for further theological and cultural education, with trips to major cities and universities in England, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. He attended lectures by major thinkers and speakers such as Ernst Hengstenberg, Leopold von Ranke, Isaak Dorner,

In addition to his prominence as a long-time professor and president of perhaps the leading Baptist seminary in America, Hovey retained personal friendships with many of the leading Baptists of his day and was extremely active in ecclesiastical, scholarly, and social societies.[13] He was also a prolific author. Hovey wrote a multiple edition theological textbook,[14] several dozen further books, articles, and pamphlets on various theological and denominational issues. And he edited the American Commentary on the Old and New Testaments (of which he contributed the New Testament introduction that appeared in the Matthew volume and the commentaries on John and Galatians).[15]

Friedrich August Tholuck, Albrecht Ritschl, Johann Lange, Franz Delitzsch, Gottfried Thomasius, Merle d'Aubigne, and Charles Spurgeon. Throughout his life Hovey remained well-read in the major European theology in England, France, and Germany. See Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 57–68. Hovey often provided a series of (two or three) book reviews of European theology in the *Baptist Quarterly*, which were titled "Foreign Literary Intelligence." Hovey attempted to make this trip immediately after graduating from Newton but the funds for such a trip fell through. Such trips were common practice for American academics. See Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship 1770-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

[13] Some of these include deacon at the Baptist Church of Newton Centre, MA (of which Hovey participated, at different times, in the pastoral callings of William Newton Clarke and E. Y. Mullins); a trustee at Worcester Academy, Brown University, Wellesley College, and the New England Conservatory of Music; a corporate or board member of Boston's General Theological Library, American Tract Society, Massachusetts Bible Society, American Baptist Missionary Union, Watchman Publishing Company, National Divorce Reform League, Gardner Colby Ministerial Relief Fund, and the New England Centennial Commission; and, he was member of the "Theological Circle," Harvard Biblical Club, Victoria Institute (London), and the Baptist Social Union of Boston.

[14] The three stages of his theological work are Alvah Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology* (Providence: Providence Press Company, 1870); Alvah Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1877); Alvah Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology* (New York: Silver, Burdett, 1900). The "Outlines" were intended and produced for classroom use only while the "Manuals" were published and made available to a wider audience. Also helpful for understanding Hovey's theology is a much shorter work that was prepared for young people to grasp the rudiments of theology: Alvah Hovey, *Doctrines of the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892). Though only a brief 68 pages, this work follows the outline of his *Manuals* and offers an interesting look at the main points of his theology succinctly stated. Hovey also published an 1861 edition of his *Outlines* and an 1866 edition that had interleaved blank pages, both editions of which are exceptionally rare: Alvah Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology* (Boston: G. C. Rand & Avery, 1861); Alvah Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology* (Boston: G. C. Rand & Avery, 1866).

[15] Alvah Hovey, "General Introduction to the New Testament," in *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, by John A. Broadus (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), iii–xliii; Alvah Hovey, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, An American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1885); Alvah Hovey, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, An American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1890).

Hovey's prominence and prolific output was recognized in his own day and is also recognized in current Baptist studies. Speaking of nineteenth-century Baptists, David Dockery referred to Hovey as "the foremost theologian of the day."[16] The 1894 comments from Henry Burrage, a historian known for his first-hand knowledge of nineteenth-century New England Baptists, gives the best picture not only of Hovey's recognized scholarship, but of his long influence on multiple generations of Baptist leadership:

> Dr. Alvah Hovey, who was graduated at Newton in 1848, and was elected tutor in Hebrew in 1849, and professor of church history in 1853, became professor of theology and Christian ethics in 1855; and this position he still holds. In all these years his services in behalf of the institution have been of the highest value. Thorough scholarship, unfailing candor and willingness to follow whithersoever the truth leads, have characterized his career as an instructor; and his pupils have found in him not only a helpful teacher but a delightful friend. His published writings, which are numerous, have given him a wide reputation as a theologian and author. Since 1868, Dr. Hovey has been president of the institution. More than eleven hundred students have already availed themselves of the advantages that Newton affords. Three-fourths of this number have served as pastors of churches in our own land. Many of these have held, or are still holding, important positions, and most of them have proved themselves useful ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. A large number have done heroic service as missionaries in foreign lands. Some have served as presidents of colleges and theological seminaries, or

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[16] David S. Dockery, "Looking Back, Looking Ahead," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 342. Another indication of Hovey's influence comes from William Allison in his entry on Hovey to the *Dictionary of American Biography*: "Probably no other American Baptist ever spoke with more *ex cathedra* influence than he, yet he was the least assertive of any such authority." William H. Allison, "Hovey, Alvah," in *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. Dumas Malone, vol. 9 (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1932), 270. A few further examples are given here: "To Hovey's credit, Newton became the most influential Baptist seminary of the mid-nineteenth century, counting four among five of the other Baptist seminary presidents as its alumni in 1868." William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: With Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 285. "Newton Theological Institution, though venerable with age, has lost nothing of the elasticity of youth. During the long presidency of Alvah Hovey, one of the foremost educators and theological authors of the denomination, it has maintained its position as one of the leading theological seminaries of the country." A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1894), 480. "Wide reading had made Hovey conversant in contemporary trends in Germany and England, and many Baptists considered him a veritable oracle. 'I have heard him called the Baptist pope of New England,' a friend was to say after Hovey's death. That title did not imply that he was autocratic, but that his scholarship commanded wide respect." Maring, "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible, 1865-1918, Part I," 54. The quote comes from George Merrill, president of Colgate.

> as professor in such institutions. The wisdom if the founders in establishing this school of the prophets has been abundantly justified.[17]

That Hovey was so prominent makes his theology highly significant for nineteenth-century Baptist theology. But this paper's main argument is that Hovey's New England context is likewise significant. As has been shown, Hovey lived his entire life in New England while teaching at a prominent Baptist seminary that was located close to the environs of Andover. More than living in New England, however, Hovey had multiple close relationships with significant Edwardsian (or Edwardsian-trained) theologians.

In Hovey's experience he was taught theology by at least three men with Andover training: Nathan Lord, Irah Chase, and Horatio Hackett. Hovey's theological writings show that he was very much aware of the various "schools" of theological thought within early America. And it was the New England Theology, particularly as it was associated with Andover,[18] by which Hovey was most influenced.[19] Edwards Amasa Park in particular had a significant influence on Hovey's thought.

Park began teaching at Andover in 1847 and consistently held to a subset of New England Theology called New Haven Theology.[20] This theology was continuously transmitted

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[17] Allison, "Hovey, Alvah," 270.

[18] On the connection of the New England Theology and the origins of Andover, see: John H. Giltner, "The Fragmentation of New England Congregationalism and the Founding of Andover Seminary," *Journal of Religious Thought* 20, no. 1 (1964 1963): 27–42; Bendroth, *A School of the Church*, 1–24.

[19] For an extended discussion of Andover's influence, see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 49–57. In addition to Park, Hovey also appreciated the work of Moses Stuart, but this appreciation appears to have been more for Stuart's exegetical methodology than for any particular theology. For Hovey's tribute to Stuart at his death, see Alvah Hovey, "Moses Stuart," *The Christian Review* 17 (April 1852): 288–96.

[20] Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 147.

until his retirement in 1881.[21] When Park died in 1900, Hovey contributed to a memorial address on the topic of the "Substance and Manner of Professor Park's Teachings."[22] Both Park and Hovey lived in the Boston area and Hovey revealed that they had regular interactions in several venues. They served together on the Board of Brown University and would often ride the train together to board meetings in Providence (this trip often also included Boston pastor Adoniram Judson Gordon). They regularly corresponded with each other, Park asked Hovey at different times to contribute to the journal he edited (*Bibliotheca Sacra*) as a representative voice among Baptists, and Hovey had Park come to Newton to lecture on the atonement. In addition to these personal interactions, Hovey said that he spent significant time studying Park's theology from lecture notes as they were copied from Park's students and he read Park's published works intently.

In his appraisal of Park's theology, Hovey described Park's defense of the benevolence of God, human freedom of choice, "every sinner a sinner by choice," the nature of the atonement, and biblical authority.[23] In regard to Edwardsianism, Hovey noted that: "Of the New England Theology, as a scheme of religious thought, he knew all that was worth knowing, from the time

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[21] Charles Phillips describes Park's Calvinism as a "synthesis of Edwardsian natural ability, New Divinity moral government, and a Hopkinsian exercise scheme." Phillips, "Edwards Amasa Park," 152. When Park retired, the liberal New Theology dominated Andover, thus effectively ending the Edwardsian influence at Andover. See Daniel Day Williams, *The Andover Liberals: A Study in American Theology* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 26–30; Bendroth, *A School of the Church*, 76–82; Phillips, "Edwards Amasa Park," 160.

[22] Hovey's essay is the first half (338-47) of the co-published work: Alvah Hovey and Joseph Cook, "Professor Park as Preacher and Teacher," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (April 1901): 338–59. Joseph Cook's essay is entitled: "The Tone of Awe and Self-Effacement in Professor Park's Discourses" (347-59).

[23] Ibid., 341–43.

of the elder Edwards to his own day."[24] Hovey had a high respect for Park and for the general character of his theology.

> In a word, the substance of Dr. Park's theological teaching was not a system of philosophy, though it was closely reasoned and profoundly philosophical; nor was it a system of ethics, though it was closely united with moral law and profoundly ethical in spirit; but it was the gospel of Jesus Christ, lustrous and vital throughout with the living and loving personality of God, and appealing to reason, to feeling, to imagination, and to will, – that is, to the whole spiritual nature of man, – thus proving itself to be in our own day, as in Paul's, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.[25]

Hovey was thoroughly acquainted with New England Edwardsians such as Park. But Hovey was also well read in Isaac Backus,[26] Andrew Fuller, and Jonathan Edwards himself, interacting with several of their ideas throughout his theology textbooks. Clearly, Hovey was familiar with Edwardsianism in its many variations, he admired various Edwardsians (specifically those in his native New England that he had close acquaintance with), and he considered their views to be worthy of consideration. What remains to be seen is whether he accepted and taught these views himself.

Edwardsian Themes in Hovey

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, contention arose in America between Calvinists and their detractors over the doctrines of Scripture, the Trinity, Christology, original

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[24] Ibid., 345.

[25] Ibid., 343–44.

[26] Hovey wrote the first biography of Backus: Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus, A.M.* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1858).

sin, and the allegedly deleterious moral effects of Calvinism.[27] In regards to the distinctives of New England Theology, generally speaking, a major contention was that their doctrines of original sin and atonement perpetuated a legal fiction wherein there was an arbitrary transfer of guilt and penalty to people who did not commit the sin being punished. To combat this, in this Edwardsian thinking, humanity could not be truly guilty of Adam's sin and neither could Christ for that matter. With that in mind, the atonement was not about satisfying the literal demands of sin's specific punishment as in many traditional schemes of penal substitutionary atonement. That would be impossible given the denial of Adamic imputation and, in this thinking, it would mean asserting the absurdity that once a sin is forgiven (remitted) it still needed to be literally satisfied.[28] Instead, Edwardsians normally asserted a governmental explanation wherein God's righteous demand for punishment was satisfied in a general way by Christ's general substitution. In this context, "general" means that God's demands for justice were satisfied not by a literal substitution for the actual punishment (distributive justice) but rather by a satisfaction of the general demands of justice within God's moral government.[29] Therefore, Christ's substitution could be seen as a real substitution in that it satisfied the same demands for justice that the

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[27] Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805 - 1900* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1–57; Noll, *America's God*, 269–92; Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 69–90; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 159–233.

[28] This objection that literal remission and satisfaction were mutually exclusive was a Socinian objection that many governmental theorists took to heart. See Oliver D. Crisp, "Penal Non-Substitution," *Journal of Theological Studies* 59 (April 2008): 160–61.

[29] Cooley helpfully explains that Edwardsians regularly distinguished between distributive justice and general justice. Cooley, "The New England Theology and the Atonement," 7–8. Crisp also helpfully explains the differences in God's justice as that between rectoral (the moral law of God that governs all) justice and retributive (the divine law of God that required specific punishment) justice. "Whereas the former must be satisfied in some sense, there may be a relaxation of the requirements of divine retributive justice so that Christ may act in a manner consistent with rectoral justice (hence the 'penal' element in this theory) but without acting so as to satisfy divine retribution as a penal substitute (which has direct bearing upon the non-substitutionary element to this doctrine)." Crisp, "Penal Non-Substitution," 148–49.

penalty for sin demanded, though it did this not through a literal retributive substitution but through the substitution of a suitable equivalent.[30]

These complicated debates were ubiquitous within nineteenth-century theology. They were not the only debates related to the theological issue of atonement,[31] but the Edwardsian contributions form an obvious backdrop as one reads theology texts of that day.[32] And, as will be shown below, Hovey integrated these theological concerns into his own theology.

Adamic Imputation and Human Moral Accountability

When Hovey discussed sin in his theology, he consistently had in the forefront a concern that his explanation be able to stand against the charges of divine capriciousness and injustice.[33] He sought to provide reasonable answers to these charges as well as explain the biblical witness.

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[30] That the Edwardsians, and other proponents of governmental views, broadened the ideas of both substitution and penalty is discussed in Crisp, "Penal Non-Substitution," 157–62. Crisp prefers to refer to this view of the atonement as "non-substitution," by which he means that "Christ's work on the cross is not a substitutionary work, strictly speaking. Although he suffers rather than the sinner, *he does not stand in the place of the sinner with respect to the penal consequences due for sin*." Ibid., 159. Italics original.

[31] Horace Bushnell also put forward another view of the atonement, to which Hovey gave a long response: Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice: Grounded in Principles of Universal Obligation* (New York: Scribner's, 1871); Alvah Hovey, *God With Us; or, the Person and Work of Christ, with an Examination of "The Vicarious Sacrifice" of Dr. Bushnell* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1872). For more context, see David F. Wells, "The Debate over the Atonement in 19th-Century America, Part 1: American Society as Seen from the 19th-Century Pulpit," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 574 (June 1987): 123–43; David F. Wells, "The Debate over the Atonement in 19th-Century America, Part 2: The Shaping of the 19th-Century Debate over the Atonement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 575 (September 1987): 243–53; David F. Wells, "The Debate over the Atonement in 19th-Century America, Part 3: The Collision of Views on the Atonement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 576 (December 1987): 363–76; David F. Wells, "The Debate over the Atonement in 19th-Century America, Part 4: Aftermath and Hindsight of the Atonement Debate," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145, no. 577 (March 1988): 3–14.

[32] This was true within Baptist circles. For instance, the tensions brought to light by this debate are regularly commented on by Augustus Strong in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and he felt that his ethical monism was the best solution. On Strong's views and Hovey's response, see Carl F. H. Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology* (Wheaton, Ill: Van Kampen Press, 1951), 221–25; Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 247–73.

[33] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 101; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 134.

When weighing various theological viewpoints on any given topic Hovey's standard procedure was to list out the various views along with their positives and negatives before providing his own view. He rarely identified completely with any one view. His goal was to supply nuance and care, which he certainly did. Unfortunately, his method did not always provide clarity as it often ended in theological obfuscation.[34]

How humanity was connected to Adam's sin (the doctrines of original sin, the origin and propagation of the soul, depravity, and imputation) was one of the driving points in Edwardsian discussions,[35] and Hovey's theology was no different.[36] He surveyed Pelagian, Arminian, "Edwardean," Placean, Augustinian, and Calvinistic views before giving his own.[37] Before giving some explanation, let me piece his view together as I understand it: Hovey believed that there was an Adamic connection to all his posterity due to procreation; but, this connection does not equal guilt (Hovey would not say that we are *guilty* for Adamic sin as this would bring God's justice into question by creating a legal fiction: legal explanation contrary to reason), the

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[34] Brackney notes the same: "In much of Hovey's doctrinal discussions, he erred on the side of constructing an apparatus that was far too complex in scholarly obfuscation." Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*, 286. Nettles states that "Hovey was less than precise at defining terms and less than convincing in mounting evidence for positions he espoused." Tom J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory: A Historical, Theological, and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 232.

[35] In Sweeney's discussion of Nathaniel Taylor in the earlier nineteenth century, he focused on the doctrines of original sin (chapter four), atonement within the government of God (chapter five), and regeneration (chapter six). Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*. This sub-section will focus on the themes that appear in Sweeney's chapter four.

[36] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 107; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 144; Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 171. In 1870 and 1877, Hovey titled this section: imputation of sin: or the accountability of men for their sinfulness." In 1900, Hovey titled this section "Mankind, as Truly Sinful, are Guilty and Condemned."

[37] In his 1870 *Outlines*, it was "New School" instead of "Edwardean" and it was "Old School" instead of Calvinistic.

connection only explains the moral condition of humanity. Guilt comes in *sympathy* with Adamic sin.

Hovey did not discuss his views on the origin and propagation of the soul in his 1870 or 1877 editions, but it appears explicitly in 1900 in which he "inclines" toward a procreation view.[38] It is important to note that while he felt it was the best of the possible views, he still had issues with it. True to form, when Hovey later explained that the Augustinian view held this option he gave a substantial caveat: "But it may be questioned whether the descendants of Adam, as separate persons, have any sense of guilt for what their *nature* did in the person of Adam and Eve. What the traducian theory does explain is the moral condition of mankind since the fall: it scarcely explains why men should be charged with sin for being in that condition."[39] Such a caveat makes more sense when he explains his view of responsibility for Adamic sin. Hovey noted that many believed that humans have responsibility "for the sin of Adam, which is in principle, repeated by every sinful act of his offspring. But it would be in many respects better to say, that *he is accountable for the degree of sympathy* which he has for the whole system of evil, and for the disobedience of Adam."[40] Hovey believed, in other words, that the depravity that was inherited from Adam and passed via procreation to all posterity in their moral nature does not necessarily mean that all of humanity is charged directly for the *guilt* of Adam's sin.[41] This guilt

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[38] Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 142.

[39] Ibid., 174.

[40] Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 151. Emphasis added.

[41] In discussing the relevant passages, Hovey remarked in his 1870 edition: "According to these passages, the moral nature of every human being is depraved at birth, and, as such, displeasing to God. They may not, however, prove that the sin of Adam is charged directly upon every one of his posterity at birth, so that he is born as guilty as Adam was after the Fall." Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 106–107.

comes only when one, through word or deed, expresses sympathy with the sin. This conclusion would not be consonant with the Augustinian view of imputation though it was quite familiar to Edwardsians.

In his 1877 theology, Hovey admitted that such a conclusion was according to reason and that it was important to also weigh the evidence of Scripture, which he felt was "formidably strong in favor of the view, that both Adam and Christ acted for others; that, in some true sense, all men suffer the penal consequences of the sin in Eden, being in full fellowship with it, and that all who are in moral union with Christ will enjoy the full benefit of his death. Yet the Scriptures recognize a difference between personal sin and inherited sinfulness, as appears in their accounts of the final judgment."[42] This admission that the penal consequences of Adam's sin were somehow transmitted to human posterity tempers his above assertion that one is only guilty for one's own thoughts and deeds. This would seem to allow for a form of Augustinianism contra Edwardsian views. Yet even within this tempering he admits a difference between personal sin and inherited sinfulness. Hovey tried to walk a tight line on this issue, not wanting to theoretically demean God's justice by making human posterity guilty for Adam's sin, yet admitting that Scripture seemed to lean that way. By the final (1900) edition of his theology, Hovey had not changed much other than to leave out the last quoted paragraph that could have softened his Edwardsian leaning. In other words, he merely stated that human posterity is guilty for their sympathy only, thereby effectively denying imputation of Adamic guilt.[43]

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[42] Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 151.

[43] Garrett notices the same: "Hovey levied some criticism against various historic theories of the imputation of sin, and while clearly teaching the universality of sin and human depravity, did not affirm that all humans are guilty of Adam's sin but was emphatic as to the punishment of sin." James Leo Garrett Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 281. Nettles also stated that

It was none other than August Hopkins Strong who noticed this denial in a personal letter to Hovey shortly after the 1900 edition was published: "As to imputation of sin, it has always seemed to me that Paul intended to teach Augustinianism, and that has made me an Augustinian. If I cannot trust all Paul's methods of reasoning, can I trust him in Romans 5:12-19? Your resting the responsibility for inborn depravity on our sympathy with Adam's Sin seems to me a decided verging toward the New School view. But when I read of your imputing to Christ the sins of men because of Christ's natural union with the race I go with you wholly."[44] Hovey and Strong corresponded back and forth extensively, especially in regard to Strong's ethical monism.[45] Strong's monism allowed him to root imputation in a deep-seated personal connection (more so than traditional Augustinianism)[46] in contrast to more nominalist or federal views.[47] Hovey's denial of Adamic imputation was a clear nod toward Edwardsianism and the tendency to move

"Hovey's views on human responsibility in the sinful state are helpful and even compelling at times. He is much less helpful, and even timid, in his discussion of total depravity and the relation of the race to the sin and guilt of Adam." Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory*, 233. In contrast, Brackney states that Hovey "affirmed the federal theory that Adam and Christ are representatives of imputed sin and righteousness, respectively." Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*, 286.

[44] Augustus Hopkins Strong to Alvah Hovey, October 15, 1900, Alvah Hovey Papers, The Divinity Library, Yale Divinity School. Emphasis original.

[45] For more explanation of Hovey and Strong's relationship, especially regarding Strong's ethical monism, see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 247–73.

[46] Strong made it clear that his ethical monism was meant to help his understanding of the atonement: "And yet I accept Ethical Monism because of the light which it throws upon the atonement rather than for the sake of its Christian explanation of evolution." Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism* (Philadelphia: Griffith and Rowland, 1899), 78.

[47] "My federalism was succeeded by *realistic theology*. *Imputation is grounded in union*, not union in imputation. Because I am one with Christ, and Christ's life has become my life, God can attribute to me whatever Christ is, and whatever Christ has done. The relation is *biological*, rather than forensic." Augustus Hopkins Strong, *What Shall I Believe? A Primer of Christian Theology* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 91. Emphasis original. Strong argued that the Old School federal theologies held to a legal fiction that tended to "to reduce divine justice to book-keeping, to ignore all truth and reality in God." Ibid., 85–86. On the other hand, he correctly noted that the New School "regards men merely as individuals, and which ignores the organic unity of mankind on the one hand, and its connection with God on the other." Strong, *Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism*, 151. See also the discussion in Henry, *Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology*, 220–25.

away from ontological realism toward some sort of nominalism.[48] In one of Hovey's critiques of Strong, he admitted something similar: "Our conception of the personality of the human race, in distinction from the personality of every individual composing it, is too shadowy to serve any purpose in reasoning. When we try to grasp it mentally, we find nothing real in our possession."[49] Humans have unity in some sense, but not in any personal sense. It appears that Hovey, in accord with Edwardsianism, did not see realism as a helpful explanation of reality, which helps explain his denial that Adamic guilt could be imputed to posterity.[50] In his views of imputation and the justice of God, Hovey found common ground with Edwardsians. The same is true for his atonement theology.

The Atonement: God's Love and Righteousness

In several places Hovey wrote about the atonement.[51] He was again concerned to defend the righteousness as well as the love of God and he wanted to put forth a theory whose logic could not be described as arbitrary or a legal fiction. In his earliest writings (1870, 1872 and 1877),[52] Hovey used the idea of propitiation as the over-arching theme of atonement. His basic

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[48] Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 83–90.

[49] Alvah Hovey, "Dr. Strong's Ethical Monism," *Watchman* 75, no. 51 (December 20, 1894): 11.

[50] Though, as Strong hinted, Hovey felt that other forms of imputation could be valid.

[51] The most important, in chronological order, are: his 1870 classroom manual, *Outlines of Christian Theology*; his 1872 Christology work, *God With Us*; his 1877 theology text, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*; and his 1900 theology text, *Manual of Christian Theology*.

[52] Stephen Holmes argues that Hovey changed the overarching concept from his 1877 edition to his 1900 edition from propitiation to the self-sacrifice of Christ. This is true but I will contend with Holmes's further point that this showed the "emphasis was no longer on the turning aside of the wrath of an angry deity; rather the noble act of a loving Saviour was to the fore." Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 77. I understand that Hovey remained consistent to his basic concepts of the atonement, but he added further points of clarification and his re-organization did not change the basic logic of his atonement theory. It appears to me that he

logic had a handful of significant points: First, a penalty for sin was necessary to demonstrate God's opposition to sin, which is always perfectly righteous. Second, the propitiation applied must be sufficient to adequately express God's opposition to sin. Third, a suitably equivalent expression could be theoretically accepted, provided it had equal or greater force of expression. Fourth, this substitute had to be sinless and endure suffering voluntarily and was conditioned on repentance and security of future obedience. Fifth, the amount of suffering depended greatly on the "excellency of the sufferer in the sight of God." Sixth, Christ's sufferings fulfilled all these conditions, thus "his suffering may be a proper substitute for the sinner's death."[53]

This was the logic or "rational" view of the atonement and Hovey also gave the biblical presentation as he saw it: First, propitiation was made toward God by Christ in his blood and death. Second, it was effective through Christ's death because it was an adequate illustration of the judicial righteousness of God. Third, Christ's propitiation was effective because it was endured "voluntarily, as the penalty due to men for their sins." Fourth, Christ's death removed "an obstacle existing in the mind of God to the exercise of his saving grace."[54] To Hovey, to understand the atonement in terms of propitiation was to show the God-ward side of the atonement. There was also the man-ward side of the atonement that he consistently defended.

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consistently held that the over-arching understanding of the atonement was that it needed to demonstrate both God's love and his righteousness. His 1900 keyword, "self-sacrifice," was perhaps a more precise designation of this idea.

[53] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 178–79; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 209–11. The quotations come from the 1877 *Manual*.

[54] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 163–77; Hovey, *God With Us*, 101–41; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 211–24. Quotes come from the 1877 *Manual*. Each of these three works have four points which are agree with my four-point outline, though they are presented in different orders and wording.

This was simply that the atonement of Christ made manifest to believers what God's estimation of sin was, thereby influencing them toward sorrow for sin and trust in Christ.[55]

When Hovey wrote his 1900 *Manual*, he modified his presentation of the atonement. In my view I do not think he changed the substance of his argument, but he did clarify a few points. The first clarification is that he decided to use the idea of Christ's "self-sacrifice" as the over-arching term instead of propitiation because propitiation "suggests the relation of Christ's death to the mind and attitude of God only."[56] Hovey covered the man-ward aspect of the atonement in his previous works but he did this at the end of his presentation of propitiation. In 1900 he allowed it to intersperse throughout. Thus, propitiation only covers one aspect of the self-sacrifice of Christ.

More helpful than changing the major term was that Hovey also gave space to explaining further terms that shine light on his atonement logic. These are "moral good," "natural good," "moral evil," and "natural evil."[57] Moral good is righteous action (holiness) and it normally produces natural good which is love and happiness. Moral evil is unrighteous action or feeling (sin) and it produces natural evil (sorrow and pain). This underlying understanding has major implications for Hovey's atonement theology and his view of imputation. Natural evil becomes the consequence of sin. Further, because humans are social beings it is possible to share in one another's natural evil (i.e., the consequences of their sin). This laid the groundwork for how someone else could possibly bear the penalty of another as a substitute (and for how the human

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[55] See especially his 1872 work, *God With Us*, 156-77.

[56] Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 248.

[57] Ibid., 249–51.

race is somehow united). With these new terms in tow, Hovey's biblical presentation of the atonement slightly changed. Before getting to propitiation he gave three prior ideas: First, Christ's self-sacrifice was necessary to restore fellowship. Second, God's love was a primary reason for Christ's self-sacrifice. Third, God's righteousness and grace were primary reasons for Christ's self-sacrifice.[58]

These terms and ideas provided clarification to Hovey's conception of the atonement. Hovey considered different atonement theories and what can be learned from them. However, he did not choose to identify with any one theory, but rather preferred to give several propositions true of his own view.[59] Hovey's full atonement theory was convoluted but can be summarized in the following way:[60]

- God's love and righteousness are at the center and must be vindicated in the end.
- Holiness (moral good) is the best thing for all creatures and is associated with happiness (natural good). Sinfulness (moral evil) ends in pain and loss (natural evil).
- Natural evil is an exhibition of God's estimate of sin. Indeed, this divine righteous view of sin must be expressed in its penal consequences (natural evil).
- God's judicial righteousness must be satisfied by a proper experience of the penalty or a proper substitute for the penalty.

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[58] Ibid., 252–58. Hovey's fourth point was that Scripture presents Christ's self-sacrifice as propitiatory. Fifth, Christ's self-sacrifice served as a ransom to deliver from sin in both a man-ward and a God-ward way. Sixth, Christ was qualified to intercede since he was the theanthropic person, united to both humanity and God. The fourth, fifth, and sixth points are the same ideas presented in his previous publications. Ibid., 258–64.

[59] Much of the following is summarized but comes directly from Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 264–72.

[60] Hovey's clearest summary is found in Ibid., 272–76. My bullet points are a distillation of this.

- Only the voluntary sacrifice of a Divine-Human being could be a proper substitute because only a human could truly bear the requisite natural evil (the penalty of death) and only a divine being could provide enough value. Thus, Christ, by virtue of the incarnation, was able to perfectly bear the penalty and his sacrifice, by virtue of his perfect deity, was unlimited in value.
- Christ's suffering and death at the hands of sinners was a proper penalty (natural evil) and took the place of punishment for others.
- Thus, Christ's work is about God's love to humanity and was intended to affect the moral and religious condition of humanity.
- Nevertheless, atonement could only be applied to those who meet the condition of faith.

Two significant observations need to be made. First, Hovey's discussion of moral and natural evil and good revealed the fundamental connection of all humanity. They are connected as social beings through their common experience of natural evil, which evil they can bear for one another. "And this natural evil, or suffering of pain and loss, must be borne either by the sinner or by his associates and friends. He must bear it himself or know that another has borne it for him."[61] In sum, "the members of a family cannot be dealt with as if each one was alone in the world."[62] This connection is <u>not</u> ontological or personal/real but it is a spiritual connection. Second, this human connection is strong enough that one can take the penalty of another (so long as it is a sufficient substitute which only Christ is), but they cannot take the sin and guilt. Hovey

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[61] Ibid., 251.

[62] Ibid., 271.

explained: “Beings who have a like spiritual nature can realize and bear the spiritual sufferings of one another. And ‘bearing another’s woe’ is sympathy or compassion, when either of these words is used in its deepest sense; it is suffering *with* another,– enduring what his spirit endures, sharing, not his bodily ill, but the feeling which that ill excites; not his sin and guilt, but the spiritual state, the remorse and fear consequent upon them.”[63] The penalty can be transferred (imputed) to another, but not the guilt itself.

To conclude this section, Hovey’s view of the atonement was somewhat unique. It is reminiscent of certain aspects of Edwardsianism though certainly not a reproduction.[64] Hovey considered his view to be penal and substitutionary[65] rather than a divine expedient (which he identifies with governmental views).[66] Yet, penal and substitutionary were broadened terms in his view (the penalty borne is not the actual penalty, it is only a spiritual suffering, nor is it a full substitution of guilt), he denied that guilt is imputed to Christ, and he used consistent governmental language. These all indicate that he held to a species of the governmental theory.[67] He saw the atonement as primarily satisfying the demands of God’s moral law and to do this

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[63] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 174; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 225; Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 277. Italics original, underline added. This quote is unchanged in each edition.

[64] Hovey was always reticent to identify whole-heartedly with any school of thought and never approved of the famous Edwardsian distinction of natural and moral ability and inability: Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 147.

[65] Ibid., 208.

[66] Hovey identified this clearly with Edwards Park and others: Ibid., 208, fn. 1. In 1900, Hovey said this view saw the atonement as “a substitute for the penalty of sin.” Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 266. In an unpublished class lecture, Hovey identifies not only Park with this view but also Andrew Fuller: Alvah Hovey, “Theories of the Atonement,” unpublished lecture, Alvah Hovey Papers, the Divinity Library, Yale Divinity School, 8-9.

[67] As was indicated above, the redefining of “penal” and “substitution” is normal within governmental views: Crisp, “Penal Non-Substitution,” 157–62.

guilt was neither transferred nor literally paid. It seems that Hovey understood that he was charting a new path that overlapped with old school and new school views:

> Without professing to have set forth *the* way, and the only way, in which Christ actually bore the penalty due to men for their sins,– without asserting that Christ bore just the amount of suffering which awaited sinners, unredeemed, in eternity, and without overlooking the dignity of his person, which gave inestimable value to his death, we think *a* way has been indicated by which he could have borne penal woe; and if so, however different in some of its elements may have been the actual suffering of soul endured by him from that which we have suggested, the objection to our doctrine has been sufficiently met.[68]

Hovey did not admit to following any school of thought (he wore his own theological hat) and his theology was not that of a true Edwardsian. Yet, in his views of Adamic imputation and atonement he expressed concerns and solutions similar to the Edwardsians, which might well have been as a result of his admiration for key Edwardsians in his native New England.

A New England Baptist: Some Takeaways

That such a prominent nineteenth-century Baptist held to some Edwardsian ideas is suggestive for both Baptist studies and Edwards studies. For Edwards studies it again illustrates the long reach that Edwardsian thought had, particularly in New England. As was mentioned in the opening, many Baptists have been recognized as Edwardsian, but no one quite so late as Hovey (1820-1903).[69] It has been recognized, though not studied at length, that many Baptists in the northeastern United States held to Edwardsian ideas. But this normally points to the legacy of

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[68] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 174; Hovey, *God With Us*, 150–51; Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 226; Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 277–78. Italics original. Again, this quote appears unaltered in all four of these works, which argues for the consistency of Hovey's views.

[69] See the people and dates provided in Sweeney, "Evangelical Tradition in America," 227.

Andrew Fuller[70] rather than the direct influence of a New Englander such as Park. In Hovey's case, his published works evidence influences from Edwards himself as well as important Edwardsians including Backus, Hopkins, and Fuller. However, by his own admission and by evidence of his theological views, it was Park that had as much an influence on Hovey as any Edwardsian. Multiple Edwardsian streams fed into Hovey's theology, which is not surprising as it was a pervasive theological position in nineteenth-century America.

What should be remembered about many Baptist theologians, and particularly Northern Baptists like Hovey, is that while they clearly read their church history and engaged with much historical theology, they were not self-consciously working within the bounds of any one theological school (let alone a tradition such as that of the Post-Reformation dogmaticians) and they often skirted the traditional theological discussions.[71] This does not mean that Hovey had no

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[70] Haykin, "Great Admirers of the Transatlantic Divinity," 206. Haykin notes that Francis Wayland in the 1850s argued that "Fuller's brand of Edwardsianism had become 'almost universal' among the Baptists in the 'northern and eastern States.'" The Wayland book referenced was: Francis Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1857).

[71] This is a big discussion within Edwards studies as well and there has been much written on the historical and theological continuities between Edwards and those who came before as well as those that came after, as this paper has mentioned. For those that preceded Edwards, see Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 166–76. Also see the various essays in Douglas A. Sweeney and David Kling, eds., *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); Crisp and Sweeney, *After Jonathan Edwards*. All agree that Edwards was well aware of and attempted to work within the bounds of Post-Reformation Reformed standards. It is also agreed that Edwards did not always utilize the same theological language/categories as the dogmaticians that preceded him. See Philip J. Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn from the Classic-Reformed Tradition of Freedom of the Will*, New Directions in Jonathan Edwards Studies, eds. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Adriaan C. Neele, vol. 2, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2016); Adriaan C. Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). What is not agreed upon is to what extent the difference in language and categories reflects Edwards's stance within the tradition. See the discussion between Paul Helm and Richard Muller in Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of the Ways in Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 3–22; Paul Helm, "Jonathan Edwards and the Parting of the Ways?," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 42–60; Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and Francis Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will. In Response to Paul Helm," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (2014): 266–85; Paul Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (2014): 286–96; Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018). This issue is the primary focus of Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards*, who sees Edwards as the last of the post-Reformation Reformed dogmaticians.

place for tradition. He clearly did, and even as an authority.[72] But it means that men such as Hovey were explicitly trying not to identify with specific confessional positions, they were trying to word their theology in their own way, and they felt fairly free to disagree with historical positions. While many Baptists identified with certain confessions (London, Philadelphia, New Hampshire), many, including Hovey, purposefully did not identify with any of these. He preferred his own terms. One result was that they were often heavily influenced by their own time and lacking in sensitivity to classic theological questions. Tom Nettles makes this exact point about Hovey and correctly identifies Hovey's holding to Monothelitism, despite Hovey's awareness that this flies in the face of early creedal positions, as a case in point.[73] One more example of this tendency is that in his 1870 *Outlines* Hovey did not see eternal generation of the Son as necessary or implied in Scripture.[74] In his 1877 theology, Hovey did not give any discussion to eternal generation but relegated the issue to a footnote and referred readers to other authors.[75] By his 1900 theology, Hovey did not include the explanatory footnote at all.[76] There seems to be a freedom to depart from and/or a tendency to neglect classical discussions.

Taking this tendency and adding to it Hovey's Edwardsian leanings, perhaps one further takeaway may be possible. George Marsden proposed that part of the new school heritage on

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[72] See my discussion of Hovey's view of tradition within his theological method: Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 166–76.

[73] Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory*, 232. See Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 192–94; Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 228–31.

[74] Hovey, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, 133–34.

[75] Hovey, *Manual of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics*, 180–81.

[76] Hovey, *Manual of Christian Theology*, 215.

Presbyterian fundamentalism was their general tolerance for new conceptions of theology (though this only went so far) and a willingness to abandon/modify, or not be tied to, a confessional theology.[77] Perhaps a similar long-term effect was at work in Baptist theology.[78] Kevin Bauder and Robert Delnay have suggested that a key to the success of the liberals over the conservatives among Northern Baptists in Hovey's time period was that "educational leaders often failed to realize how radical liberalism really was. One factor that contributed to this failure was the theological imprecision of the generation that came immediately prior to liberalism."[79] I agree and I would suggest that (even among the most theologically astute, such as Hovey and even Strong) their own theologies *required* a tolerance for new conceptions and an attendant necessity to significantly modify or even abandon key conceptions of traditionally conservative theology because *their own* theology did this. A bridge to progressive and liberal theology was latent in their method and in their attitude toward sources.[80] Though Hovey, for one, still remained conservative and appreciated the tradition to some extent.

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[77] George M. Marsden, "The New School Heritage and Presbyterian Fundamentalism," *Westminster Theological Journal* 32 (May 1970): 129–47.

[78] Hovey's own Newton Theological Institute from its beginning rejected any confessional standard and emphasized more modernistic methods. See my discussion in Shrader, "Thoughtful Christianity," 41–48. I argue that many of the early Newtonians, including Hovey, utilized biblicist theological reasoning by which I mean their tendency "to (1) utilize a scientific approach to Scripture, to (2) resist allowing any theological system or statement to influence biblical interpretation, to (3) utilize any source of truth, and to (4) build a positive theology from this basis." Ibid., 44, fn. 65.

[79] Kevin T. Bauder and Robert Delnay, *One in Hope and Doctrine: Origins of Baptist Fundamentalism 1870-1950* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2014), 40.

[80] Sweeney (following Fisher, Williams, and others) has made the suggestion that certain Edwardsian brands of conservative theology (Sweeney looked primarily at Nathaniel Taylor) did not last long but instead ended up serving as bridges to liberal theology at Yale, Andover, and elsewhere. Their theology was mostly conservative in substance, but their sources and methods helped pave the way for liberal thinking. Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 151–53. See also Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963); Williams, *The Andover Liberals*.

In sum, the argument of this essay has been that significant Edwardsian themes are present in the influential theology of late nineteenth-century Baptist Alvah Hovey. Hovey evidences similar concerns as the Edwardsians, was admittedly influenced by prominent Edwardsians on Edwardsian themes, held key Edwardsian doctrines, and taught this Edwardsian-influenced theology to more than half a century of Baptist seminary students in New England. Any account that seeks to assess the character of conservative Baptist theology in the later nineteenth century would do well to note the Edwardsian backdrop, as shown in the theology of Alvah Hovey. Further, this Edwardsian influence shows a general tolerance for new conceptions of theology, a dependence on contemporaneous theological conceptions, and an ambivalence toward classic theological categories, which may help to explain the demise of conservative theology, such as Hovey's, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.