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An Interpretation of the Confrontation Between Revivalist Joel Hawes and Alleged Anti-Revivalist Horace Bushnell

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I. Introduction

In nineteenth-century New England, Joel Hawes (1789-1867) was a prominent revivalist, and Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) was a significant anti-revivalist. Both men were located in Hartford, which at the time, was one of two capitals in Connecticut, and one of the most important centers in both Connecticut and America. Hartford was also the headquarters for most of the Protestant organizations established during the Second Great Awakening.⁽¹⁾

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate several issues that have been neglected in the study of the confrontation between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell. The issues take the form of three questions. Why did Hawes and Bushnell take the positions of being a revivalist and an anti-revivalist respectively? How did each one manifest himself as either a revivalist or anti-revivalist? Did Hawes and Bushnell have any similarities?

To accomplish these tasks, it is necessary first of all to grasp the general characteristics of Congregational revivals. Congregational revivals differed greatly from Methodist revivals, which were typical and dominant in early nineteenth-century America. Therefore, the revivals of Connecticut Congregationalists were quite different from those of Methodists in the other states.⁽²⁾ Charles Roy Keller, a scholar of the Second Great Awakening in Connecticut, states that Connecticut Congregationalists preferred to meet in churches or believers' homes, but eschewed the outdoor gatherings and the camp meetings. In addition, the extreme emotionalism and physical responses typical of other revivals of the Second Great Awakening were not

present among Connecticut Congregationalists. Rather, Keller explains that the people gathered, participated, and departed in a quiet and consciously subdued manner. Clergy were equally restrained in their behavior during revival meetings. They did not employ the highly emotional techniques of Methodists and other revivalists. Furthermore, Keller notes that only “settled ministers” conducted revivals in Connecticut. In other words, there “were no ministers from outside the state, no itinerants, no lay preachers.”⁽³⁾

Second, in order to assess the confrontation between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell, one needs to understand the Taylor-Tyler controversy. In the late 1820’s, Connecticut religionists broke into two camps, one supporting liberal Calvinist Nathaniel W. Taylor (1786-1858) of Yale Divinity School, and the other supporting Bennet Tyler (1783-1858), a conservative Calvinist.⁽⁴⁾ Tyler argued that Taylor’s position of “the free agency of man”⁽⁵⁾ was undermining “*evangelical religion*”⁽⁶⁾ and responded to the controversy in 1833 by founding the Connecticut Theological Institute (Hartford Seminary Foundation). Although the controversy did not cause a schism in the strict sense of the word, it is important to understand that the controversy did cause Connecticut Congregationalists to live many years with a spirit deeply scarred by division.⁽⁷⁾

II. The Confrontation of Revivalist Joel Hawes and Alleged Anti-Revivalist Horace Bushnell

A. Joel Hawes’s Revival

Joel Hawes was born in Medway, Massachusetts, on 22 December 1789. In 1809, when he was nineteen years old, he was baptized by Dr. Prentiss of Medfield, since his own minister had “been laid aside from his labors.”⁽⁸⁾ Hawes graduated from Brown University in 1813, and later studied theology at Andover. He wrote that his four years at Andover not only were the happiest of his life, but also resulted in the greatest personal growth of his life.⁽⁹⁾ After graduating from Andover in 1817, he spent a period in probationary ministerial training, and then was ordained on 4 March 1818 at the First (Center) Congregational Church in Hartford. Edward A. Lawrence, a biographer of Joel Hawes, notes that the ordination was quite an event:

The ordination took place March 4, 1818; seventeen churches being invited on the council. In the services, Prof. Fitch of Yale College made the introductory prayer; Dr. Woods of Andover Seminary preached the sermon; Dr. Perkins of West Hartford offered the ordaining prayer; Mr. Rowland of Windsor gave the charge to the pastor; Dr. Flint of the South Church, Hartford, the right hand of fellowship; while Rev. Mr. Goodrich made the concluding prayer.⁽¹⁰⁾

Just after his ordination, Hawes received a supportive letter from Seth Terry expressing Terry's satisfaction with Hawes's mode of preaching.⁽¹¹⁾

In 1828, Hawes published *Lectures to Young Men*, which had a large circulation not only in America but also in England. He was chosen as a member of the corporation of Yale College in 1846, and remained in this position until his death.⁽¹²⁾ In 1861, he was elected into the Prudential Committee of Yale College, another position that he retained to his final days. Hawes died in Gilead, Connecticut, on 5 June 1867.

The First (Center) Congregational Church had a long history. The church installed Thomas Hooker as its first pastor in Newton (now Cambridge), Massachusetts, on 11 October 1633.⁽¹³⁾ However, in June 1636, Thomas Hooker moved to Hartford with about one hundred members of the congregation, and established in Hartford the first church in Connecticut.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the one hundred and eighty-five years between the ordination of Thomas Hooker and the ordination of Joel Hawes, the First (Center) Congregational Church had ten pastors:⁽¹⁵⁾ Thomas Hooker, Samuel Stone (a co-laborer with Hooker), John Whiting, Joseph Haynes (a co-laborer with Whiting), Isaac Foster, Timothy Woodbridge, Daniel Wadsworth, Edwards Dorr, Nathaniel Strong, and Joel Hawes.⁽¹⁶⁾

Although the First (Center) Congregational Church had a long, distinguished history, Joel Hawes found its membership, organization, and records to be in terrible condition.⁽¹⁷⁾ He noted:

No church-records; no documents to tell me who are members, and who not; what children have been baptized, and what not; our covenant and confession of faith contained in just ten Arminian lines;

four deacons of the five not members of the church; many irregular members, some timid ones, and, I fear, but few who would favor a thorough reformation.⁽¹⁸⁾

In order to address the deplorable situation, Hawes decided to use revivals to move the spirit and theology of the Center Church toward orthodoxy. The following remark taken from an 1830 address illustrates his high opinion of revivals:

Let your hearts be much set on revivals of religion. Never forget that the churches of New England were planted in the spirit of revivals; that they have hitherto existed and prospered by revivals, and that if they are to exist and prosper in time to come, it must be by the same cause which has from the first been their glory and defence.⁽¹⁹⁾

Hawes was true to his word. During his forty-four year ministry at the Center Church, his congregation experienced ten revivals.⁽²⁰⁾ They took place in 1826, 1829, 1831, the fall and winter of 1833, 1834, 1838, the winter of 1841-42, 1852, 1857, and 1858.⁽²¹⁾ However, even before 1826, the spirit of revival was felt among the parishioners. In order to accomplish his goal, Hawes realized that he needed assistance, and asked Lyman Beecher to help him. Beecher, who was experienced in revivals, spent two weeks with the Center Church congregation. During that time, he accompanied Hawes on home visits, and counseled people individually and collectively regarding salvation. Hawes noted that aside from preaching and prayer, the only other revival aid the two pastors used was “the meeting for inquiry, or the anxious meeting . . . commonly held immediately after the public religious service.”⁽²²⁾ The 1826 revival lasted for about one year, and greatly affected many young people.

The next revival, in 1829, gave both the young and the old access to the church. In the revival of 1831, the measure of the protracted meeting was adopted for the first time in Connecticut. Hawes did not resort to the measure, but acquiesced to it, since the pastors of the North and South churches favored the method.⁽²³⁾ During the fall and winter of 1833, Hawes saw some signs of the revival, and began to labor on pastoral visitations.⁽²⁴⁾

His efforts resulted in the addition of sixty to seventy people to the congregation.⁽²⁵⁾

During the revival of 1834, Dr. Taylor was invited to speak at the Center Church. Taylor spent a week or more with the congregation. The revival lasted for several months and added sixty to seventy people to the church.⁽²⁶⁾ In the revival of 1838, "a special work of grace" extended not only to the Center Church but also to most of the churches in Hartford.⁽²⁷⁾ In the revival during the winter of 1841-42, Rev. Kirk labored for several weeks in different Congregational churches.⁽²⁸⁾ This revival was particularly effective among young people. In 1852, revivalist Charles Finney came to help the Congregational churches of Hartford. The last two revivals, held in 1857 and 1858, brought large numbers of people to church.⁽²⁹⁾

Joel Hawes's revivals had two characteristics. First, although he was, of course, a strong promoter of the Hartford revivals, he was very cautious regarding new measures. Hawes thought revivals that resorted to new measures made the church too emotional. For example, he was wary of extremes, explaining that good health was not comprised of first a day of wellness and then a day of illness, and that agriculture could not be fruitful when a flood was followed by a drought. The same principle applied to religion, he argued. Alternating "from engagedness to indifference," from slumber to alertness, and from life and attentiveness to apathy and inattentiveness did not, in his opinion, create healthy religion.⁽³⁰⁾ Thus, Hawes did not favor new measures, and it is clear that he tried to remain faithful to the traditional Congregational way of revival in Connecticut.

The second characteristic of Hawes's revivals was that he tried to further his revivals through gospel-preaching. Lawrence notes that Hawes had been focused on preaching ever since he decided to enter the ministry.⁽³¹⁾ However, as Hawes himself explained, he did not preach "philosophy nor metaphysics nor poetry nor fiction nor science; but he aimed to preach the gospel, and to preach it plainly and fully."⁽³²⁾

Because Hawes was clearly interested in gospel preaching, he first of all, regarded the apostle Paul as a model preacher. He wrote: "I love him [Paul] more than ever, and feel more desirous to imitate him in zeal, fidelity, and plainness in dispensing the Word."⁽³³⁾ Second, regarding the theological foundation of his gospel preaching, Hawes had been influenced by

Nathanael Emmons (1745-1840).⁽³⁴⁾ It is important to note that Emmons was a follower of the conservative Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803).⁽³⁵⁾

Lawrence notes a third reason behind Hawes's gospel preaching related to the Taylor-Tyler controversy that in those days so greatly affected pastors' theological bases. Hawes was neither a Taylorite nor a Tylerite.⁽³⁶⁾ In other words, he accepted "Dr. Taylor's practical theology, but was not satisfied with all his speculations. He agreed with Dr. Tyler in the substance of his creed, but did not like some of his metaphysics, and modes of presentation."⁽³⁷⁾ However, in actuality, Hawes may have regarded himself as a Taylorite, for he was attached to Taylor and went frequently to New Haven to see him.⁽³⁸⁾ In the revival of 1834, Hawes asked Taylor to come and preach at the Center Church.⁽³⁹⁾ In 1846 Hawes was chosen as a member of the corporation of Yale College.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Despite all of the above, I believe that Hawes may actually have been a Tylerite. This is based on Hawes's unconscious contradiction: he was not a liberal Calvinist, which was a crucial characteristic of Taylorite theology.

A fourth reason that Hawes engaged in gospel preaching lies in the fact that his sermons were more doctrinal than experiential.⁽⁴¹⁾ Fifth, his preaching was "more the *very* Word, and less upon or *round about* it."⁽⁴²⁾ In other words, he focused on the Scripture itself, rather than on speculation about the Scripture. Sixth, his sermons made more of an appeal to judgment and understanding, rather than to the emotions or even intellect.⁽⁴³⁾ Seventh, his preaching was "more direct and practical."⁽⁴⁴⁾ The final source of his gospel preaching lies in the fact that his sermons did not make use of imagery and figures.⁽⁴⁵⁾

B. Horace Bushnell's Anti-Revivalism

Horace Bushnell was born on 14 April 1802 in Bantam (near Litchfield), Connecticut. He was baptized in a local Episcopal congregation, and in 1821 joined the local Congregational church. He studied at Yale College from 1823 to 1827. Following his graduation, he became a journalist, and studied law, but entered Yale Divinity School in 1831. In that same year he experienced a conversion.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In February 1833, he received an invitation from the North Congregational Church in Hartford to supply the pulpit temporarily.

On 22 May 1833, he was ordained.

Bushnell seemed destined for controversy. In 1838 he published the article, "Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion" in the *Christian Spectator*. He wrote that he hoped "to establish a higher and more solid confidence in revivals, and, at the same time, to secure to the cause of evangelical religion a more natural, satisfactory and happy, as well as a more constant movement."⁽⁴⁷⁾ Revivals of religion were the main source of trouble from the beginning of his ministry.⁽⁴⁸⁾ In 1839 he received a letter from Deacon Seth Terry in which Terry complained that he saw a wide difference between his own and Bushnell's views regarding scriptural doctrines and principles.⁽⁴⁹⁾ One should notice this is the same Seth Terry who sent a consoling letter to Joel Hawes when Terry was a deacon in the Center Church.

In 1844, Bushnell's "The Kingdom of Heaven as a Grain of Mustard Seed" was published in *The New Englander*. This article, built on the foundation laid in "Spiritual Economy of the Revivals of Religion," developed the theme of personal religious growth rather than conquest by conversion. He noted that the "mustard seed" nature of the Kingdom of Heaven is lost when revivals are used "not for the reviving of piety, but for the subjugation of the unbelievers..."⁽⁵⁰⁾ In other words, the concept of conquest easily overpowers the concept of growth. In 1847, Bushnell's ideas regarding Christian growth were further developed in *Discourses on Christian Nurture*, "An Argument for *Discourses on Christian Nurture*, Addressed to the Publishing Committee of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society," and *Views of Christian Nurture, and of Subjects Adjacent Thereto*. In 1848, he delivered a series of three discourses at the Divinity School in Harvard University, Yale College, and Andover. In the following year, based on these three discourses, *God in Christ* was published, followed by *Christ in Theology* in 1851. As a result of the ideas promoted in the above noted works, especially *God in Christ* and *Christ in Theology*, Bushnell was brought to trial for heresy from 1849 to 1854. A few short years later, in 1859, he retired from the North Church. Horace Bushnell died in 1876.⁽⁵¹⁾

Historically speaking, the origin of the North Church dates back to the Center Church founded in 1636 by Thomas Hooker. Dissident church members from the Center Church founded the Second (South) Church in 1670. From that time, over one hundred and fifty years passed before a new

Hartford Congregational church was established. Once the number of residents in Hartford grew and church attendance increased thanks to the Second Great Awakening, the Center Church became crowded. Therefore, in 1823, the Center Church decided to form the Third (North) Congregational Church. Just under a hundred Center Church members and a handful others inaugurated services at the Third (North) Congregational Church.

The first pastor of the North Church was Carlos Wilcox, a minister-poet.⁽⁵²⁾ He found the congregation to be spiritual in nature and prosperous in income; however, “he struggled vainly for a revival and left the church after a year.”⁽⁵³⁾ The congregation’s second pastor was Samuel Spring. This man had strong Taylorite views, which annoyed the Tylerites in the congregation. After four years, Spring moved to a church in East Hartford, “leaving the [North] congregation bitterly divided over the merits of Taylorite divinity.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ It was into this contentious environment that Horace Bushnell entered as North’s third pastor.

As mentioned above, the condition of the North Church when Bushnell arrived was a split between Tylerites and Taylorites. This split was one of the primary troubles Bushnell faced as its pastor. Years later, in the commemorative discourse of the twentieth anniversary of the North Church, Bushnell described the confusing reception he received:

I went, as invited, directly to the house of the chairman of the committee; but I had scarcely warmed me and not at all relieved the hunger of my fast, when he came in and told me that arrangements had been made for me with one of the fathers of the church, and immediately sent me off with my baggage to the quarters assigned. Of course I had no complaint to make, though the fire seemed very inviting and the house attractive; but when I came to know the hospitality of my friend, as I had abundant opportunity of knowing it afterwards, it became somewhat of a mystery to me that I should have been despatched in this rather summary fashion. But it came out three or four years after, that as there were two parties strongly marked in the church, an old and new school party, as related to the New Haven controversy, the committee had made up their mind, very prudently, that it would not do for me to stay even for an hour with

the new school brother of the committee. . . . I mention this fact to shew the very delicate condition prepared for the young pastor, who is to be thus daintly inserted between an acid and an alkali, having it for his task, both to keep them apart and to save himself from being bitten of one, or devoured by the other.⁽⁵⁵⁾

At first, the North Church had only two deacons. One of them was the aforementioned Seth Terry, a Tylerite. He was representative of the type of people who could easily place Bushnell's position in jeopardy.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The other deacon was Amos M. Collins, who related to the teachings of Nathaniel W. Taylor. Robert L. Edwards, a biographer of Horace Bushnell, writes that Collins was raised as a Calvinist and therefore needed to adjust to Bushnell's unusual form of leadership. However, Edwards adds that because Collins was spiritually flexible and leaned toward a liberal Taylorite outlook, "Collins supported his controversial minister in season and out."⁽⁵⁷⁾

One more cause of Horace Bushnell's trouble as pastor was the revivals in Hartford. He complained about the "real and deep trail of feelings" that arose when he encountered evangelists who used "the machinery system of revivals."⁽⁵⁸⁾ In his commemorative discourse celebrating the North Church's twentieth anniversary, he provided a vivid description of the revivals' negative impact:

The permanent was sacrificed to the casual, the ordinary swallowed up and lost in the extraordinary, and Christian piety itself reduced to a kind of campaigning or stage-effect exercise. The spirit of the pastor was broken, and his powers crippled by a lack of expectation; for it was becoming a fixed impression that effect is to be looked for only under instrumentalities that are extraordinary.⁽⁵⁹⁾

What Bushnell really wanted to say and to do at the time was to distinguish between "the reviving of religion" (which he thought should be used when a congregation needed it) and a religion that judged all religious experience within the context of "spiritual campaigns" and extraordinary behaviors and events.⁽⁶⁰⁾ However, he noted, possibly with some relief, that as of 1853, the "idea of casual extraordinary religion" was outmoded.⁽⁶¹⁾

What was, then, Bushnell's method of reviving religion as an alternative method to revivals of religion? The answer is that he came to see *nurturing* as the primary method. As mentioned earlier, Bushnell published *Discourses on Christian Nurture* in 1847. In this book, he summarized what he meant by the term "nurture:"

The child is to *grow up* a Christian. In other words, the aim, effort and expectation should be, not, as is commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in sin, to be converted after he comes to a mature age; but that he is to open on the world as one that is spiritually renewed, not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but seeming rather to *have loved what is good from his earliest years.*⁽⁶²⁾

Although Charles Hodge was grateful for Bushnell's concept of "nurturing" "*as an alternative to revivalism,*"⁽⁶³⁾ Bennet Tyler, Taylor's arch-critic, thoroughly attacked the idea. Tyler did not view revivals of religion as secondary methods to "nurture." He observed that revivals usually began in the church; a death-like stillness pervaded the worshipping assembly; and revivals were not temporary excitements that were quickly over and followed by a melancholy response.⁽⁶⁴⁾

C. Charles Finney's observation of Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell, and the Hartford Revival in 1852

In the winter of 1852, Hartford had a great revival, which was led by the famous evangelist Charles Finney and described in his memoirs. First, Finney wrote that he had been invited to hold meetings not by Joel Hawes, but by William Weston Patton, pastor of the Fourth (South) Congregational Church.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Second, both Hawes and Bushnell attended the South Church revival meetings and were greatly interested in Finney's work. As a result, each pastor extended an invitation to Finney to preach in his respective church, which Finney was happy to do.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Third, however, Finney soon saw that there was a confrontation between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell, and began to understand the frustrations of Hartford's lay people and the South Church's pastor, William

Weston Patton. Finney noted that the lay people experienced the confrontation between the ministers was a stumbling block to the work of revival. Furthermore, the lay people did not necessarily hold with Hawes's position that Bushnell's *God in Christ* was not orthodox.⁽⁶⁷⁾ As for Patton, Finney believed that the clergyman had never sympathized with Hawes's viewpoint, either.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Finney's understanding of the positions held by the laity and by Patton, as well as Finney's own observation that the main obstacle seemed to be Hawes's unwillingness to "cordially cooperate with the other ministers in the work,"⁽⁶⁹⁾ led Finney to take action. He informed Hawes that "he [Hawes] was in a false position."⁽⁷⁰⁾ Hawes seemed to feel his responsibility deeply,⁽⁷¹⁾ and, as a result, both he and Bushnell appeared to come to an understanding that they would lay aside their difficulties.⁽⁷²⁾ However, according to the editors of Finney's memoirs, the truce was not permanent. Even though Bushnell attempted to come to an understanding with Hawes, Bushnell was unable to change their relationship. Thus, things remained the same between them.⁽⁷³⁾

Fourth, Finney himself recalled that Hawes had a deep-seated fear of the "new measures." In his memoirs, Finney made note of the following incident:

Dr. Hawes was especially very much afraid of any such measures [calling on sinners to come forward and break away from the fear of man, and giving themselves publicly to God]. Consequently I could do no such things there. Indeed Dr. Hawes was so much afraid of measures, that I recollect one night in attending a meeting of inquiry in his vestry with him the number of inquirers present was large, and at the close I called on those that were willing then and there to give themselves up to God, to kneel down. This startled Dr. Hawes; and he remarked before they knelt down that none were requested to do so unless they did it cheerfully, of their own accord; which, by the by, I was aware that most of them would very readily do. They did kneel down, and we prayed with them. Dr. Hawes remarked to me as the inquirers rose and were dismissed: "I have always felt the necessity of some such measure, but have been afraid to use it. I have always seen," said he, "that something was needed to bring them to a stand,

and to induce them to act on their present convictions; but I have not had courage to do anything of the kind." I said to him that I had found some such measure indispensable to bring sinners to the point of submission.⁽⁷⁴⁾

D. Thomas Robbins's observation of Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell, and the 1852 Hartford Revival

Clergyman Thomas Robbins bequeathed a long and valuable journal to future generations. He was born in Norfolk, Connecticut, on 11 August 1777. After graduating from Williams in 1796, he was licensed to preach as a Congregational minister on 25 September 1798. He served as pastor at some Congregational churches; then lived in Hartford from 1842 to 1856. He founded the Connecticut Historical Society (and was its librarian in 1844). From 1796 to 1854, he kept a journal, which was published in 1886-87 under the title, *Diary of Thomas Robbins, D.D.* He died on 13 September 1856, in Colebrook, Connecticut.

Thomas Robbins's journal illustrates that he was well acquainted with Joel Hawes and a frequent attendee of his meetings. For instance, in his February 16, 1818 journal entry, Robbins noted the upcoming date of Hawes's ordination.⁽⁷⁵⁾ On 4 March, the day of the event, Robbins described the ceremony. Robbins commented that the body of the communicants at Hawes's church on 1 June was the largest he had ever seen. On 5 October 1845, Robbins made note that Hawes preached at the North Church, of which Bushnell was pastor. In the journal entry of 18 April 1847, Robbins wrote approvingly, "Dr. Hawes labors with great earnestness, in hope of some revival. The Lord grant it."⁽⁷⁶⁾ On the ninth of May, he remarked, "I think Dr. Hawes is the most profitable, useful preacher that I have known."⁽⁷⁷⁾ On the eighth of August, Robbins found Hawes's preaching to be "very impressive and solemn."⁽⁷⁸⁾ When Taylor preached at the Center Church on 27 October 1850, Robbins observed that the sermon was "fully Orthodox."⁽⁷⁹⁾ Finally, Robbins's comment on 22 February 1852 that the revival was continuing⁽⁸⁰⁾ reflected the fact Finney was in Hartford and working with the revival during the winter of 1852.

Many scholars think that Thomas Robbins did not always think highly

of Horace Bushnell, when compared to Robbins's good opinion of Hawes.⁽⁸¹⁾ However, Robbins's journal reveals some interesting entries regarding Bushnell. On 6 October 1844, Robbins noted that he went to meetings as a "hearer," whereupon he observed Hawes preaching in the morning and Bushnell preaching in the afternoon.⁽⁸²⁾ Although it is not possible to verify whether Robbins attended the Center Church or the North Church, the point is that Hawes and Bushnell shared the same pulpit that Sunday. On the next Sunday afternoon, Robbins preached for Bushnell and observed that the North Church had a large, "good" congregation.⁽⁸³⁾ In the diary of the seventeenth of November, Robbins again had a favorable opinion of Bushnell and the North Church: "Attended Mr. Bushnell's meeting both parts of the day. A fine congregation, with good music."⁽⁸⁴⁾ The journal entry of 18 October 1846 made note that Bushnell preached at the Fourth (South) Church, of which Patton was pastor.⁽⁸⁵⁾ On 28 November 1847, Robbins reported that Bushnell gave a sermon at the Center Church. A comment recorded on 23 March 1849—"Read Bushnell's strange book [*God in Christ*]"⁽⁸⁶⁾—indicates that Robbins probably did not have a high opinion of the work. On 7 October 1850, Robbins "Conversed with brethren about ecclesiastical matters."⁽⁸⁷⁾ (The editors of Robbins's diaries suggest that Bushnell may have been the subject of the clergy consultation.⁽⁸⁸⁾) Despite the controversy surrounding Bushnell, Robbins's journal entry of 20 July 1851 observed that Bushnell preached at the Fourth (South) Church, where Patton was pastor. This comment makes it clear that Bushnell had not been ostracized from his fellow clergy's pulpits. Finally, on 15 February 1852, Robbins noted that he attended a meeting at Bushnell's church, and commented favorably on the size and religious interest of Bushnell's congregation. He added that a strong interest in religion was something that the North Church shared with other congregations in Hartford.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The winter revival of 1852 in Hartford was carried on a wave of revival preaching by Charles Finney. Thomas Robbins's journal entries for the period illustrate how busy Finney was and how open the pastors of the town were to allowing him to preach from their pulpits. In the first journal entry, dated 5 January 1852, Robbins wrote approvingly of Finney's preaching.⁽⁹⁰⁾ On 16 January, Robbins attended Center Church to hear Finney, noting that the sermon was good and that the crowd was big.⁽⁹¹⁾ Less than ten days later,

on 25 January, Finney spoke at the Center Church once again and Robbins made the following observation: "There is evidently a general work in the town. The Lord carry on his own work. The evening meeting very full."⁽⁹²⁾ According to Robbins, Finney preached a good sermon at Joel Hawes's church the very next day,⁽⁹³⁾ and on 1 February once again attracted a large crowd.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Finney was busy on 8 February: he preached at the Fourth Church in the afternoon and at the Center Church in the evening. Robbins continued to be impressed by the revival, observing that the "work of Grace in the town is great. Meetings very full and solemn."⁽⁹⁵⁾ The North Church and its pastor, Horace Bushnell, hosted Finney on 4 March. Again, Robbins gave a favorable review of both the sermon and the number of people in attendance.⁽⁹⁶⁾ The final notation in Robbins's journal regarding the winter revival in Hartford was 7 March 1852: "At evening attended a very full meeting at the Center. Mr. Finney preached; expecting to leave here soon. The work of grace continues with power in the town."⁽⁹⁷⁾

Therefore, the evidence in Thomas Robbins's journals can lead a reader to several conclusions. First of all, Robbins preferred Joel Hawes to Horace Bushnell, because Robbins attended Hawes's meetings much more than Bushnell's meetings. Second, Robbins found Hawes's preaching to be particularly of value. Third, Robbins disagreed with Bushnell's theology, especially the theology found in *God in Christ*; however, Robbins spoke highly of Bushnell's congregation, which he perceived to be large and fine.

E. Correspondence between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell

As mentioned earlier, Bushnell was brought to trial for heresy from 1849 to 1854 due to the theology expressed in his books, especially *God in Christ* and *Christ in Theology*. Joel Hawes was at the forefront of the motion to bring Bushnell to trial. However, despite Hawes's opinions and activities, Bushnell attempted to reconcile with his fellow clergyman.

Bushnell initiated the process of reconciliation by writing a letter to Hawes on 10 February 1852.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Hawes responded to the letter on 11 February 1852, asking whether or not Bushnell could assent to the doctrines of "the Assembly's Catechism or the Thirty-nine Articles"⁽⁹⁹⁾ which were held by the evangelical churches. After this, on 27 June 1852 the North Church

withdrew its connection with the North Consociation of Hartford County, to which the North Church belonged.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ This action was a sign that the North Church congregation supported Bushnell, their pastor, and decided to save him from a heresy trial. Upon the withdrawal of the North Church from the North Consociation of Hartford County, Hawes felt obliged to discontinue his professional fellowship with Bushnell.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

On 20 March 1854, Bushnell once again sent a letter of reconciliation to Hawes. First of all, according to this letter, Bushnell stated that the strained relationship between himself and Hawes was a hindrance to God's truth and Christian community, and that both of them should realize the fact.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Second, Bushnell suggested Hawes bring their churches into a full co-operation, and engage a mutually acceptable preacher to assist them.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Hawes's reply to Bushnell was sent on the following day, 21 March 1854. Hawes told Bushnell, "I remained in the faith which was held by the body of the Evangelical Churches in New England. You have parted from me on that faith."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ To explain just where Bushnell had deviated from the faith of New England theology, Hawes wrote: "I refer to your books, especially to the first, 'God in Christ.' I have a deep conviction that the teachings of that book are wrong, entirely wrong on the main points discussed."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Bushnell responded to Hawes with a letter dated 23 March 1854. In it, Bushnell explained that he did not deviate from beliefs common to New England Congregationalism, especially with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity and doctrine of the work of Christ.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Bushnell followed up with another letter on 3 April 1854, in which he clarified that Hawes disagreed with him with regard to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement. Regarding the Trinity, Bushnell repeated his assent to the Nicene doctrine of Trinity, which was reaffirmed in the Westminster Confession.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Concerning the Atonement, Bushnell explained, "I have never supposed that I had cast away anything really held by the adherents of Church doctrine. . . . I supposed that I was only revising the form, not that I was reducing or changing the substance."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Hawes's reply to Bushnell, dated April 1854, was the last letter between the two clergymen. It was, simply put, an amicable document in relation to two points: Hawes established fellowship with Bushnell, and accepted doctrines that Bushnell had presented in a unique way. Regarding

establishing a fellowship, Hawes wrote:

I am surely, as before intimated, not insensible to the fact, that evils many and grievous must grow out of suspended fellowship and co-operation in promoting the cause of God between ministers situated as we are, pastors of contiguous and mingled congregations; and, oppressed as I often have been with a sorrowful sense of these evils, I have been willing to do any thing I could do, consistently with a conscientious regard to truth and duty, to put an end to them, by having confidence restored and fraternal relations established between us. I have known, too, that you have desired and sought the same.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Concerning the controversial doctrines, Hawes remarked that he found, “very little to which I feel disposed to object in the statement you make of your views of the Trinity, the work of Christ in his atonement, and justification by faith in his sacrifice.”⁽¹¹⁰⁾

To sum up, the correspondence between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell had two characteristics. First, Bushnell deeply knew that the confrontation with Hawes was a stumbling block with regard to the promotion of religious revivals, even though Hawes did not want to admit that point. Second, the correspondence between Hawes and Bushnell was a doctrinal controversy, for Hawes accused Bushnell of holding unorthodox doctrines of the trinity of God and the atonement of Christ.

III. Conclusion

First, it is commonly understood that Joel Hawes was a great revivalist, and that Horace Bushnell was a prominent anti-revivalist. However, this categorization seems too simplified. It is possible to find similarities between the two men. They both did not approve of and feared emotionalism in the church.

Second, what was, then, the difference between the two men regarding the revival? What was the confrontation of Hawes and Bushnell concerning

the revival?

On the one hand, Hawes tried to promote the revivals not by new measures but by gospel preaching that emphasized doctrine. Thomas Robbins's observations made this point very clear. With regard to the Taylorite-Tylerite controversy, one can say that Hawes was a Tylerite whose characteristic was that of a conservative orthodox Calvinist. The fact that Hawes wanted to promote the revival was ironical, in that he did not realize that he was himself a stumbling block to the revivals; and that lay people did not necessarily have sympathy with his position. Charles Finney's observations have clarified these aspects.

On the other hand, Bushnell tried to revive the religion not by revivals but through nurturing, which stressed growth. In regard to the Taylorite-Tylerite controversy, one can say that Bushnell was a Taylorite whose characteristic was that of a liberal orthodox Calvinist. Contrary to Hawes, Bushnell was aware that the confrontation between himself and Hawes was a hindrance to revivals and to their religious communities.

Notes

- (1) Charles Roy Keller, *The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 7.
- (2) *Ibid.*, 53.
- (3) *Ibid.*, 53-54.
- (4) H. Shelton Smith, "Introduction," in *Horace Bushnell*, ed. H. Shelton Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 3.
- (5) Keller, 228.
- (6) Smith, 3. (*Italics mine*).
- (7) *Ibid.*, 3.
- (8) Edward A. Lawrence, *The Life of Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D.* (Hartford: Hamersley & Co., 1873), 21.
- (9) *Ibid.*, 53.
- (10) *Ibid.*, 60. Joel Hawes wrote of that day: "Dr. Wood preached the sermon. For that man I have an affection truly filial; and I believe he feels towards me as a kind and tender father. Before he left, he spent some time in free conversation with me. The parting was bitter. Andover, with all its pleasant scenes, rose to my remembrance,

and quite overcame me. We knelt down, and prayed; the good man commending me to the grace of God. May the smiles of Heaven rest upon him forever!" Ibid., 62.

- (11) Ibid., 62. Seth Terry is an interesting and crucial person in confrontation between Joel Hawes and Horace Bushnell. Seth Terry played an important role as clerk when Joel Hawes was called to be the pastor of the First (Center) Congregational Church; however, Terry later moved to the North Church of Horace Bushnell. It is interesting to note, though, that Terry had moved on to the South Church by the time of his death. Of his friend's death, Joel Hawes wrote: "21st [of 1864]. To-day attended the funeral of Hon. Seth Terry, at the South Church, . . . aged eighty-five. . . . I made a few remarks, and offered the prayer. A decidedly Christian man. A faithful friend to me all the time I have been in Hartford." Ibid., 271.
- (12) Ibid., 7, 282.
- (13) Philip E. Howard, *The Life of Henry Clay Trumbull* (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Co., 1905), 95.
- (14) Ibid., 95.
- (15) Ibid., 95.
- (16) Ibid., 60-61.
- (17) Ibid., 63.
- (18) Ibid., 63.
- (19) Joel Hawes, *A Tribute to the Memory of the Pilgrims, and a Vindication of the Congregational Churches of New-England* (Hartford: Cooke & Co. and Packard & Butler, 1830), 211-12.
- (20) Lawrence, 110.
- (21) Ibid., 110-12.
- (22) Ibid., 109.
- (23) Ibid., 110. At this point, the pastor of the North Church was not Horace Bushnell but Samuel Spring, Bushnell's predecessor.
- (24) Lawrence, 111.
- (25) Ibid., 134.
- (26) Ibid., 111.
- (27) Ibid., 111.
- (28) Ibid., 111.
- (29) Ibid., 112.
- (30) Ibid., 114.
- (31) Ibid., 322.
- (32) Ibid., 332.
- (33) Ibid., 323.
- (34) Ibid., 282, 308. Nathanael Emmons, Samuel Hopkins, and Timothy Dwight were disciples of Jonathan Edwards.

- (35) Keller, 37.
- (36) Lawrence, 312.
- (37) *Ibid.*, 312.
- (38) *Ibid.*, 6.
- (39) *Ibid.*, 111.
- (40) *Ibid.*, 7.
- (41) *Ibid.*, 337.
- (42) *Ibid.*, 337.
- (43) *Ibid.*, 329.
- (44) *Ibid.*, 337.
- (45) *Ibid.*, 328.
- (46) John M. Mulder, "Introduction," in *Christian Nurture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), *xvii*.
- (47) This quotation is from *Views of Christian Nurture, And of Subjects Adjacent Thereto*. Horace Bushnell, *Views of Christian Nurture, And of Subjects Adjacent Thereto* (Hartford: Edwin Hunt, 1847), 125.
- (48) Horace Bushnell wrote in "Twentieth Anniversary: A Commemorative Discourse" in 1853: "The only difficulty I have ever encountered in my ministry, that cost me a real and deep trial of feeling, related to the matter of evangelist preachers, and what may be called the machinery system of revivals." Horace Bushnell, "Twentieth Anniversary: A Commemorative Discourse" (Hartford: Elihu Geer, 1853), 19. See also Mary Bushnell Cheney, *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell* (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969), 81-82.
- (49) *Ibid.*, 92.
- (50) Horace Bushnell, "The Kingdom of Heaven as a Grain Mustard Seed," *The New Englander* II (1844): 607. In this article, Bushnell also made public his idea of infant baptism. However, I will not be writing about infant baptism because this issue does not directly relate to the topic of my article.
- (51) Cheney, 1-579. See also Robert L. Edwards, *Of Singular Genius, Of Singular Grace* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 1-405.
- (52) Barbara M. Cross, *Horace Bushnell: Minister to a Changing America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 43.
- (53) *Ibid.*, 43.
- (54) *Ibid.*, 43.
- (55) Bushnell, "Twentieth Anniversary: A Commemorative Discourse," 7-8.
- (56) Robert L. Edwards, "Portrait of a People: Horace Bushnell's Hartford Congregation," ed. Horton Davies, *Studies of the Church in History* (Allison Park: Pickwick Publication, 1983), 152.
- (57) *Ibid.*, 152.

- (58) Bushnell, "Twentieth Anniversary: A Commemorative Discourse," 19. See also the note 48.
- (59) Bushnell, "Twentieth Anniversary: A Commemorative Discourse," 19-20.
- (60) *Ibid.*, 21.
- (61) *Ibid.*, 21.
- (62) This quotation is from *Views of Christian Nurture and of Subjects Adjacent Thereto*. Bushnell, *Views of Christian Nurture and of Subjects Adjacent Thereto*, 6. (Italics mine).
- (63) Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, ed. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 284. (Italics mine).
- (64) Bennet Tyler, "Letters to the Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D., Containing Strictures on his Book, Entitled *Views of Christian Nurture, and Subjects Adjacent Thereto*" (Hartford: Brown & Parsons, 1848), 49-55.
- (65) Charles G. Finney, *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, ed. Garth M. Rosell & Richard A. G. Dupuis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 520-21.
- (66) *Ibid.*, 521.
- (67) *Ibid.*, 521-22.
- (68) *Ibid.*, 522. Rosell and Dupuis, the book's editors write a note here: "Patton initially felt obligated to dissociate himself from Bushnell, but he was 'touched and won by the patience and somewhat saddened good temper' of Bushnell, and a 'warm friendship and alliance' grew between them."
- (69) *Ibid.*, 522. Cheney notes, "In services held at the Centre Church he [Bushnell] was not invited to participate, even to the extent of reading a hymn. This state of things was a trial to the brotherly love of Mr. Finney, and he would fain have become a mediator to restore the broken harmony." Cheney, 253-54.
- (70) Finney, 522.
- (71) *Ibid.*, 522.
- (72) *Ibid.*, 522.
- (73) *Ibid.*, 522.
- (74) *Ibid.*, 523.
- (75) Thomas Robbins, *Diary of Thomas Robbins, D.D.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1886), vol. I-732.
- (76) *Ibid.*, vol. II-862.
- (77) *Ibid.*, vol. II-864.
- (78) *Ibid.*, vol. II-874.
- (79) *Ibid.*, vol. II-992.
- (80) *Ibid.*, vol. II-1037.
- (81) Edwards, "Portrait of a People: Horace Bushnell's Hartford Congregation," 151.

- (82) Robbins, vol. II-753.
- (83) Ibid., vol. II-754.
- (84) Ibid., vol. II-758.
- (85) Ibid., vol. II-843.
- (86) Ibid., vol. II-934.
- (87) Ibid., vol. II-990.
- (88) Ibid., vol. II-990.
- (89) Ibid., vol. II-1036.
- (90) Ibid., vol. II-1033.
- (91) Ibid., vol. II-1034.
- (92) Ibid., vol. II-1035.
- (93) Ibid., vol. II-1035.
- (94) Ibid., vol. II-1035.
- (95) Ibid., vol. II-1036.
- (96) Ibid., vol. II-1038.
- (97) Ibid., vol. II-1038.
- (98) I currently cannot find the source containing the content of this letter. One thing, though, is certain: Charles Finney was in Hartford when the reconciliation letter was sent from Bushnell to Hawes.
- (99) Lawrence, 207.
- (100) Cheney, 261.
- (101) Lawrence, 201.
- (102) Cheney, 327.
- (103) Ibid., 328.
- (104) Ibid., 329.
- (105) Ibid., 329.
- (106) Ibid., 331-32.
- (107) Ibid., 335.
- (108) Ibid., 335-36.
- (109) Lawrence, 214-15.
- (110) Ibid., 215.

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