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primary and usual meaning of the word *angel*, meets the *exgentia loci*; is perfectly natural in itself; meets and removes various difficulties, and is open to no fair grammatical, logical or theological objection.

ARTICLE VII.

RICHARD BAXTER'S "END OF CONTROVERSY."

On the 21st of January, 1691, Mr. Baxter wrote the Preface to this celebrated treatise. The title of the treatise is: "An End of Doctrinal Controversies which have lately troubled the Churches by Reconciling Explication without much Disputing. Written by Richard Baxter. Psalm 120: 6, 7, My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace; but when I speak, they are for war. Luke 9: 46, 49, 50, 54, 55, There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest, etc. London: Printed for John Salusbury, at the Rising Sun, Cornhill, 1691." On the 8th of December, 1691, Baxter died. Of course, the present treatise could not have been published many months before his decease. Parts of the treatise, however, had been, for twenty years, lying by him in manuscript. The work, therefore, may be presumed to contain his latest and maturest views. Notwithstanding all that has been said with regard to his theological fluctuations, this treatise develops a good degree of harmony pervading the entire course of his theological speculations. He changed his opinions sometimes. Not seldom has he contradicted himself; so did Dr. Owen and Dr. Twisse contradict themselves; but most of the contradictions found in Baxter's later works, were found in his earlier also. In one sense, he was consistent with himself in adhering to them.

A succinct but luminous and richly suggestive view of Baxter's theological system, spirit, and history, was given in two Articles of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. IX. pp. 135—169, 300—329. The only doubts which we have heard expressed with regard to the entire impression of those Articles, were derived

from the suspicion, that Baxter may have modified his theological system toward the close of his life. The design of the present Article is to give a brief synopsis of the last important theological work which Baxter published, and thus to exhibit the symmetry between the principles laid down in his "Ead of Controversy" and the principles which were ascribed to him in the ninth volume of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and were advocated by him in the volumes, *Catholic Theologie* and *Methodus Theologiae Christianae*, which he published in his earlier, although, intellectually, not in his more vigorous, manhood.

The same spirit characterizes the present volume which distinguishes his preceding works. It is a spirit of conciliation, but of decided invective against the divines who refuse to be conciliated, and to whom he applies the proverb: *vespæ habent favos*. "I am blamed by Dissenters," he says, "as coming too near by conciliatory explications, to some things which they call dangerous points of Popery, Arminianism and Prelacy; but whether it be by truth or error I leave to trial."¹ "Controversies I have written of, but only to end them, not to make them."² "If those that have long reproached me as unfit to be in their church (and said, *ex uno disce omnes*, with their leader), find any unsound or unprofitable doctrine here, I shall take it for a great favor to be confuted, even for the good of others excluded with me when I am dead."³

† 1. Reasonableness of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

Whatever of truth lies in the adage, that we must heartily believe a doctrine in order that we may understand it, Baxter was inclined to prize far more highly the maxim, that we must understand a doctrine before we can heartily believe it. "A true knowledge of God," he says, "is necessary to the being of religion and to holiness and glory. No man can live, obey, trust or hope, beyond his knowledge."⁴ There is much that is incomprehensible in every doctrine, but, according to Baxter, we affectionately receive only so much of that doctrine as we first intellectually apprehend. "Nothing that God commandeth us to believe," he says, "is either *contrary to or above* reason (that is, the reasoning intellect) informed by evangelical revelation or

¹ Preface, p. 4.

² *Ib.* p. 2.

³ *Ib.* p. 6.

⁴ Chap. I. §§ 1, 3, 4.

notice, and honestly and soundly qualified to judge otherwise." "This is apparent,—because we have no faith in us, but what is an act of reason and rational will; and, therefore, that cannot be said to be *above* reason, which is itself essentially an act of reason."¹ Very far, however, was this theologian from overrating the amount of our knowledge. Of this fact his "End of Controversy" gives even more evidence than is found in his other works. His favorite maxim was that, "perfectly *nihil scitur* of anything, but imperfectly *aliquid verum* is known." "Nothing is so certainly known as God, and yet nothing is so defectively known."² Much of our knowledge concerning him is derived from similitudes. These are suggestive but inaccurate. "He that would know how to conceive of God, must first know himself, and what his own soul is. The true conceptions of your souls must be the prime helps to conceive of God by similitude."³ "God is said to clothe himself with light as with a garment, and a man will say, I have seen the king to-day, who saw him but in his garments. And if he saw the skin of his face, how little of the king did he see? In Scripture, they that have seen angels are said to have seen God, and heard his will by them."⁴

In conformity with this principle, and also with the prevalent mode of reasoning among the schoolmen, Baxter makes especial effort to render the doctrines of the Gospel intelligible. He strives to explain the Trinity. He often reiterates the affirmation "that the *Trinity in unity* is imprinted by God on the whole frame of nature and government or morality, and that doctrine of the Trinity, which to the ignorant is a stumbling block, greatly helpeth to confirm my belief of the truth of the Gospel and Christianity, while I find it so congruous to the foresaid impress, and attested so much by all God's works; especially on man."⁵ Man, while in the image of God, has a nature, holiness, and dominion; here he begins to illustrate the Trinity. The nature of man is one, yet has three faculties, the vital, active power, intellect and will. "The same soul of man hath three more general faculties, that is, mental, sensitive and vegetative (or igneous). These are distinct, but not divided, yet are not three souls but one."⁶ "The sensitive soul in brutes hath the faculties, first, vitally active; secondly, sensibly apprehensive; thirdly, sensibly appetitive; one of these faculties is not the other, yet all are but one sensitive

¹ Chap. V. §§ 6, 7.

² *Ib.* § 1.

³ *Ib.* § 12.

⁴ *Ib.* I. § 14.

⁵ Chap. II. § 2.

⁶ *Ib.* § 13.

soul."¹ So the plant is one substance, but has, first, a power of motion; secondly, a power of separating its proper nutriment from other things; thirdly, a power of assimilating its nutriment to itself. The sun and similar bodies have the power of motion, of illumination, of calefaction. "The motion is not the light, nor is the light the heat, nor is the heat the light or motion. Nor are these three suns or substances, but one substance is in all three."² A similar tripartite relation is noticed by Melanchthon in music, geometry, grammar, arithmetic. Baxter adds illustrations from logic, politics, etc. The great truths designed to be illustrated are, that God has, first, essential life; secondly, infinite knowledge; and thirdly, perfect will; the Divine faculties are, first, simply potential; secondly, in immanent action; thirdly, in emanent activity; as Jehovah is the God of nature, grace and glory, so he is, first, Creator; secondly, Redeemer; thirdly, Sanctifier; thus, first, he exists, has a substance; secondly, he exists in and of himself, he knows himself, he loves himself; and, thirdly, he expresses his feeling in the three acts of creation, redemption and sanctification. This threefold relation of the Divine attributes and acts to each other and to the Divine substance, is included in the Trinity.

Accordingly, Mr Baxter adopts various modifications of the word Person as applied to each distinction in the Trinity. He does not proscribe the word; for usage has established it. He does not strenuously insist upon the word; for, ever since it was introduced, it has been condemned by some orthodox divines. "The bare use of the name Person, by one that knoweth not what that word signifieth, doth prove no man orthodox, but only that he useth orthodox words; it will save no man to use a word which he understands not." "The Scripture hath all necessary names for the Trinity."³ "Doubtless the word Person of the Trinity is of very different signification from the same word applied to man."⁴ "To say that [the Persons in the Trinity] are three minds, or spirits, or substances that do *invicem conscire*, is to say that there are three Gods. And because every mental substance hath its own active power, intellect and will, it supposeth three Trinities instead of one."⁵

Such remarks are not at all surprising to one who is familiar with many ancient speculations on the Trinity. These speculations make the Trinity nothing more than relative. We should

¹ Chap. II. § 14.² *Ib.* § 16.³ *Ib.* § 22.⁴ *Ib.* § 23.⁵ *Ib.* § 25.

do great injustice to Mr. Baxter, however, if we should suppose that he believed in nothing more than this relative Trinity. He believed that this relation of attributes is involved in the Trinity, but something additional is also involved in it. His "End of Controversy" contains such remarks as the following, and these tend to modify somewhat the impression made by the preceding quotations :

"But though I am past doubt that in God is this Trinity of essential, formal, inadequate conceptions or primalities, and that the impress of them is on the soul of man, which is his image, and on the whole frame of nature and grace; yet far be it from me to say that nothing else is meant by the Trinity of Persons. Thus much we are sure of: there may be more to constitute that personality than is to us comprehensible; and I doubt not but there is more, because thus much is so intelligible; seeing the Divine nature is so infinitely far above the comprehension of us poor worms. But what we know not we cannot describe or notify to others."¹

Indeed, so deeply penetrated was the mind of Baxter with the mysteriousness of the Trinity; so confident was he that the Trinity is something altogether above and beyond a mere relation of the Divine attributes and acts, that, in his "End of Controversy," he does not even venture to oppose Dr. Henry More's opinion, "that from the prime Being emaneth — or is created — the ζωνή, which is the second hypostasis or person, and matter which is the third" hypostasis, and thus the Trinity consists in "the prime entity, the life and the matter, being the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Once he published a treatise against that doctrine, "but," he says in his "End of Controversy," "on further consideration, I am very loth to be so venturous in a case of such tremendous mystery, as to meddle for or against [Dr. More's theory]. lest *etiam vera dicere de Deo si incerta, sit periculosum*."² He did not adopt More's notion; he continued to deem it unsound; but he was not so confident of its falsity as to hazard a renewed argument against it. He did not believe the world to be the eternal effect of an eternal cause; yet, in his distrust of human speculations, he says: "The difficulty of the controversy [on the eternal duration of the world] doth deter me from meddling with it, lest I be blinded by presuming too nearly to gaze on the light that should guide me, and God, that is love, should for my boldness be to me a consuming fire. Things

¹ Chap. II. §§ 27, 24.

² *Ib.* § 28.

revealed only are for our search."¹ While searching them for the reasonableness of the Trinity, this metaphysical divine was by no means disposed to make the doctrine simply rationalistic.

§ 2. *The Divine Government.*

After all the disputes which our veteran controversialist had conducted on the subject of the Divine government, it is interesting to notice the manner in which he discusses the subject when he describes himself as "under the sentence of death, in expectation of [his] my approaching change."

He represents the decrees of God as God himself decreeing; as no distinct substance, no accidents of the Most High, but as his essential will in a certain state. According to Baxter's favorite mode of speaking: "Man *in esse cognito* was nothing but God himself." God's knowledge of future events was not derived from his decrees, but is his essential attribute, or rather is himself essentially knowing. He perceives future events directly, just as we perceive present events. His decrees respect his own acts. Whatever he does, that he determined to do; and he does not determine what he does not effect. He does effect much in relation to sin; "much without which sin could not be (as the life and power of the sinners, his abused mercies, objects, etc.). Therefore, all this he decreed to do, even as his own works, which sinners make the occasions of their sin."² As the "End of Controversy" does not allow the propriety of saying that God decreed our transgressions, so (unlike some previous works of Baxter) it does not appear to sanction so much as the expression that he decreed the certainty of our transgressions. "If those be in the right (as most) that think sin is nothing (no more than death or darkness) you will grant that God decreed it not;"—this is one of his expressions indicating his tendency to favor the scholastic representation that sin is a non-entity. "Where there is no effect or object of God's will, there is no such will to be named and asserted. But so much as God effecteth in or towards man's damnation, so much he must be said to will. God effecteth no man's sin, and therefore he willed not or decreed not to effect it."³ So far as to permit sin means not to hinder it, then God did not decree to permit it, for

¹ Chap. II. § 29.

² Chap. VI. § 6.
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³ *Ib.* §§ 3, 4.

the not hindering of sin is above negation, "a mere nothing," and God does not decree a mere nothing. "And if it would hold that God decreeth his permission of sin, it followeth not that he decreeth the sin permitted; for that is not a capable object of his volition."¹ All the punishments which God inflicts upon sinners, he decrees to inflict; but where the withholding of spiritual favors is not a punishment, there it is not an act of reprobation, and so far as it is a mere *withholding*, a simple negation or privation, it "is nothing, and so as nothing not the object of a positive decree."

"By all this it appeareth that election and reprobation go not *pari passu*, or are not equally ascribed to God. For in election God is the cause of the means of salvation by his grace, and of all that truly tendeth to procure it. But on the other side, God is no cause of any sin which is the means and merit of damnation; nor the cause of damnation, but on the supposition of man's sin. So that sin is foreseen in the person decreed to damnation (but not caused), seeing the decree must be denominated from the effect and object. But in election God decreeth to give us his grace, and be the chief cause of all our holiness, and doth not elect us to salvation on foresight that we will do his will, or be sanctified by ourselves without him. Therefore, Augustine, Prosper and Fulgentius still make this difference, that the decree of damnation goeth on foresight of sin, but the decree of salvation containeth a decree to give that grace that shall certainly save us."²

The views of Baxter with regard to the Providence of God, are in harmony with his views respecting the Divine purposes. Every consistent thinker will adopt a theory of the eternal decrees, which corresponds with the theory concerning the method in which those decrees are carried out. Baxter differed from the Calvinists on the subject of Divine Providence, as much as on that of the plan which Providence executes. Turretin and his school make a broad distinction between God's determining sinners to their acts, *as acts*, and to their acts *as sinful*. "*Illa [praemotio Dei] tantum pertinet ad actiones; quatenus materialiter et entitative se habent, non vero moraliter; id. ad actus substantiam, sed non ad ejus malitiam.*" "*Cum in omni actione morali necessario distinguenda sit substantia actus in genere entis, ab ejusdem bonitate vel malitia in genere moris, actio intelligendi et volendi simpliciter, quae habet rationem materialis, ab actione intelligendi et volendi hoc vel illud objectum licitum*

¹ Chap. VI § 7.² *Ib.* § 15.

vel illicitum, quæ habet rationem *formalis*; patet nullam actionem posse dici essentialiter bonam vel malam, sed tantum prout est hic et nunc circumstantiata in genere moris, id. cum *oxygen* ad hoc vel illud objectum morale bonum vel malum."¹ And Turretin teaches often, that we may regard the Deity as the cause of the action considered simply as such, in the matter of it, although he is not the cause of the action considered as evil, in the form of it. This is denied by Baxter, who insists in his "End of Controversy," that as God is not "the willer," so he is in no sense the cause of depraved actions. He writes:

"To say, that God is the principal determining cause of every sinful act with all its objects and circumstances (called the *materiale peccati*), and also the cause of the law that forbiddeth it, and the person that committeth it, is to make him the chief cause of sin, as far as it is capable of a cause, even of the formal cause. To say, that such a cause is the cause only of the act but not of the *obliquity*, is absurd; because the obliquity is a relation necessarily resulting from the law and act with all its *modes* and *circumstances*; and the obliquity can have no other cause. To say, that God willeth and loveth and causeth sin, not as sin, but for *good ends* and *uses*, is to say no more for God, than may be said for wicked men, if not for devils; save only that God's ends are better than theirs. To say, that God willeth not sin, but the *existence* and *futurity* of sin, is but as aforesaid to say, that he *wills* not sin as sin, or *sub ratione mali*, but that it exist for better ends; or else it is a contradiction; for to *will* or *cause* sin is nothing else but to *will* and *cause* the *existence* of sin. They that say, that God willeth the *existence* of sin as it is *summe conducibile* to the glory of his justice and mercy (yea, and that *per se*, and not *per accidens*) do wrong the glory of God's holiness and wisdom. A physician can love his own skill and compassion, and the honor that cometh to him by curing a disease, without loving or willing the disease itself, but only supposing it as an *evil* which he can turn to *good*."²

Mr. Baxter persevered in advocating the principle, that God administers the affairs of his natural universe by second causes, and, while God upholds these causes and their efficiency, they occasion the phenomena of the universe without any other than that preserving operation of God. "Let unbiassed reason judge," he writes, "whether, if a rock should be held up in the air, if God continue the *natural gravity* of it, with all the rest of the frame of nature, *could* not that rock fall, without another motion which is without any second cause, to thrust it down."³ "All

¹ Op. Loc. VI. Quæst. V. §§ 16, 17.

² Chap. VIII. §§ 2-6.

³ Chap. VII § 13.

are agreed," he adds, "that there is *no less of God* in the operations done by *second causes* or *nature*, than in *immediate* operations, without second causes. God is as much in the one as in the other."¹ So far, indeed, does Mr. Baxter carry his principle of second causes, that "it is hard for" him "in most *miracles* to say that God doth more than" cause one "natural agent to resist, turn back or overcome another." He supposes that, as "God hath a rank of free agents that act arbitrarily," these super-human agents may be commissioned by the Most High to perform miracles, and even that some of these miracles may have been performed by evil spirits. When thus performed, however, they are controlled in their influence by opposing and superior miracles, as the wonders of the Egyptian magicians were overruled for the Divine glory by means of the greater wonders wrought by the hand of Moses.

† 3. *Free Moral Agency.*

On this subject, the last theological treatise of Baxter is, perhaps, more definite than his preceding treatises, but corroborates their main doctrine, and condenses it into a more self-consistent form.

In the first place, the "End of Controversy" reaffirms the dogma, that man has a natural power to do all that is required of him by a just God. It gives unequivocal evidence that its author adhered to the same forms of thought and of speech which are noticed in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. IX. p. 150. He has anticipated on this theme many of the distinctions usually ascribed to President Edwards. He speaks not seldom of our natural "powers or faculties," as if he would define the word "power" by the word "faculty;" but it is evident that he here uses the word "faculty" as that which *can* perform the specified act. He does not mean by it an incompetent faculty, an incapable capacity, which is in fact a mere incapacity. He means what Dr. Owen (inconsistently with himself) calls "the suitableness and proportionableness of the faculties of the soul." He speaks habitually of the "free-will," the "self-determining" and "self-determined will."² Language does not allow a more definite

¹ Chap. VII. § 13.

² Chap. XIV. §§ 26—28. On p. xxxii, Baxter says that "Almost all the matter of faith is above the reason of ignorant souls," as this reason is "dispositive and

explication of his meaning than he has given in the following words :

"Objection. The difference [dispute] is, whether a bad man can change his own will. Answer. Your *can* meaneth the *natural power* or the *due disposition*. As to the first, *he can*, that is, he hath those faculties which *want not natural power* to act better. But as to the latter, he *cannot without grace*; that is, through indisposition he will not."¹ "It is not only *morally* (by vice) but *naturally impossible* to believe that which was never heard, read or understood."² A common remark has been, "it is as impossible for a sinner to repent as to create a world." Baxter says: "If it be as impossible for man to do anything but what he doth, or not to do all that he doth, without God's foresaid predetermining premotion, as it is to be Gods, or to overcome God, or to make a world, then if men are counted sinners and condemned, it is for not doing such impossibilities, for not doing what God alone can do, or for not overcoming Almighty premoving power."³ "I know that to nature the reasoning of our late infidels, to prove that every act of the will is as truly necessitated as the motions of a clock, do seem plausible and hard to answer; because it seemeth strange that in any mode of action man should be a *first cause* of it, and that a creature's act should have no superior cause in any mode. But on the other side the evidence is cogent, first, that God is able to make a self-determining power that can thus do, for it is no contradiction; secondly, that it is congruous, that below the happy race of confirmed spirits, there should be a race of such undetermined free agents, left much to their own self-determining power; and, thirdly, experience persuadeth us *de facto* that so it is; and, fourthly, they that deny it must unavoidably make God the prime cause of all sin in a higher degree than it is or can be ascribed to Satan."⁴

It must not be supposed that Baxter believed in a natural power independent of God. "No creature," he says, "hath any power but what is totally derived from God and dependent on him, and still upheld by him and used under him."⁵ Therefore, whatever of good this natural power accomplishes, it does all on account of a previous agency of God, and "by his help." "Though some would have more power ascribed to *nature*, and

active, though not above the *possibility* of their faculties being better cultivated and disposed hereafter." Elsewhere he speaks of the *faculty* being in a state of *ability*, and also a state of *capacity* to act in a certain way.

¹ Chap. XIV. § 23.

² Chap. XVI. § 4.

³ Chap. VIII. § 11. See also Preliminary Chapters, p. xxxii. Chap. XII. Sect. 1, § 12, where we read: "Man's great duty being to love God perfectly, according to his present ability, and to please Him," etc. See also Chap. XII. Sect. 5, § 35.

⁴ Chap. IX. § 19.

⁵ *Ib.* § 6.

others appropriate more to *grace*, yet in this it is no controversy, *how much* is to be ascribed to God; for both nature and grace, and the powers of both, are totally from God. But all the question is, *which way* God giveth it to man."¹ It was because Baxter regarded himself as honoring God thereby, that he insisted so strenuously on men's natural ability to do all that is required of them. He repeatedly asserts that "the more power a creature hath, the more he glorifieth the power of God." "To deny or extenuate any power given of God, is to dishonor him in his works."² It is in order to commend the justice of God that the "End of Controversy" repeats so often such phrases as: "Adam had power to have stood when he fell;" "there is therefore *in rerum natura* such a thing as a true power to do more good and less evil than we do;" "there was such a power in Adam's will by which he could have willed what he did not will, and by which he could have rejected the temptation, and this without any other grace than that which he then had and used not."³

In the second place, as the "End of Controversy" affirms our natural power, so it denies our moral power to perform our duty before regeneration. Its use of the terms moral ability and impotence, may further explain its use of the terms natural ability and impotence. What expressions can be more unequivocal than the following?

"The moral power given by grace, consisting in the right disposition of the will, is not of the same kind with the natural power or faculty, and the words can and cannot used of both sorts, have not the same signification, but are equivocal; otherwise sin and grace should change man's species."⁴ "It is more proper to say, that an unbeliever and unholy sinner *will not* repent and believe, than that he *cannot*; though that also may be truly said, if well explained.⁵ But the meaning is not, that he cannot though he sincerely would; nor yet that he cannot be willing for want of the natural power of willing; but first, that he hath a logical, and secondly, a moral impotency; that is, an indisposition; he wanteth both disposition, habit and act, but not the faculty."⁶ "As to ethical [moral] power and liberty which lieth in the right disposition of man's faculties, every man hath it so far as grace hath prevailed, and wrought it in him, and none any further."⁷

¹ Chap. IX. § 7. ² *Ib.* §§ 2, 8. ³ *Ib.* §§ 14—20. ⁴ Chap. XIV. § 13.

⁵ Compare this assertion, that the term moral inability may *if explained* be truly called inability, but is more properly called unwillingness, with the quotations on p. 360 below.

⁶ Chap. XIV. § 15.

⁷ *Ib.* § 19.

In the third place, the "End of Controversy" repeats and explains the remark made in the preceding works of its author, that the impenitent sinner has, perhaps, sometimes the moral power to do right. Verbally this contradicts the theory of Baxter just specified under the second head. But, when the moral power of sinners to repent is affirmed, the term is used in an obviously different sense from that in which it is used when the power is denied. It is used to denote, not the fullest *disposition* to repent, but so much of a disposition as removes all hindrances to the act, and all difficulty in it, but does not, as a matter of history, secure the act. It denotes a state in which sin is not certain, nor holiness certain, but there may be equal probabilities in favor of both. The will is then in *equilibrium*, and with the same degree of facility and readiness may choose or refuse the same thing. This is just the state in which President Edwards supposed that the will could not be. This freedom from all obstacles to a choice or refusal, is what Baxter seems to regard the fullest, most complete *power* of choice or refusal. It is the natural power, and so much of the moral power as *can* exist antecedently to any positively determining influence. It is such a measure of grace as does not determine the will, but removes all inward or outward obstacles to the will's own right self-determination. "Power," says Baxter, "hath several degrees. Some can act easily, yea, is hardly restrained" (this is the definition of the moral power of a sinner sometimes to do right, when in point of fact he will do wrong); some can act with difficulty, yet constantly; some with difficulty and very rarely; some can act, but the impediments are so great and its weaknesses such as that it never *will* do what it *can*" (in *this* extreme the natural ability is asserted to be contemporaneous with the persistent sin); "and these we call a moral impotency; as being *reputative* impotency, in these three last degrees" (i. e. the indisposition is called impotency because it is not a power free from *all* kinds of hindrance, not the *highest, fullest* degree of power).¹ Destitute of this gracious ability the will *cannot* repent, in the reputative and the fullest sense of "can;" that is, it will not repent, and cannot with freedom from every kind of disinclination, inconvenience, etc. In agreement with this explanation, Baxter gives the following definitions, which have been thought to conflict with his theories above expressed:

¹ Chap. IX. § 12.

"The word moral power signifieth, first, sometimes a power to moral actions, and so natural power in man is also moral in some degree; secondly, sometimes a holy disposition, especially in the will to such holy moral actions; which is the rectitude of our natural powers, or the health of them in a saving degree or sort, and is the gift of grace, since sin departed" [this is obviously Edwards's definition]; "thirdly, most frequently I use the words for such a degree of God's helping or healing influx or grace, as is short of a habit for promptitude and facility, but yet puts the soul in such a disposition by which man can do the act, and it may come to pass without more grace, whether it do or not, which the Dominicans call sufficient grace, and I rather call necessary grace; fourthly, sometimes it is meant, as *causa moralis*, for that which is power reputatively."¹

It is obvious that the word *can*, under the third of the preceding specifications, means, not a simple ability, but an ability in the fullest degree, a reputed ability unattended with *any* obstacles, such as inconvenience, disinclination, etc. So, necessary grace is that which is necessary for performing the act, not with *mere* ease but with such ease that the act "is *hardly* restrained." By keeping in mind these explanations, made elsewhere by Mr. Baxter, the following definition of moral power, in the sense of sufficient grace, will tend, perhaps, to free him from some of the contradictions which have been imputed to him.

"By sufficient" [or moral power; see preceding quotation] "here I mean such *without* which man's will cannot" [reputatively in the fullest sense] "and *with* which it can perform the commanded act toward which it is moved, when yet it doth not perform it, and this without any other degree of help than that which procureth *not* the act. So that it is not all that is useful to the effect, nor all that is necessary to *easy* or *prompt* performance, or to the infallible ascertaining of the act, nor to the *melius esse* only that we speak of; but so much as is necessary *ad esse*, and efficient of the true *posse*. When you can properly say that a man *can* do this, you say that he hath all that is of necessity to the doing of it."²

Here we must suppose either that Baxter expressly contradicts his frequent assertions, that every man, simply as a man, is able in the proper sense to perform all those duties which he will not

¹ Chap. IX. § 11. So in Chap. XIX. §§ 23, 24, "the mere moral power to believe" is distinguished and separated from the act of believing, whereas in Edwards's nomenclature the moral power to believe is the certain belief.

² Chap. XIII. §§ 23, 37. See also XV. §§ 15, 16. Compare this quotation with a quotation on p. 358 above. There the phrase moral inability is spoken of as less proper than moral unwillingness. Here the true *posse*, the *proper* ability (in its highest degree) is the moral power.

perform, or else we must suppose that he speaks of the highest degree of power which is consistent with the non-performance of the duty, and affirms that sufficient grace gives to the man, or is, this unimpeded ability, which still the sinner may refuse to exercise. If the grace does persuade a sinner to the holy act, it is *effectual* grace; but if it merely leave the sinner to his own unbiassed decision, it is *sufficient* grace.¹ The great question on this theme is: "whether any men in the world have grace sufficient" [i. e. moral power] "to repent and believe savingly, who do not." The Edwardean theology answers in the negative. Baxter replies:

"Certainly to answer the question negatively or affirmatively, I cannot; as not knowing any more of God's working on men's souls than he himself hath told us of. But, if we may conjecture upon probabilities, it seemeth to me most likely, that there is such a sufficient grace or power to repent or believe savingly in some that use it not, but perish. For, first, if angels had and used [for a while?] such a *sort* of grace; and, secondly, if Adam had such a sort of grace and used it a while; and, thirdly, if unregenerate men have such a grace for lower acts which tend to faith; and, fourthly, if the faithful have such a grace to do more good and less evil than they do; [then], fifthly, it seemeth very improbable that only in the fifth instance (to repent and believe) none in the world should have such a sufficient grace."²

It is to be remembered, however, that, while Mr. Baxter is not confident that any man ever performs a positively *holy* act without *efficacious* grace, he yet feels an assurance that there are *good* acts which a man performs merely under the influence of *sufficient* grace. "It is very improbably imagined," he says, that God preserved the angels and holy Adam from sinning "by such a grace as he would never after make use of in the world; and that man's free will did, for so short a time, do its duty by that sufficient grace, and *never after do any one act by the like grace in any one to the world's end.*" "It is incredible that no common grace of God now is *as sufficient* to the performance of the least good act (which is good but *secundum quid*), as Adam's was to the fulfilling of *all* God's law; and that the best unregenerate man is not able to do any better than he doth, or forbear some evil that he doth, as well as Adam to have foreborne all."³ The distinction which our author makes between a *good* act and a

¹ Chap. XIX. § 23.

² Chap. XIII. §§ 25—27, and Chap. XV. §§ 16, 17.

³ Chap. XIII. § 43.

holy act, is a source of much confusion in his own, and in other writings.¹

† 4. *Human Sinfulness.*

The solicitude of Baxter to avoid all appearance of favoring the dogma, that God is the cause of our sinful actions, did not lead him, in his latest discussions, to any abatement of the Calvinistic theory of original sin. In some particulars, the volume now under review, gives a peculiar intensity to that theory. It reaffirms some of the remarkable things adduced in *Bib. Sacra*, Vol. IX. pp. 144—146. It not only asserts that the sin of Adam is imputed to us, but also that it *ought* in justice to be imputed. "God doth not repute us to have been what we were not; for he judgeth truly and is not mistaken."² Baxter discards the idea, that the sins of our progenitor are imputed to us by a sovereign appointment of Heaven. "God doth not impute Adam's sin to us because *he will do it*, without any real participation of ours; no, nor *beyond* our true natural participation, but *according* to it. Otherwise God should have made us sinners, merely because *he would do so*, and not *Adam*."³ This scholastic writer also rejects the comparatively modern dogma, that "God so covenanted with Adam, that he should stand or fall for himself and his posterity," and that our dependence upon Adam for our moral character is merely through this covenant. He affirms distinctly:

"That there was any such covenant that if he [Adam] stood, his posterity should all stand, or be confirmed and saved, is more than ever I found in Scripture, or can prove, or do believe. But that it would have been to the *benefit* of his posterity I doubt not. And that his fall was to the guilt and corruption of his posterity, I doubt not; but (as I said) not without and beyond their natural interest in him, and derivation from him as the reason of it. And we are as much naturally in our next parents."⁴ "We receive our original guilt and pravity immediately from our next parents, and but remotely from *Adam*. It could never have come to us, but through them from whom we receive our nature; from them we receive the guilt and pravity of our nature. Therefore, thus far, at least, our next parents communicate guilt and pravity to us, and not *Adam* only; in which we see that God's imputation goeth along with real natural participation. It seemeth to me a strange oversight in too many divines, who deny (or observe not) our

¹ See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. X. pp. 705—738.

² *Ib.* † 8.

³ Chap. X. † 3.

⁴ *Ib.* † 13.

guilt of all the rest of our parents' sins, while we were in their loins as well as of Adam's." "If I have a guilty and depraved soul from my parents, it is because I was one in them virtually or seminally as truly and naturally as I was in Adam; and had not the guilt been theirs, it had never been mine; and if it be mine because it was theirs, why not one part of theirs as well as another?"¹

The preceding quotation proves that, although Baxter retained to the last his faith that "all mankind descending from [Adam] by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in that first transgression," yet to the last Baxter discarded the idea that we thus fell on account of any *peculiar* "covenant made with Adam as a public person not for himself only but for his posterity." There was, according to Baxter, as real a covenant made with all our ancestors as with the first one. But, connected as we are with Adam and our other progenitors, we sin in them all, not by virtue of any covenant apart from our participation in our ancestors' guilt, but by virtue of that participation itself. "When Adam sinned," says Baxter, "his whole person was guilty and no part innocent;" so when Noah sinned, when every one of our progenitors sinned. "Therefore," continues this unflinching author, "his [Adam's] very *semen prolificum* had its part in the guilt according to its capacity; and, though it was not a guilty person, it was a part of a guilty person; and a part that was the *semen personae*; so that, when that semen became a person (Cain), it became a guilty person; the guilt following the subject according to its capacity; and so downward by propagation to this day."² No other theory of our guilt for Adam's sin is self-consistent.

Our resolute divine proceeds to fortify his positions by argument, and to defend them against objections. Both his arguments and his replies illustrate the real meaning of his theory. He writes:

"And the Scripture is more copious, and as plain in making punishment due to children for their *next parents'* sins, as for Adam's, though Adam's only was the original of all sin and misery. I have elsewhere proved it at large. The case of Cain's posterity, and Ham's and Ishmael's and Esau's and Achan's family, and Ahab's, and many more do fully prove it. And more fully the second commandment and God's declaration of his name to Moses, Exodus 34th, and many a threatening to the seed of the wicked,

¹ Chap. X. §§ 9—12.

² Ib. § 7.

and Christ's express words in Matthew 23: 26. So that Scripture puts us out of doubt.

"The common objection is, that their guilt would be greater on us towards the end of the world, than on them at the beginning, because all our ancestor's guilt would be ours. But I answer, first, if it were so, it would be but many obligations to the same punishment, when it amounteth to that which God seeth our nature capable of. For a finite worm is not capable of more suffering than is proportioned to his nature. And, secondly, this objection vainly supposeth, that none of our ancestors' sins were pardoned. Whereas all are pardoned to the faithful and their seed, and much temporal punishment is pardoned to many of the un sanctified. And God himself, by limiting it to the third and fourth generation, seemeth to set bounds to his own justice. And, thirdly, the guilt of our parents' sins, being of a more diminute nature than that of our own actual sin (*caeteris paribus*), it falleth not so fully on us, as it did on the committers themselves, nor as our own do. And, fourthly, God offereth us the full pardon of our own and all together. And as long as the law which tells us of our desert of punishment, doth also give us a free pardon, we have no cause to complain."¹

Many writers are wont to modify their phraseology, when they speak of the sin which we committed in our ancestors; but this schoolman of the seventeenth century, who endeavors to reconcile the "generative traduction of souls" with "God's present, yea immediate causation of their essence, which may be called creation," attempts in his "End of Controversy" no qualification of his words, but says, with a noticeable self-consistency:

"And they that consider, that parents cause not children as an artificer maketh an engine, but by generation, which is a communication of their own essence; and what natural interest parents and children have in each other, and that it is real sin that is in both, and that the moral privation in its nature containeth much of man's misery, will easily grant that it is both a sin and a punishment, properly enough so called."²

† 5. State of Infants.

As it has been queried, whether or not the doctrine of infant damnation has found advocates in the church, it may be interesting to notice Baxter's remarks upon that theme. He says, that some suppose all infants (dying such) to be saved; some

¹ Chap. X. §§ 14, 15.

² Chap. X. § 20. Everywhere Baxter insists that nothing can be sin which does not *deserve* punishment; therefore "in Adam we deserved death." Chap. XXI. §§ 34, 41.

suppose that none of them are actually glorified, but all of them are incapable of positive glory; others affirm that one class of infants are actually glorified, and that another class are punished *poena damni*, but not *poena sensus*. (This distinction is rejected by Baxter, who believes that if an infant be deprived of true joy, that infant will suffer real pain.) Some believe, he further asserts, that all *baptized* infants are saved, and unbaptized infants are punished with the mere *poena damni*; others believe that all infants baptized with the parents' consent are saved; others still, that all infants baptized by the consent of any real or even nominal Christian are delivered from punishment. According to some, the faith of the church who dedicate the infant in baptism is, the condition of the infant's rescue from punishment; according to others, "any one baptized by a godfather's offer, who undertaketh for his Christian education, shall be saved, and no other." "Some lay the hope upon *ancestors'* faith and say, that if the great-grandfathers, or others before them, were faithful, the infants shall be saved." "The commonest opinion among the English Calvinists is, that God hath made no certain promise of the salvation of any particular infant, but by his general promise of mercy to *the seed of the faithful*, hath given cause to hope that *more of them* than of *others* shall be saved; and, therefore, that they are by baptism to be entered into the visible church, as we baptize the adult, while we are not certain but they may be hypocrites."¹ According to Baxter, then, the Calvinists of his time did not believe that *all* of even the baptized infants of pious parents will be saved. The Anabaptists of that day went further still, and taught "that there is no promise nor assurance of the saving of any particular infants in the world, either Christians or heathens; but only that God electeth some whom he will sanctify and save, and reprobate others whom he will damn." "So that we cannot say that he will save ten, or that he will damn ten of all the world; nor have the faithful any more promise than heathens of the salvation of their infants." In the following words Baxter expresses his own opinion, which is in exemplary harmony with his doctrine on Original Sin:

"God who visited Adam's sin on all his posterity, hath in the covenant of grace, also, so joined infants to the parents, that till they have a *will* to choose for themselves, their parents may choose for them, and dispose of them for

¹ Chap. XIX. § 3, 13.

their good, and God taketh them as members of the parents so far. And so he hath made many express promises of mercy to the faithful and their seed, (and threatenings to the wicked and their seed). And this mercy cannot be consistent with their damnation; for it is to be their God, and to love and bless them, which cannot stand with damning them. And God having but one covenant, seeing they are in the same covenant with their parents, and not another, if it give pardon to the parents, it doth also to the child, of whom no condition is required, but that he be offered by a believing parent to God; whose acceptance is salvation." "If an infant be the child of a true believer, he hath all that God and the church require, and, therefore, if he be to be baptized, he is certainly put into a state of life, because no condition is wanting on his part."¹

As Baxter believed that infants were real, and, therefore, ill-deserving participators in their ancestors' sin, and as he refused to sanction the theory that infants, dying such, pass into a "middle state" in which they are deprived of happiness but freed from pain, we infer that, in his last years, he did not absolutely disbelieve the theory of a strictly merited, a positive, though justly proportioned misery, inflicted on infants who die without having been baptized on the true faith of their parents.²

† 6. State of the Heathen.

Decisive as Baxter's expressions are with regard to Original Sin, he yet lets fall some indefinite remarks with regard to Total Depravity. "Nature itself," he says, "is not" in lapsed man divested of all moral or divine principles." "In the *will* there are some inclinations still to *good as good*, and therefore to God as far as he is truly conceived of as God, and so far as that conception is not conquered by a cross conception of some enmity; and so of other good." Pope Adrian taught that "an unsanctified man (not in a state of salvation) may so far love God, even *above himself*, as to consent rather to die and be *annihilated*, than (were it possible) God should be annihilated, or not be God." And says Baxter: "I am not able to confute or deny" this. "He that tells men, that they shall be saved, if they would rather be annihilated than that there should be no God, doth make them a promise which God hath not made."³ These expressions of Baxter are afterwards explained by the remark,

¹ Chap. XIX. §§ 16, 14.

² *Ib.* §§ 2, 6.

³ Chap. XIV. §§ 6, 10.

that the unregenerate never "love God as God, as the *ultimate* object, and most amiable good to be known," and as "the *holy* Ruler of the world," and "the *just* Judge." They do not love his laws, his restraints, nor "the holiness and rectitude in themselves which God commandeth." The amount of Baxter's doctrine is, that unregenerate men do not love the entire divine character in all its relations, although they do sometimes love some of the divine attributes in some of their relations, more than they love themselves. (See the closing paragraph of † 3, p. 360 above; see also † 10 below).

These remarks prepare us to examine the teachings of Baxter with regard to the state of the heathen. He believed them to be, by nature, destitute of supreme love to the character of God viewed as a whole. In this sense he regarded them as totally depraved. Did he, then, believe that they would be lost? He supposed them to be under a "law of grace," a system by which their sins would be pardoned, on condition of their believing "that God is and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But *are* any Pagans in this believing state, and are any saved in consequence of their compliance with this gracious law? "It is exceeding probable," is Baxter's reply, "at least, that God would never govern many hundred parts of the world (compared to the Jews) before Christ's incarnation, and five-sixth parts since his incarnation, by a law of grace which yet no person should ever have effectual grace to keep, as far as was necessary to his salvation." "But what numbers do perform the condition and are saved, no mortal man can tell," although we must think that "far fewer are saved where less means is vouchsafed, than among Christians who have herein the unvaluable *preëminence* above others."¹

Although our merciful theologian did not profess to feel a confident assurance of the actual salvation of many heathen, yet he writes, in a style singularly characteristic:

"I wish the impartial reader to study Malachi 1: 10, 11, whether even this be not the sense, 'from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name,' etc. Our translators have, as expositors, thrice at the least added the future tense, 'shall be;' but all the old translations, Syriac, Chaldee Paraphrase, Greek, Latin, etc., put it in the present tense, 'is great, is

¹ Chap. XVI §§ 29, 30.

offered.' It seems more probable by the context, that the Hebrew text understood the *present* tense, none being expressed."

"If we might imitate our Father Abraham, we should suppose the number of the saved through the world to be very considerable; for as I said elsewhere, though God had told him that Sodom was so much worse than the rest of the world that God would destroy it, yet Abraham thought there might be fifty righteous persons there. Its like he thought not worse of the rest of the world."¹

To the objection that the Gospel requires faith in Christ, as the condition of salvation, Baxter replies: that the disciples of Jesus became regenerate men before they believed that he was to die on the cross; faith in the atonement is necessary where the atonement can be known, but, where this blessed truth cannot be known, there God never exacteth of men according to what they have not, but only requires a good use of what they have.² To the objection that all who are admitted into the kingdom of God must be saved by atoning grace, Baxter replies, that Pagans when thus admitted are saved, not on the ground of their own worth, but "for the sake of the meritorious sacrifice and righteousness of Christ as promised in Gen. 3: 1. No man ever came to the Father but by the Son's merit, and Spirit; nor without a consenting belief and affiance in God's redeeming or recovering, pardoning, saving mercy; and true repentance, and a sanctified soul, which is in love with God and goodness."³ When penitent, the heathen have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, on the ground of Christ's atonement, although they have never heard of their Redeemer or of their Sanctifier. God often blesses men without their knowledge. Still, although the heathen have not heard of a Saviour, they are, according to Baxter, "bound not to despair of pardon and salvation; for an obligation to use means as tending to recovery is inconsistent with an obligation to despair. Therefore, hope of mercy and use of some means, mankind is obliged to by the law of lapsed nature."⁴

¹ Chap. XVI. §§ 32, 33.

² "Though infants and idiots cannot actually believe, they may be saved by Christ." Chap. XVIII. § 14.

³ Chap. XVI. § 26.

⁴ Chap. XII. Sect. 3, §§ 8—13.

† 7. The Covenants.

"Although the word law do principally signify the regulating imposition of our duty, and the word covenant doth principally signify a mutual contract, yet it is the same divine instrument which is meant oft and usually in Scripture by both these names. It is called a law in one respect, and a covenant in another, but the *thing* is the same."¹ The law contains a command; this command is the condition of the covenant. The law contains a premiant clause; this promised reward is the benefit freely offered in the covenant. The law contains a penal clause; this threatened punishment is the evil specified in the covenant, as following the non-performance of the condition. The word "*συνθήκη*" signifieth, usually, but the resolved declared terms of life and death, or the divine ordination by which he will rule and judge us. And so it is oft called a covenant before consent by man, which maketh it to be *συνθήκη*, a mutual contract. And even a law, as received by a voluntary subject, is consented to and becometh a contract."² Christ inserted his commands in his Testament, John xiv.—xvi.; in his last will he gave certain gifts on certain terms. A testament is a covenant made by a man in expectation of his death.

The first covenant which God made with man, was the covenant of innocency with Adam. This was a covenant, because it contained a promise of blessedness to Adam on condition of his remaining sinless. But as we have now sinned, our perfect innocence is impossible; therefore, God promises no reward of innocence to us; for he would make no promise on a now impossible condition; cessante capacitate subditi, cessat promissio conditionalis et transit in sententiam. Hence "our divines say, that the law of nature (which they call moral) bindeth us as a rule of duty, but the covenant ceaseth." Even if we should henceforth obey God, we have no promise of reward.

The second covenant is that of mediation made with Christ *incarnate*. "It is too bold and offensive a phrase to call God's eternal decree of redemption by the name of a law, yea, or a covenant of God with himself; that is, of the Father with the Son. Therefore, all the descriptions of it in the Old Testament

¹ Chap. XII. † 3.

² *Ib.* † 3.

are but prophecies and promises containing the terms of the *future* covenant; as we call a form of prayer, a *prayer*, though it be but matter fitted to be a prayer when it hath the formal act."¹ Emphatically is the idea disclaimed by our author, that Christ took "the real or reputative person of any man but himself." "His person was not the natural person of any other, nor esteemed of God so to be; nor yet was he the full and proper representative or civil person of any man, much less of all men; that is, one that the law allowed us to do and suffer by, so that, in law sense, his doing and suffering should be reputed ours, as a man payeth a debt by his servant or substitute; which is morally or reputatively his act and deed, or accepted in the same sort and to all the same effects and purposes, as if he had paid it with his own hands."² Baxter condemns this doctrine precisely as it is now condemned by the New England divines; and affirms that, on this ground, the pure Redeemer was "in God's account a sinner, and the greatest sinner in the world, and hated as such by God above any other sinner."³ "His being made sin for us signifieth, first, that he was made a sacrifice for sin, and was taken and used by God as one that undertook to suffer for our sins, in our stead, though not in our person; and, secondly, that he was really accounted a sinner by those that crucified him, and used as such."⁴ True or false, it is no *new* divinity which reaffirms what Baxter taught, that "Christ did not fulfil the law of innocency in our several persons; we did not reputatively fulfil that law by him; so as that his perfection is taken as ours, in habit and in act."⁵

The law given to Christ, that is, the condition of the covenant made with him as the incarnate Messiah, was his entire righteousness, his complete performance of duty. "It is abusive subtilty to divide Christ's performance into little parcels, and then say: 'This parcel is imputed to me for this use, and that for that use, and by one he merited this and by the other that, when

¹ Chap. XII. Sect. II. § 2, 3.

² *Ib.* § 5.

³ *Ib.* § 6.

⁴ *Ib.* § 8.

⁵ *Ib.* § 9. "In strict sense as representing a man, or doing it in his person, signifieth that Christ so died (and merited) in several mens' persons, as that the law or lawgiver doth take it to have been in *sensu civili*, their own suffering and doing and meriting, or to all intents, purposes and uses all one to them as if they had so died and merited themselves. thus Christ neither died nor merited for any man." Chap. XIII. § 13. Baxter insists on the distinction between Christ's suffering in our *nature*, and suffering in our individual *persons*.

(though each part of his condition or duty had its proper *reason*, yet) it was only the entire performance that was the condition of the benefits, and so of our justification and salvation."¹

The reward offered to the incarnate Redeemer was the complete and eternal blessedness of his friends. There was no punishment annexed to this law or covenant, "for penal laws are for those that have need by fear to be restrained from sin, or constrained to duty; which Christ needed not."²

The third covenant made with man was the law or covenant of grace in the *first* edition. This "was made with Adam as the father of all mankind, and so with all mankind in him as truly and as much as the covenant of innocency was; for, first, God's word maketh no difference; secondly, Adam was as much *after*, the common father of mankind, and all we as much in him, as *before* the fall; thirdly, the express word of God in many places proveth it, joining children with parents in such blessings, and, therefore, including the children of Adam."³ The command of this law, or the condition of this covenant, is, repentance of past sin, the cordial acceptance of truth so far as revealed. The reward of obedience, or the blessing of the covenant, is heaven; the punishment of disobedience is hell. It is called the law of *grace*, because it promises the pardon of sin on condition of a penitent and believing heart in view of the truth made known to the subject.

This law of grace is in force over the heathen world (see § 6 above); but it requires more and greater duties when it is addressed to those who have the supernatural revelation. It had a peculiar appendix, when it was addressed to Abraham and his seed. His family were required to be a "peculiar people" in their state of feeling, and to practise the outward rite of circumcision; these were the peculiar condition of their covenant with God. But this condition was made still fuller, the command of the law became still more extended, when the covenant was renewed with the Jews under Moses. A complicated ritual was appended to the law of grace as previously revealed, and the whole moral and ceremonial law was made the distinguishing badge of the Jewish theocracy. This is called by Baxter the "covenant of peculiarity," being the same with the covenant of grace enlarged by the Abrahamic and the Mosaic appen-

¹ Chap. XII. Sect. II. § 16.

² *Ib.* § 15.

³ *Ib.* Sect. III. § 21.

dices. "It is this *operous* law of Moses which Paul meaneth usually by the law of works, and the old or former covenant." He does not term the mere moral law a law of works. This moral law, as a law of grace, and with the Mosaic ceremonial appended, "is called the law of works, because of the great and burdensome and costly externals" which are superadded to it, "and because as a *political* law it so much insisteth comparatively on those externals, and the doctrine of grace is comparatively more obscure in it than in the Gospel; and because the Jews had by their abusive interpretation overvalued the externals and operous ceremonies and sacrifices of it,"¹ When Paul says, "He that doeth these things shall live by them," he does not mean, he that has never sinned shall live; for "we must not put such a scorn on the infinitely wise and righteous Governor of the world" as to suppose that he promises a blessing on condition that we be perfectly innocent, which now we cannot be. Neither "does Paul mean that the condition was, 'If you will never sin more, I will pardon all that is past,' for God never made such a law with man; not to sin being morally impossible, and pardon never offered on such terms."² But Paul's meaning is: He that will heartily observe all the burdensome ceremonies of the Mosaic law shall live. This is the *peculiar* command of that law; the *peculiar* condition of that covenant. When Paul declares, that none can be justified by the works of the law, he means, that none can be justified by "the mere *body* of Moses's law separated from the law of grace which is its *soul*," he cannot be justified "by the written political law and its externals — put in opposition to Christ." These marked peculiarities of Baxter's interpretation pervade and characterize all his speculations on the economy of redemption.

The fourth covenant is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the law or covenant of grace in the last edition. In this covenant more is required of us: the law is more spiritual and comprehensive, than in the preceding; for our faith in the atonement must be fuller than before the New Testament was given; more is done for us: the Holy Spirit is given more copiously, a richer reward is proffered, and a severer punishment threatened than by any previous economy. "The law is magnified by Christ as man hath an intellect, and will, and an executive power, and the

¹ Chap. XII Sect. IV. § 17.

² Ib. §§ 19, 20.

Gospel is to work on all, so the [Apostles'] creed is the summary of our belief, the Lord's prayer of our desire, and the Christian decalogue and institutions of our practice, as expounding what baptism generally expresseth."¹ It is a great mistake to imagine "that Christ made no law, and that the Gospel is not a law." "There is now no law of God that we are under, but what is truly the law of Christ." This law of grace in Christ does not now require us to be perfectly innocent; "for that were to command not only a moral, but a physical, absolute impossibility, as saying, thou shalt not have sinned." But this law of Christ, as a rule of duty, "obligeth us *for the future* to as much perfection of duty as we are naturally capable of performing at that time, though viciously indisposed, it being only natural disability, and not moral vicious unwillingness that hindereth obligation. But though not to do all we can be *peccare*, yet it is not a sin unto death or damnation," if a man perform so much as is made by Christ the condition of life; i. e. if he exercise faith in the atonement of Christ. Therefore, "it is the law of Christ or of grace, which is *norma officii et judicii*, and by which we must be judged at the last day."²

† 8. *The Work of Christ.*

On this theme, the "End of Controversy" has the same tendency, with all the preceding works of Baxter, to represent the grace of God as free and generous. This volume teaches, that Christ assumed, not the nature of the elect only, but of all mankind. So the promise of redemption was made to Adam, not as the Father of the elect alone, but of the whole race. Hence it was not the sin of merely the elect, but of every man, which occasioned the sufferings of Christ. Moreover, "it is not to the *elect* only, but for *all the world* (as to the tenor of it) that Christ hath purchased and given a conditional pardon of sin, and a conditional donation of life eternal in the covenant of grace, both of the first and second edition. That is, the conditional grace is universal: Whosoever believeth shall be saved; though the promulgation of it hath many stops."³ Accordingly, Christ has commanded his ministers to offer salvation to all men, not to the elect only, and to command all men to accept it. In point of fact, also, many favors are bestowed on all men, the non-elect as

¹ Chap. II. Sect. V. § 19.
VOL. XII. No. 46.

² *Ib.* §§ 32, 35, 40.

³ Chap. XXIII. § 4.

well as the elect, in consequence of the atonement; for all men do receive great favors from heaven, and none can obtain *any* blessing except through Christ." "There are no people on earth that are not obliged to the use of *some means* appointed them to be used for their full pardon and salvation; else *despair* would be their *duty*, and they should not be judged *sinners* for neglecting any such means. And were they not bound to do anything for their own salvation, their sin and misery would be far less than it is. Therefore, all people have some such means, that have a tendency to recovery and salvation afforded them by God."¹ The atonement, then, is general in the following particulars: "Christ died so far in the stead of all mankind as to suffer death by his voluntary sponson, as a punishment deserved to themselves by sin, to free them all from it, on condition of their suitable acceptance of his grace."² His death is fitted or adapted to promote the salvation of all men. It has actually procured many temporal blessings for all men, and the conditional promise of eternal life to all. Christ intended to bless the whole race by his death; therefore, it is *sufficient* for the rescue of the whole race from punishment, and it is *efficient* in securing common grace for the non-elect as well as the elect. It has "*effectually* procured" "the conditional gift of life to all mankind." Probably, also, it has been, and is still, efficient in securing such influences of the Spirit for some of the non-elect as give them a *moral* power to repent, although they refuse to perform the duty thus made easy for them; a duty which they might perform "without any more grace." "Common redemption and the decree of common grace both antecede that which is properly called election, in order of nature *in esse objective*; that is, God decreeth to give faith and salvation effectively to some of them that had common grace."³ "Therefore, in this sense Christ died for all, but not for all *alike* or *equally*; that is, he intended good to *all*, but not an *equal* good with an *equal* intention. Whatever Christ giveth men in time as the fruit of his death, that he decreed from eternity to give them; and whatever he never giveth them, he never decreed to give them. What he giveth them absolutely, he decreed to give them absolutely; and what he giveth them but conditionally, he decreed to give them but conditionally."⁴ And "all the world hath grace or merciful help

¹ Chap. XIII §§ 10, 11.² *Ib.* § 13.³ *Ib.* § 19.⁴ *Ib.*

sufficient to enable them [with a moral ability] to do *less evil* and *more good* than they do, and to use some means better than they do, which tend to further grace."¹

§ 9. *Effectual Grace.*

By effectual grace is meant, "first, the gracious means or second causes appointed by God to cause our faith." "Christ is the chief means, and instituteth the rest; Scripture, ministers, example, good company, merciful providences, afflictions, meditation, books, prayer, sacraments, etc. are all appointed for such effects." "The Spirit first indited the word, as we cut a seal to be the instrument of impression, and then by that word, doth work on souls."² By effectual grace is meant, "secondly, the first moving impress on the soul, as it is antecedent to act and habit." "The thing received by us from God seemeth to be a certain impress, impulse, *vis*, or disposition to act in order of nature before the act itself, which impress sometimes is made ineffectual by a prevalent indisposition or resistance of the will."³ Although in natural phenomena, even the miraculous, Baxter was reluctant to admit an agency of the First Cause, without the instrumentality of second causes (see § 2 above), yet in spiritual phenomena, we find no such, or, at least, not an equal, reluctance. We read in the "End of Controversy":

"We all confess, that God worketh by means, and we cannot name an act on us which he always ordinarily doth without any means or second cause. And we acknowledge that there are *gracious means*, and that ordinarily these must have a sufficiency in their kind. But withal we must say, that God worketh immediately as to proximity of causation, when he worketh not so immediately as without second causes. And that whether by means or without means (as he pleaseth), there must be such a disposition communicated to a depraved, undisposed soul, as shall be a moral power, and put it into an immediate capacity to consent or act."⁴

This distinction between immediateness as to proximity of causation, and immediateness as to freedom from all instrumentalities, is one of great value.

"All means will be uneffectual without God's inward operation by his Spirit. He must work on the speaker and on the hearer, to make means

¹ Chap. XIII § 42. See pp. 349—361 above.

² *Ib.* § 1.

³ Chap. XV. §§ 1, 3.

⁴ Chap. XIII § 39.

effectual, as is agreed on. But whether as God worketh in naturals, according to the aptitude of natural second causes, so he worketh faith and other graces by a settled proportion of concurrence, agreeable to the aptitude of gracious second causes, or means of grace, is a question too hard to be boldly and peremptorily determined by us that are in so much darkness. But it seemeth to us, that God would not have made it so great a part of his government to establish a course of means, if he did not intend to work ordinarily by them, and according to their fitness."¹

The fitness, adaptedness, tendency of the means of regeneration to their end, is elsewhere very frequently asserted by Mr. Baxter.

"But there is no question but God can work without means; and, intellectual souls, being so near to the first cause, it is utterly uncertain to us, whether in works of grace God have not a double operation on the soul, one by his appointed means, and another by immediate influx; and if it be so, how these concur to one and the same effect and also how God doth immediately move souls, are all past man's reach, and should be acknowledged above our disputes."²

The *first impress or motus* which the Holy Spirit effects upon the soul is said by Mr. Baxter to be produced on man as "a mere patient, though not antecedent to all former acts of man, or all preparative dispositions." "God, sometimes at least, maketh so powerful an impress as doth necessarily determine man's will, by a necessity consistent with his liberty;" that is, such a moral necessity, as is not a *mere* certainty, but such a certainty as would render the man's refusal to obey highly painful, a necessity the opposite of moral ability; see pp. 359—361 above. "It cannot be proved by any man, that no man believeth by that deficient motion which doth not *necessarily* determine his will, seeing that many preparatory acts are done by such a motion. And it is probable that it is oft so." "But by which degree of grace soever the effect be produced, still God's will is the chief cause of it, which can procure the effect *infallibly* when it doth not *necessitate*."³ Whenever divine grace does subdue the soul, it is effectual grace, although the same degree of it

¹ Chap. XV. § 2.

² *Ib.* § 7.

³ *Ib.* §§ 13, 17, 18. Baxter makes a distinction between infallible certainty and necessity. So he makes a distinction between "infallible certainty" and "perfect certainty." He says that we may be infallibly certain of our conversion, although not perfectly certain. See "Saints' Everlasting Rest," Works, Vol. XXII. pp. 496, 498.

which will subdue one heart fails to convert another, and the same means which are adapted to one are not adapted to another, and one sinner has both the natural and (probably) the moral power to resist the grace that does in fact persuade him, while another sinner has no moral power to withstand the influence by which he is led to Christ.

§ 10. *Holiness.*

As Baxter affirms that, when Adam apostatized, the whole person, body and soul, committed iniquity, and, therefore, sin pertains to the physical and intellectual nature, as well as to the will; so, in consistency with himself, he affirms that holiness belongs to the involuntary, to even the physical nature, as well as to the rational choice.¹ In necessary agreement with this principle, the "End of Controversy" teaches, that "the fear of God and his judgments, and a care of our own souls, and a sorrow for sin and a desire for happiness may be not only preparatives but *lower parts* of holiness."²

A sad wrong, however, is done to this acute author, if we suppose that he does not modify these statements, and explain them into a nearer approach to the doctrine, that all holiness is the supreme voluntary love to God. For, while he affirms that "nature and common grace do give men that which is truly good, and not only *minus malum*;" "and is truly laudable and amiable, considered, without the mixture, simply in itself," yet he distinctly declares, that with this good there is mingled an evil which "is still the *predominant* part in all the unsanctified," and, therefore, the inferior degree of good in them "will not properly denominate them *good men*, nor the whole action a *good action*, save equivocally, analogically and *secundum quid*, because the *form* denominateth, which is here wanting."³ This form, this essence, "the true formal specifying nature of [holiness] consisteth in a love of God's infinite goodness, and a will addicted to obey his will, or a *pleasèdness* in *pleasing* him. This is holiness."⁴ Moral virtue is the genus, and denotes "our love and duty to God, and to man for God's sake;" "holiness is the chief

¹ Chap. XVII. §§ 5, 6, 8. "Though the intellect be not free of itself, it is free by participation, being *quoad exercitium* under the empire of the will that is free." Chap. XVIII. § 5.

² Chap. XVII. § 11.

³ *Ib.* § 29.

⁴ *Ib.* § 11.

species" and "is taken narrowly for our love and duty to God, as distinct from our love and duty to man."¹ "Those actions are not morally good unless done in obedience to God's commanding or ruling will, and, finally, to please his will."² "The intellectual holiness is but initiative, the will's holiness is the more perfect." The radical distinction, then, which the "End of Controversy" draws between the renewed and the unrenewed is, not that the former have *some*, but the latter have *no*, supreme love to God in certain relations, but that regenerate men love the *entire* divine character, and especially the holiness of it, more than they love all things else, while unregenerate men do not prefer the divine character, as a whole, to other objects, but prefer themselves or the world to the holiness of that character. Thus the regenerate possess the form, the essence of virtue, while the unregenerate may sometimes possess the matter, but never cherish the essential parts of moral goodness. "An hypocrite may be said to have moral virtue, as he may be said to have holiness, that is, only *secundum quid*, yea, but analogically; yea, but equivocally; in that he hath no other sort of faith and love and obedience. An infidel's moral virtue, and all unsanctified heathens' or other persons', is of the same sort only with this described of the hypocrite. And they err not that say: they have no *true* moral virtue but analogical."³ Why should not our perspicacious author make similar distinctions, *mutatis mutandis*, with regard to the nature of physical, intellectual, sensitive, as distinct from *voluntary*, sin? Believing that some acts of the impenitent are good, *as far as they go*, Baxter did not hesitate to say that some of these acts are commanded, and encouraged by God. "He that heareth of Christ and believeth not, or believeth uneffectually, and is not a converted sound believer, is under God's command to use certain means allowed him to procure faith and true conversion, and that not without all hope of good success."⁴ This use of means is the voluntary agency of the sinner while impenitent, and the

¹ Chap. XVII. § 21. In his "Saints' Everlasting Rest," Baxter says, that the acceptance of Christ "is principally, if not only, the act of [the believer's] will." Vol. XXII. p. 507.

² Chap. XXV. § 6.

³ Chap. XVII. §§ 26—28. In his "Saints' Everlasting Rest," Baxter speaks with less definiteness, and implies, perhaps, a doubt, "whether the main difference between special grace and common grace, be not rather gradual than specific." Vol. XXII. p. 504.

⁴ Chap. XXV. § 31.

Baxterian system is here, as elsewhere, distinguished from the more accurate theology of modern times, which refuses to encourage any form or degree of impenitent action.

Baxter also differs from the common evangelical creeds in applying to our holy acts the term "worthiness or merit." "All sober Christians, in all ages, have been," he says, for designating our right feelings as worthy or meritorious "in a sound sense;" that is, in the sense of "fit, meet for a reward."

"I have formerly thought, that though we agree in the thing, it is best to omit the name, because the Papists have abused it; and I think so still, as in such companies and cases where the use of it, not understood, will scandalize men. But in other cases, I now think it better to keep the word; first, lest we seem to the ignorant to be of another religion than all the ancient churches were; secondly, lest we harden Papists, Greeks and others, by denying sound doctrine in terms, which they will think we deny in sense; thirdly, because our penury of words is such as for my part I remember no other word so fit to substitute instead of merit or desert or worthiness. The word rewardable, is long and oft harsh. And what other have we? And it is nothing else that we mean."¹

The reward which the faithful receive is called *μισθός*, wages, and the faithful themselves are called *ἀξιοί*, and these terms denote a worthiness or merit, a moral aptitude for the reward. This moral aptitude of good works to receive a recompense in heaven "consisteth in these things:

"1. That they are efficiently from God's Spirit. 2. They are in their measure agreeable to God's governing will. 3. They are done in love, to his glory and to please him. 4. They are done by a member of Christ. 5. They are profitable to men, ourselves and others. 6. The habits and acts are God's own image. 7. They have the promise of his reward. 8. They are washed in the blood of Christ, that is, their faultiness is pardoned through his merits. 9. They are presented to God by Christ's intercession. 10. And, lastly, they are man's aptitude for the reward in their very nature; yea, part of it themselves, as they are of God; holiness being the beginning of happiness, or of that love of God which in its perfection is heaven itself; such an aptitude as that a holy person cannot be miserable, nor can God hate and damn a holy soul that truly loveth and obeyeth him."²

"Holy obedience is, in the very nature of it, so pleasing to the most holy God, as rendereth it *apt* to be the matter of that condition on which his covenant promiseth to reward us, the imperfection being pardoned, and we and our works accepted, upon the redemption wrought by the merits of Christ, and upon his intercession, and presenting them to God."³

¹ Chap. XXV. §§ 53, 54.

² *Ib.* § 44.

³ *Ib.* § 59.

Our author unequivocally declares, that "faith and repentance are acts of man," and, therefore, "as 'acts' and 'works' are words of the same sense, so works, even works of special grace, are prerequisite to justification." Our faith in Christ, as an act (and not merely as related to Him the object); the work of believing in Christ (and not merely the object Christ believed in), "is prerequisite as a moral disposition to justification; and in that sense a work or act of man" is prerequisite.¹

"As the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God, so faith in them is one faith; and no man can truly believe in Christ, that believeth not in the Father; our belief in God as God and love to him, is that salvation to which Christ is to bring us." "All that belief which is necessary to the baptized, is necessary to our justification. But that is our belief in Father, Son and Holy Ghost (in the measure that they are revealed)."²

† 11. *The Real, Imputed and Justifying Righteousness of Believers.*

The simple remark of Baxter, that "there is a moral goodness in these works [faith and subsequent obedience] of man, by which through Christ they are pleasing to God," and that this goodness "is their aptitude to [the divine] acceptance and reward,"³ suggests at once his views with regard to the real righteousness of moral agents, as these agents act under law or under grace. This righteousness, as related to the precept of the law, is nothing but perfect obedience; as related to the conditions of salvation under grace, it is the compliance with these conditions; as related to the rewards promised and the punishments threatened in the law, it is a right to receive these rewards, and to be exempt from these punishments; as related to the premiant and penal parts of the law of grace, it is a right to be saved through Christ's atonement.⁴ No mere man, therefore, can pretend to be righteous in view of the law. Through grace a believer's righteousness is "sincere faith and repentance, as the condition of our first right to the present gifts of the covenant; and, also, sincere love and obedience to the end, as the condition of our final justification and glory."⁵ Our faith is imputed to us for righteousness, and this faith is not exclusively a confidence in the righteousness of Christ, but it is the principle of all forms of vir-

¹ Chap. XXV. §§ 33. Chap. XXII. § 6.

² Chap. XXIII. § 36.

³ Chap. XXV. § 40.

⁴ Chap. XXI. §§ 8—20.

⁵ *Ib.* § 18.

tie; "faith, as faith in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in the sense of the Baptismal Covenant, is the apt matter to be the condition of our justification by the gift of that covenant."¹ The words (Rom. 4: 11), *that righteousness might be imputed or reckoned to them also*, "seem to me to have no difficulty, but what men by wrangling put into them. To have righteousness imputed to them, is to be reputed, judged or accounted as righteous men, and so used."² "God never judgeth falsely, but knoweth all things to be what they are." The Holy Scripture "most frequently by" righteousness meaneth that which consisteth in our acts and habits.³

But is not Christ's righteousness, as well as their own faith, imputed to believers?—His holy life is the *meritorious cause* of the favors bestowed upon them. Because he fulfilled "all the law which God the Father gave him," he has so glorified the divine wisdom, goodness, truth, justice and mercy, that the ends of the divine government may be now better attained than by the destruction of the sinful world.⁴

But, although the holy obedience or righteousness of Christ has procured for us all the spiritual favors which we enjoy, and in this sense may be imputed to us, yet we cannot be said to have fulfilled the law in the person of Christ, and in that sense to have his holiness imputed to our souls. "Because the sense of the law was not: Thou shalt obey, or another for thee; it never mentioned a vicarious obedience,—but: Thou thyself shall obey."⁵ Is that phrase, "imputing Christ's righteousness," a Scripture phrase? Not that I can find.⁶

"The person of our Mediator was neither in the sense of the law, or in God's account, properly the person of the sinner; Christ and we are distinct persons. Had we been perfectly holy, innocent, and obedient in Christ, it would follow: 1. That we are justified by the law of innocency, as having perfectly done all that it commanded us, which is not true. It is by the pardoning law of grace that we are justified. 2. That we have no need of pardon, nor of Christ's sufferings for our pardon, nor of prayer for pardon, nor any means for it; for he needeth no pardon that is perfectly innocent. 3. Therefore they assert contradictions, when they say that we both perfectly obeyed by and in Christ; and yet suffered or satisfied in or by him for our disobedience. 4. It would follow, that all penalties, even corrective, laid on

¹ Chap. XXIII. §§ 24, 23, 36, and Chap. XXVII. § 11.

² Chap. XXII. § 11.

³ *Ib.* § 7, and Chap. XXI. § 50.

⁴ Chap. XXII. § 3.

⁵ Chap. XXI. § 29.

⁶ Chap. XXII. § 15.

us by God, are injuries, or no penalties, because we are innocent. 5. And that God's denying us any helps of his Spirit, and permitting the remnant of our sin yet unhealed, and the weakness of our graces, are an injurious denying us our right. 6. It would follow, that we have present right to the present possession of the whole reward, both grace and glory, and that our delay is our wrong; because he that is supposed to have done all that the law maketh his duty, from his birth till his death, hath right to the reward by the law or covenant. 7. And, it would follow, that no duty could be required of us as a condition of any benefit purchased by Christ, nor any sin charged on us so far as to be indeed our sin, because we are reputed perfectly holy and innocent."¹

In agreement with these explanations of righteousness, Mr. Baxter defines justification as consisting of three parts. He supposes it to mean, first, "making us righteous and judicially justifiable." This he terms "constitutive justification." "Constitutive justification is ever first. God never judged a man righteous, that was not righteous." "The word 'righteous' and 'righteousness' is so frequently used in Scripture for that called *inherent* or *self-performed* righteousness (incomparably often than in any other sense), as will help to inform us what constitutive justification is; and, if any dislike the name, let them call it 'making us righteous,' if that will please them better than the word justifying."² "If any, with Augustine, will mean by justification *God's making us such as the Judge will justify by sentence or execution*, then our *conversion* is part of that justification;" and the "Scripture sometimes taketh justification in that sense."³

As the first is *constitutive*, so the second part of justification is *judicial*, and consists in the plea, the evidence and witness, and the sentence, that we are righteous according to the law of grace. The third part is *executive* justification, the treating of us as righteous. "It is by the law of grace (the edition which men lived under) that Christ will judge the world," and while "no man is perfectly and absolutely just or justifiable by the law of innocency," yet "a believer is made just indeed, and so is justifiable in judgment, that is, justified virtually by the law" of the redemptive economy.⁴

"The faith that hath the promise of justification is essentially a subjecting ourselves to Christ; that is, a taking him for our Lord and Saviour by consent; which is a consent to obey him for the future. Though this actual obedience

¹ Chap. XXII. §§ 21—23.

² *Ib.* § 50.

³ Chap. XXI. §§ 25—28.

⁴ *Ib.* §§ 35, 37, 41, 46, 47, 50.

to Christ, besides subjection, be not prerequisite to our first being justified, it is requisite to the continuance of our justification; for we consented to obey, that we might *indeed* obey, and are perfidious if we do not."¹ "God calleth it his *justice* to reward men according to his law, and give them what it gave them right to. Inasmuch that it is made the second article of our faith, Heb. 11: 6, to believe that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And he giveth it as a *righteous judge*, 2 Tim. 4: 8."²

§ 12. *Saints' Perseverance.*

The following are the questions proposed by Baxter on this theme, and his answers to them. First, Is all the grace procured and given by Christ, such as is never lost? No. Secondly, Is that grace ever lost, which gives to the adult a moral power to believe without giving him the actual belief? Yes. Thirdly, Do any men lose true actual faith and justification? "I do not know." "For many hundred years the Christian doctors commonly held, that some lose true justifying faith and perish." Fourthly, Is habitual love or holiness ever lost? "That there is a confirmed state or degree of holiness that is never lost, I do hold." "But whether the *least degrees* of habitual grace be utterly loseable, which prove a present right to life till they are lost, I must precisely profess I do not know; much may be said on both sides; and if my ignorance offend any, it offendeth me more." Fifthly, Is it possible to lose that holiness which never will be lost? Men have the natural power to lose it. Sixthly, Are any persons truly converted who are not elected to salvation? Augustine supposed that some are "truly sanctified and justified that are not elect, and so do not persevere." "I do not know" Seventhly, Does the doctrine of apostasy infer any mutability in God? No; the change is only in the apostate. Eighthly, "Why did God leave this case so dark?" "It is not a matter of so great use to us as some imagine." "The difficulty of the point is such, that it should in all churches be left free, and neither side made necessary to our Christian love, peace, concord, communion or ministry." "Before Augustine's time it was taken commonly as granted, that men might fall away from

¹ Chap. XXV. §§ 15, 16.

² *Ib.* § 43. Here Baxter makes a distinction, common among the old writers, between the first act of the renewed soul, its first consecration to God, and, on the other hand, its obedience.

a state of grace, and that many did." Augustine, Prosper, Fulgentius, Macarius believed that "none of the elect did so fall as to perish;" but they all took it for granted, that some [of the non-elect were sanctified and] fell from a state of justification and perished. And I remember not one writer that I have read and noted, to be of a contrary mind for a thousand years after the writing of the Scriptures, nor any mention of any Christian sect that was so."¹

In his treatment of the Saints' Perseverance, as of other themes, Baxter exhibited his peculiar distrust in the powers of the human mind. He shrunk from all dogmatical judgments on propositions which he regarded as not expressly revealed in the Divine word. At the same time, he encouraged the most resolute inquiry in all departments of theological investigation. The "End of Controversy" evinces his perseverance in free investigation untrammelled by uninspired creeds. His modest estimate of the human faculties forbade all blind submission to human compends of doctrine. In many respects his theological system appears to have been erroneous, even in the form which he gave it during the very year of his death. Some, at least, of his errors, he would probably have corrected, had he lived in the nineteenth century. Still, it is a system instinct with life and energy. It is distinguished, as the reader will perceive in the admirable abstract given of it in the ninth volume of this Review, by a spirit of profound penitence for transgression, and of hearty gratitude for the largeness and liberality of divine grace. Everywhere he describes sin as a bitter evil, because a free, voluntary, radical state. Everywhere, he describes the grace of God as abundant and wonderful, because it gives to all men all needed facilities for salvation, and is rich in its provisions for the non-elect as well as the elect. Everywhere he seems to be mindful of his own liabilities to error, and, therefore, anxious to cherish in his own and in other minds, the spirit of genuine catholicism. He is often sarcastic, but he reserves his severity for men who strive to oppress the mind, and overload "the bruised reed" with a cumbrous machinery of human speculations. Notwithstanding all his theological mistakes, it is easy to perceive the influence of his abstract creed upon his practical and devotional treatises. The animating, inspiring, invigorating tone of his speculations

¹ Chap. XXII.

cannot be hidden in his hortatory appeals. The genius of his scholastic theology is apparent in his "Call to the Unconverted," and in his "Saints' Everlasting Rest." So thoroughly does the most abstruse science permeate the most familiar habits of thought and feeling.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE CONSERVATIVE USE OF THE EYES,

ESPECIALLY IN REFERENCE TO THE DISEASE KNOWN AS "MORBID SENSIBILITY OF THE RETINA."

By George A. Bethune, M. D., one of the Surgeons of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.

THAT disease of the eyes, which we regard as the great scourge of literary men, is known among physicians as the Morbid-Sensibility of the Retina. This term gives but an imperfect idea of the disease, as the most annoying sensations are felt in parts of the body which have only sympathetic relations with the retina, an organ which, as is well known, forms a part of the vital machinery of vision, and which, probably, has no capacity for sensation other than that concerned in sight.¹

This disease, in fact, consists of an over sensitiveness of the general nervous system of the eye, with its appendages and its neighborhood, especially of that part on, behind, and above its surface, and that of the living membrane of the lids. The uneasy or painful sensations are, it is true, produced by the exposure of the retina to the light in the discharge of its duty; at least, this is the *ordinary* succession of events, though the painful sensations are sometimes present when the organ is wholly at rest; but the sensations themselves are not in the retina, but in other parts. We wish to insist a little on this point, as connected with means for warding off attacks of disease.

¹ Sir Charles Bell says: "The nerve of vision is as insensible to touch, as the nerve of touch is to light."