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## ARTICLE II.

[by Benjamin Morgan Palmer]

### THE RELATION BETWEEN THE WORK OF CHRIST AND THE CONDITION OF THE ANGELIC WORLD.

In our meditations upon the Atonement of Christ, we are prone to regard it exclusively in its relations to the human race. This, perhaps, is natural. The Bible reveals the plan of redemption, not as a subject for speculation, but as a method of salvation: we are led, therefore, to view it in its special adaptedness to our condition as sin-

ners, and to overlook the relation it may possibly sustain to other beings beside ourselves. We know indeed that the sacrifice of Christ has an intimate Connexion with the moral government of God; but, are prone to think, only so far as we form a part of that government. If the nature of God's rule is such, that pardon cannot be bestowed upon the transgressor without an adequate atonement, we are easily content with the belief that the only design of that atonement was to secure this pardon for the actual transgressor, and that no other and higher ends are comprehended within it.

But we are persuaded that the scheme of grace revealed in the Bible, should be regarded from a far higher point of view than this low earth on which we dwell; that its relations are more vast and extensive than is supposed by those who would confine it to any one distinct class or order of beings. Taking, indeed, the narrowest view of it, it is sublime beyond all human conception. The redemption of a single soul from death, its deliverance from the bondage of sin and the power of Satan, its entire sanctification, and its introduction into heaven, are all events of the most startling and impressive kind. The passage of even one redeemed saint from the deep pit and miry clay of sin to a throne with Christ in his glory, unfolds a history which might command a listening senate of Angels. But, if with John, we could behold, in Apocalyptic vision, the one hundred and forty and four thousand, standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, having his Father's name in their foreheads, their voice as the voice of many waters, and their song that of harpers, harping with their harps: in view of that immense number, each seeming equally a monument to the mystery of grace, we should confess this is a great salvation, this salvation by the blood of Christ. Yet, this is but a standing point, from which to spring to a higher and more commanding view. We have only to look upon the different orders of worshippers in the heavenly temple, and witness the whole hierarchy bending before the throne of the Lamb, to be overwhelmed with the mystery of divine grace. It is not difficult to say why "the spirits of just men made perfect" should cry day and night, "thou art worthy, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood;" but whence come these—this "innumerable company of An-

gels”—these “flames of fire”—who catch from redeemed sinners the key-note of praise, and swell the chorus, “worthy is the Lamb that was slain?”

The answer to this question, brings us to the grave, yet delightful theme, which it is the object of the present article to pursue. It may be expressed in the following proposition

Christ Jesus, by his atonement, has introduced into the moral government of God the' *principle of grace*, which avails to the confirmation of beings who are holy, as well as to the redemption of beings who are fallen.

It may not be wholly unnecessary to state precisely in the outset the point which is to be proved. It is not our design to show that the redemption of man is by grace: this, we presume, will be freely granted; at any rate, our attention is not now directed to the proof or denial of this fact. It is sufficient that the term grace is adopted in Scripture, for the purpose of defining the whole scheme of salvation. The believer is said to be “justified by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Again, “we are saved by grace through faith,” &c. Furthermore, the promise made to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world, a promise which envelopes the whole work of Christ, is expressly said to be not of the law but of faith, in order “that it might be by grace.” And lastly, the whole Gospel, which is but the story of redemption, is defined “the Gospel of the grace of God.” These plain passages shut up controversy upon this point, even though it should not be cheerfully conceded our design will be to lead off from this admitted truth, and to show that mankind is not the only class of beings directly indebted to this grace, but that “principalities and powers in heavenly places,” stand equally with justified believers upon a gracious platform: and this grace is introduced 'to them as well as to us, through the stupendous work accomplished by Jesus Christ.

The first argument bearing upon this point, will be drawn from the fact, that the holy angels have been confirmed in their original holiness and bliss against all possible defection. But, as this fact forms the keystone of the argument, it will be necessary first to place it firmly in the arch: and perhaps the majority of our readers who readily concede the position, will not object to see arrayed before

them the proofs of a long-cherished opinion, if indeed it may not be considered a settled article of faith. Of course, the appeal must be made exclusively to the testimony of Scripture: and in gathering up this testimony, we feel the need of very great caution, since the condition of the angelic world is not made the subject of direct revelation in the Bible, but is incidentally unfolded, and only on those points where it is mysteriously interlinked with the destiny of man.

We conceive, then, that the term “elect,” applied by the Apostle to the whole body of holy angels, involves, necessarily, their confirmation. Paul, having given various directions to Timothy, concludes with this solemn injunction: “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and *the elect angels*, that thou do these things.”(1.) Now, what is meant here by the term “elect,” as applied to the angels? If we follow the analogy of the word, as it is used in Scripture relative to man, it must mean that in the purpose or decree of God, these are chosen that they may stand fast in the holiness in which they were created. The elect of mankind are those who from eternity have been chosen in Christ to be the heirs of everlasting life: the design of their election being their holiness—a holiness secured to them by their redemption in Christ and their sanctification through the Spirit. In like manner, the elect angels are chosen from eternity in Christ (2) to be the heirs of everlasting life, the design of their election being simply the confirmation of their original state. Precisely, therefore, as in the one case, the decree of election respects the redemption and sanctification of a being who is sinful, so in the other case, the decree of election respects the security and steadfastness of a being already holy. The term election in both cases discriminates between two distinct classes. The elect of mankind are chosen out from

(1) 1 Timothy, 5: 21.

(2) “The Apostle calls the blessed Angels the elect. 1 Tim., 5: 21. But the election, whether of men or of angels, out of Christ, cannot be understood. To this, I think, refers that passage of Job, (Job 38: 7,) where good angels are styled sons of God: not because they are begotten of God, (for Christ is the only Son of God,) but because they are adopted as sons of God for Christ’s sake. Hence, therefore, it is evident that the grace of Christ, the Mediator, is necessary for the happiness even of angels.” Bishop Davenant’s Comment on Col. 1: 20.

a race lost in sin and condemned righteously to hell; and stand opposed to and are discriminated from the remainder of the same race, who sink under a weight of condemnation to final perdition. The elect angels are those chosen from the whole angelic race, to abide the period of their probation, then to be confirmed against all possible defection; and they stand opposed to and are discriminated from another portion of the same race, who failed in accomplishing their probation, and were at once adjudged to the damnation of the pit. (3.)

We are aware that Arminian interpreters have placed a very different construction upon this phrase; but the feebleness of their attempt only corroborates the interpretation given above. Generally speaking, they place side by side two expositions, leaving their readers to choose between them. It is urged on the one hand, that the term election only refers to excellence of character; that elect angels means no more than holy angels. As reprobate signifies what has been tested and rejected, so elect signifies something approved, and therefore worthy and excellent; and this is given as the full and only force of the term in this passage in Timothy. On the other hand, it is urged that the phrase "elect angels" does not refer to the whole body or class of good angels, but only to the chief of them, those selected from the rest to discharge certain offices among men, and who were thus special witnesses of Timothy's conduct. It appears to us a strange oversight to place in juxtaposition two such interpretations, since the one must infallibly eat up the other. The fundamental principles upon which the two rest are utterly at variance. The first assumes that the term elect is not properly a discriminating term: it does not separate between parties, setting one over against the other; but is only comparative, the comparison

(3) President Edwards goes very far in affirming election of the angels, by ascribing their preservation from falling, to grace actually bestowed; his language is, '1 when Lucifer rebelled and set up himself as a head, in opposition to God and Christ, and drew away a great number of the angels after him, Christ, the Son of God, manifested himself as an opposite head, and appeared graciously to dissuade and restrain by his grace the elect angels from hearkening to Lucifer's temptation; so that they were upheld and preserved from eternal destruction at this time of great danger, by the free and sovereign distinguishing grace of Christ." *Miscell. Observations—Works*, vol. 8, p. 491.

lying between a certain standard and the character which is tried by it. The other assumes, on the contrary, that the term is discriminating, and undertakes to set forth between whom the discrimination is to be made. One of these may be admitted, but not both. We willingly allow the Arminian a fair choice between the two, as readily as the law allows the woman a free selection, whose husband returns after a seven years' absence, and after she has contracted a new alliance. But, we certainly cannot allow him to adopt and present both, to play at hide and seek between positions which are contradictory. If he adopts the first interpretation, we will undertake to show that it does not assign to the word elect its proper sense, but unwarrantably takes it in a signification unusual and highly metaphorical. We will further show that the terms elect and reprobate, however they may stand as correlates in scholastic divinity, are not etymologically thus related; nor are they employed in the symbolic language of theology as the representatives of opposite doctrines, because of any native antithesis of meaning. It is impossible, therefore, to determine the meaning of the word elect, by regarding it simply as the converse of the word reprobate. If he adopts the latter interpretation, we will undertake to show that the discrimination made is altogether without warrant from this or any other passage of Scripture; and that as there are two classes of angels constantly discriminated in the Bible, the elect and the apostate, the presumption is of the highest possible kind that this is the discrimination intended here.

But we find ourselves expanding this subordinate point beyond its just limits. The meaning of the phrase "elect angels," may be settled by an easy process. The term usually signifies, in Scripture, a being who is taken from a class to be the recipient of a special favor. This is its ordinary, because its technical, signification in reference to man. Its ordinary sense is to be taken as the true sense, when applied to angels, unless some other sense is plainly declared, or unless the condition of the angelic world unequivocally forbids its application to them. Neither of these restrictive conditions exists in the passage before us: no other sense is declared in opposition to its ordinary import; and so far is the condition of the angelic world from forbidding its proper application to them, it specially invites it.

There are two distinct classes of angels constantly discriminated in Scripture; elect and apostate angels are as much opposed as elect and reprobate men. Discrimination, then, being the elementary idea in the word, and the condition of the angelic world being such as to require discrimination equally with men, surely in the absence of any other sense given here or elsewhere to the word, as applied to angels, it must be taken to mean that the holy angels are the objects of an eternal divine decree, which infallibly secures their confirmation in holiness. They stand in relation to their eternal state precisely as the elect of mankind to theirs; the only difference being as to the condition in which the decree of election finds them both. What is affirmed of one may equally be predicated, *mutatis mutandis*, of the other. They are both chosen; they are both chosen in Christ, as we shall see more fully hereafter; they are both chosen to everlasting holiness and happiness. The difference between them is circumstantial, not essential: in one case, election finds man a sinner and procures his holiness by a process called sanctification: in the other case, it finds the angel a holy being and secures his holiness, by a process called confirmation. (4).

Other passages of Scripture, examined with equal care, would yield the same conclusion. The Apostle Jude says, "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains," &c. (5). Manifestly, the language here opens the inquiry whether by this first estate, is not meant a defined probation, bounded, as in the case of man's, by certain and prescribed limits. Omitting, however, this inquiry for want of space, one reflection strikes the mind in reading this, as well as the parallel passage in Peter: "for if God spared not the angels that sinned," &c; (6) which is, that these wretched beings are designated by their original apostasy, rather than by their habitual wicked character. They are

(4) "Qui erexit hominem lapsum dedit stanti angelo ne laberetur : sic ilium, de captivitate eruens, sicut hunc a captivitate defenders. Et hac ratione fuit aequae utrique redemptio; solvens *ilium* et servans istum. Liqueat ergo sanctis angelis Dominum Christum fuisse redemptionem, sicut justitiam, sicut sapientiam, sicut sanctificationem: sic ergo omne quod erat Angelis, factus est nobis." Bernard in Cantica, as quoted by Zanchius, in his treatise de bonis Angelis. Cap. 21.

(5) Jude 6.

(6) 2 Peter, 2: 4.

referred to as an apostate class, and as becoming so by a single transgression. The reader cannot fail to notice a remarkable analogy here to the single transgression which closed the probation of man, and threw the whole race into the same category of apostate beings.

It is time, however, to pass on to other proofs of the angels confirmation in holiness. We allege, then, that the offices which they discharge, are scarcely consistent with a present probationary state. They were with Christ when on Mount Sinai he set up the typical dispensation of Moses: they appeared at sundry times as messengers of Christ to his church below; they heralded his birth when he appeared in the fullness of time as the babe of Bethlehem; they ministered to him after his long temptation in the wilderness, and strengthened him-when fainting in the garden of Gethsemane; they watched about his sepulchre, when he was laid in Joseph's new tomb; they first witnessed his resurrection to his wondering and amazed disciples; they will fill his train of glory, and place his throne in the clouds when he shall descend upon the earth for judgment. It is the voice of an angel which shall proclaim by the solemn name of the existing God the end of time; it is the trump of an archangel which shall wake the nations of the dead; the angels will go forth as reapers, gathering the righteous into heaven, and casting the wicked into unquenchable fire; they are now, and will ever be, these elect angels, around Christ's throne in Heaven, praising him as the blessed Mediator, worshiping him as God and the Lamb forever. It seems scarcely possible that they should be so fully identified with Christ in his work of patience and of power upon the earth, if there existed still a doubt of their steadfastness as holy beings: and if they cannot fall, it must be only because they are graciously secured by the power of God, and not by any necessity of their own natures. One certain fact, however, concludes our faith in this matter, and will be found in the sequel to meet all the exigencies of the argument. It is undeniable that the destiny of angels as well as of men will be unalterably fixed at the day of judgment. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that we shall judge angels?" An evil spirit once challenged Christ, "art thou

(7) 1 Corinthians, 6: 3.



come hitherto torment us before the time?" (8). And Jude says explicitly, the rebel angels are "reserved in everlasting' chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." (9). Here, then, is palpable proof that on this day of destiny the condition of angels will be irrevocably fixed. If not before, then their probation must cease; the rebellious forever doomed, the holy forever established. Now as their offices discharged in the resurrection and final judgment are viewed in connection with their manifest confirmation, the same or similar functions discharged by them from the beginning are presumptive of that confirmation, as far back, at least, as the history of our own race. (10). We care not, however, to press these speculations, as the careful reader will soon see that any limit, however distant, which is placed upon their probation, as for instance at the day of judgment; will sustain the argument we design to construct.

At the hazard, however, of over-arguing an admitted point, we must add, in final proof of the angels' confirmation in holiness, their recapitulation in Christ. In that mediatorial dominion which is given to Christ, the angels are included: "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." (11). All the orders of holy angels, then, are included in Christ, and he is made Head over all. But can this be, unless those thus included are confirmed beyond the risk of apostacy? If none among men are united to Christ save those who are fully justified thereby, and their salvation infallibly secured, surely none among angels can be united to the same blessed Head save those who are confirmed thereby, and they made equally secure. It is this gathering all things in Christ, which makes up, the greatness of his mediatorial glory; and the loss of one thus gathered, either human or angelic, cannot be affirmed without blasphemy. It would destroy the integrity, mar the beauty, and dash the glory of the mystical body of Christ: the Mediator would not be perfect, because

(8) Matthew 8: 29.

(9) Jude 6.

(10) President Edwards regards the period of Christ's ascension into Heaven as the 'punctum temporis,' at which the elect angels were confirmed. See his *Miscel. Observ.*, Works, vol. 8, p. 507.

(11) Ephesians 1: 10.

of the lost member—the mystical Christ would sit upon his throne a deformed and mutilated object, to praise whom would be the bitterest irony, to worship whom would be most insulting mockery.

The proofs of this generally conceded point have been thus fully expanded, because we do not remember to have seen them any where drawn out: yet the conclusion which has been reached is only the first stage in the discussion before us. If the holy angels are now confirmed in their primitive integrity, or if they shall be thus confirmed at the period of the general judgment, (for the fact and not the date of their confirmation—is alone important,) the question arises, upon what principle are they confirmed? How comes their probation ever to cease? Why should not their happiness be conditioned to all eternity, upon their good behaviour? It is obvious this confirmation can proceed upon no principle of mere Law. All that law does, and, from its very nature, all it can do, is simply to point out the course of duty, and to enforce its teaching by an adequate sanction. It consists of only two parts, both being equally essential; the precept which indicates what is right, and the penalty which inculcates the reciprocal of right,—obligation. The one informs the understanding: the other binds the conscience. Law simply recognizes a moral being as a subject of government: it simply *sets forth* existing relations, without having the least power to *modify* them. A dispensation of mere law, then, is necessarily conditional: the precept recognizes the subject as in circumstances to obey, and therefore teaches him; the sanction equally recognizes him as in circumstances to disobey, and therefore threatens him. All its blessings are necessarily conditional, suspended upon the obedience rendered. Four brief words exhaust its vocabulary: keep—live—break—die. These words it must utter to all, and through all existence. As long as the being lives who is God's subject, the law must speak to him, this is the will of God, and it binds you.

Now the moment we introduce a limitation and say, up to this period I am liable to disobey, but beyond it I am secured against every contingency, a new principle is introduced, which is distinct from law. The proof is obvious.

In his probationary state, the being was alike under law as to its precept and its penalty; he was instructed by the one and warned by the other: but in his confirmed state, he is under law only so far as its directive nature is concerned, but is delivered from its penal sanctions—he enjoys everlasting immunity from the threats of law, because he is secured against disobedience. Now can it enter into the nature of law, and, by consequence of a legal dispensation, to relax itself, and to discharge its subject from one essential part of its own constitution? It would cancel all our ideas of law, if we attribute a principle to it by which itself shall in due season be limited, and its subject be emancipated from any portion of its control.

If, then, this confirmation rest upon no principle of law, what kind of principle is this which makes so essential a change in the condition of moral beings? We answer, it must be a principle of grace, and this *ex necessitate rei*: for what is not of law is of grace. Law expresses the relations subsisting between subject and ruler, and of course declares the obligations of both. The law of God, therefore, while it proclaims the duty of the creature to him, also sets forth all that he is bound to do in his relations to the creature. If, then, above law, God places a period to any being's probation, confirms him in holiness and secures him against future peril, he does more than his relations to that creature require, and the act is gratuitous. The confirmation is not by law, because it is not of right; it is altogether of favor, therefore it is by grace. These terms as necessarily oppose each other as light opposes darkness, and occupation, vacancy. This opposition is expressed in Scripture: "if by grace, then is it no more of works (by law); otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." (12). The authority of Scripture is always sufficient, even without a reason: yet in this case, the reason is obvious enough. While a being is upon probation, which is a dispensation of law simply, his future state is conditioned upon his obedience. In his confirmed state, it is conditioned upon nothing but the good pleasure of God, who wills him to be thenceforward an infallibly perfect being. In the one case,

(12) Romans 11. 6.

his eternal condition is suspended upon something within himself: in the other case, upon something as palpably without him, and external to him : which we take to be, in their scriptural meaning, the essential. difference between the terms grace and law, grace and works.

Each step taken in this discussion, only opens upon a more steep and thorny path. The remarks which follow, the writer would offer, not as a conclusive argument with which he is in all its parts entirely satisfied, but in the way of suggestion, to awaken the spirit of inquiry in those who may read them. It devolves upon us now to inquire how this principle of grace supervenes upon a legal dispensation? The angels were first placed upon probation, in which state they held no relations to God but such as were defined by law: now they are confirmed forever and cannot fall, and consequently hold relations to God such as are defined not by law, but by free and sovereign grace alone. How, then, comes this new and foreign principle to be engrafted upon the general economy of God's administration? The right answer to this question, if it can be rendered, will conduct us into the interior of the gospel plan, open to us the unfailing wealth of that word *grace* in its evangelic meaning, reveal to us the very heart of Christianity. It will lead us to that hidden chamber where God not only unveils the splendor of his holiness, but also the glory of his love—to that curtained sanctuary where the glorious majesty of God embosomed in his mercy, the brilliancy of the one mellowed by the softer radiance of the other, is the shechinah of the Temple on High.

It is not altogether satisfactory to attribute the introduction of this grace to the intervention of the divine *will* simply. Indeed, this does not meet the point of the inquiry, which is not as to the *quâ potestate*, but to the *quâ ratione*. We admit the divine will to be the final cause of all things: but we inquire how this will comes to be exercised in a given way. It is not sufficient to say in reference to any subject which revelation brings wholly within the scope of human inquiry, that God's will is sovereign and free: for, however sovereign, it is not arbitrary. God, as sovereign, may act, without giving to any creature the reasons of that act and whenever these reasons are withheld, we are bound to rest in the simplicity of faith upon the divine oracle, 'thus

saith the Lord.’ But though he may not reveal to any the reasons of his act, reasons he must have, which are approved by himself. This is the precise distinction between sovereignty and arbitrariness: He cannot act without reason, that is, he is not arbitrary: he may act without disclosing his reasons, that is, he is sovereign and free. In a given case we are at liberty to inquire, not only into the determinations of his will, but if he has been pleased to reveal them, into the grounds of that will. If he has withheld them, we bow abased before his sovereignty: but if he has disclosed them, we will read them, and adore his condescension. Now the question before us is simply this: may we gather from the written word the ‘quo modo,’ the way in which God has introduced this principle of grace into his moral government? Let the reader apprehend the point before him. Here are two classes of moral beings, angels and men, placed upon a limited probation: but why a *limited* probation? Why introduce through this limitation a feature which is foreign to a dispensation of law? Can it be that the obedience of a creature for an assigned period, merits this act of grace from God, that he shall be transferred to a safer platform? Merit an act of grace! the solecism of the language betrays the fallacy. (13). If law simply declares the relations between ruler and subject, the latter is bound by those relations to obey. Obligation is the formal nature of law. Through all the successive moments of one’s probation, the obedience of the moment only equals the obligation of the moment. There can be no supererogation in the case. The law demands from the creature all his obedience, and that for every moment: the obedience rendered can only answer to the legal tally. Of course, however protracted the probation, the being is just as far removed from merit at the end as at the beginning. Why, then, does God re

(13) “I believe that God is so holy, pure, and jealous, as it is impossible for him to be pleased in any creature, though the work of his own hands: so that neither angel, man, nor world could stand, or can stand, one moment in his eyes, without beholding the same in the face of the Mediator: and therefore that before him, with whom all things are present, the Lamb of God was slain before all worlds: without which eternal counsel of his, it was impossible for him to have descended to any work of creation: but he should have enjoyed the blessed and individual society of three persons in Godhead forever.” Lord Bacon’s Confession of Faith—Works, (Montague,).vol. 2, p. 407.

ward a limited obedience with eternal immunity, from all peril? Shall we say the procedure is arbitrary? This is impossible: God may be sovereign, but he is able always to give the reasons of his acts. Shall we say the reason is not revealed to us? If so, there is an end of all inquiry, and we will reverently adore the mystery. But we submit that the disclosure of this reason is important, that we may not fall into the error of supposing that man or angel may win this grace from God, as a knight may win his spurs. Nor is this all: if the reason be withheld, we are embarrassed with a serious difficulty. According to preceding statements, when a being passes over the limits of his probation, he passes to a certain extent from the jurisdiction of law. In his confirmed state he is wholly emancipated from the penalty, which is preeminently essential to law, because in it resides that obligation which is the soul of law. There is, then, in this confirmation, a relaxation of law; a species of violence is done to it; and one might infer that in so far forth the authority of God would be weakened, and the power of his rule retrenched. Again, the law is the medium through which God reveals his glory to his creatures: for the law not only expounds their relations to him, but also reflects his image to them. But as the penal sanction is an essential part of law, it not less discovers the glorious holiness of God than does the precept. If God, then, cut off this penalty from the law, so far as the confirmed angels are concerned, will it not be attended with loss to them? Will not the glory of God be dimmed by withdrawing a lens which collects and concentrates upon them so many of the rays of that glory?

Upon these two grounds it would not be difficult to construct an *a priori* argument against the possibility of setting a limit to any being's probation. The argument would be simply the *reductio ad absurdum*. If this confirmation be attended with such results as are manifestly impossible, it is plain that we are mistaken as to the fact. But the fact is clearly revealed: Holy angels and justified men are both placed upon a platform where they enjoy perfect exemption from the penal terrors of the law. Here, then, is a dilemma: a fact is put beyond dispute by revelation, yet it leads seemingly to an impossible conclusion. Surely this is a case where God may be supposed, without presumption, to make-

“known his ways.” It appears to us that in the work of Christ a principle is involved which removes this whole difficulty: and which, in our want of a universal term, we may call the principle of compensation. The problem to be solved is simply this: how can grace be engrafted upon law, without at the same time relaxing it? If now a work shall be accomplished by which the law is magnified, and upon which this grace shall be predicated, it is obvious, upon the principle of compensation, that all damage is prevented. If one allege that to confirm an angel by grace will relax law, we answer, not so: because this grace is not granted arbitrarily, but upon the ground of a high service which has been done to law for the express purpose of introducing this grace. There are, however, manifestly three essential conditions to such a work, in order to make out the compensation required. First, it must be wrought by a being who is able to magnify the law, and make it honorable; so as to compensate for the partial violence done in setting aside the penal portion of the law. Secondly, it must be wrought by a being who is able to make a more glorious revelation of God than the law can do; so as to compensate for the glory intercepted in the loss of the penalty. Thirdly, it must be the work of a being who is not bound to law on his own account; so that his work may be a ground of merit. (14). If these conditions are met, all will admit Grace is not exercised at the expense of law. If, for instance, upon the supposition there are three persons in the Godhead, one of these—say the second person—should become for a season a subject of this law and perfectly keep it, who does not see, that upon the ground of this service, and at his instance, favor may be bestowed upon any holy being whatsoever? And this because he fulfills all the above named conditions. As to the first, his obedience does more homage to the law than the obedience of all creatures through all eternity, because his nature infinitely transcends theirs,

(14) “Quia cum ipsorum obedientia quam Deo præstant suapte natura imperfecta sit et indigna quæ coram Deo compareat eoque venia opus habeat: propter obedientiam Christi perfectissimam pro perfectissima reputatur in conspectu Domini. Atque ita per Christum et justissimi et in sempiternum beatissimi: ut merito quidquid habent perfectæ justitiæ et veræ felicitatis, illud ipsi Christo acceptum ferre debeant; eumque ut caput non tam nostrum quam etiam ipsum adorare.” Zanchius—de bonis Angelis, Cap. 21.

and he brings all the resources of Deity to impart dignity and worth to his obedience. As to the second, he makes the fullest conceivable revelation of God's glory, because he is the essential God manifested. While the law is but an expression from God's lips, he is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." As to third, Christ's obedience is not only the voluntary homage of a being independent of law, but the sublime condescension of one infinitely above law. His subjection being thus gratuitous, it is perfectly meritorious, and affords just reason for treating any holy being, whom he favors, not according to the rigid requisitions of mere law, but by the milder rules of a dispensation of love. It is seen thus that if one of the persons of the Trinity, say the second, would perform a work of a prescribed character, grace might be engrafted upon the divine government, without any possible injury accruing. What shall we say then, upon turning to the sacred Scriptures, to find just such a work actually accomplished by this very person, the Son of God: a work in which these very conditions, each and singular, are fully met? Is not the presumption irresistible, that by this work is introduced that grace by which the angels are confirmed? Look at the facts, and then weigh the presumption. Here are the angels confirmed forever in holiness: this confirmation is above law, and is due to grace alone: grace cannot supervene upon law unless the law be compensated by some high service done to it, upon which this grace may be predicated: and here is just such a work accomplished by Jesus Christ. What is the conclusion forced upon us, but that a real connection subsists between the atonement of Christ and the confirmation of elect angels? (15) Here is grace palpably engrafted upon law; and here is the identical work which would seem a

(15) "Ex hoe interpretatione facile est colligere ad angelos quoque pertinere beneficium Christi : quanquam non eo plane modo quo ad nos homines pertinet. Scholastici quoque sentiunt, angelos bonos participes esse factos beneficii Christi: tum quia Christus, etiam qua homo factus est illis caput, sub quo uniti sunt et tota cum ipsis ecclesia: tum etiam, quia qua homo est, illos illuminat et cognitione auget: tum denique, quia sua passione et obedientia promeruit illis præmia in coelis permulta. Itaque, haec esto thesis: gratia et beneficium Christi, tametsi non ex æquo ad angelos et ad homines derivatur, cum illi non ut nos redemptione ac remissione peccatorum opus habeant: ad ipsos tamen magna ex parte spectat et ejus facti sunt participes." Zanchius—de bonis Angelis, Cap. 21.



*priori* necessary to that engrafting. We leave the candid reader to weigh the two members of the argument, and decide for himself.

To all this there is one plausible objection which may be urged: to wit, that Christ did not assume angelic nature, and perform this work in their legal stead. This, however, was not necessary in their case: had they been sinful, as men are, then Christ's work must have been for them, as well as for us, strictly vicarious. A sinful being has no righteousness, in which to be accepted with God. He must therefore have a righteous substitute, and the obedience of this substitute can become his only by a strict legal imputation. But these, as holy beings, are already accepted: all they require is simply an act of sovereignty, yet of grace, which shall secure their present state. The only difficulty in the case (of course the difficulty is not real, as to God, but only apparent as to us,) is the introduction of a new principle of government, the engrafting grace upon law. The moment the principle is introduced, God may, in the exercise of sovereignty, apply it to what holy beings he may please: he may be sovereign in applying it to holy beings, as we know he is in applying it to sinful beings. This difficulty, as we have seen, is met through Christ, by his atonement. Grace is manifestly introduced and made a principle of the divine administration. The extension of this principle from one to another class of beings (16) who are without sin, as it does not affect the integrity either of his nature or of his government, creates no embarrassment in our minds; but we freely submit it to "the good pleasure of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Before closing this, long and cumulative argument, we

(16) "God having from eternity, from his infinite goodness, designed to communicate himself to creatures, the way in which he designed to communicate himself to elect beloved creatures, all of them, was to unite himself to a created nature and to become one of the creatures, and to gather together in one all elect creatures, in that creature whom he assumed into a personal union with himself, and to manifest to them and maintain intercourse with them through him. All creatures having this benefit by Christ's incarnation, that God thereby is, as it were, come down to them from his infinite height above them, and is become a fellow creature, and all elect creatures hereby have opportunity for a more free and intimate converse with God, and full enjoyment of him, than otherwise could be." Edward's Miscel. Observ., Works, vol. 8, p. 522.

must crave the further indulgence of expressing some general views respecting the connection between justified men and elect angels, and their mutual dependence upon the atonement of Christ. We conceive that angels and men, all worlds and all beings, were created expressly for the divine glory. God, being infinitely happy and blessed *ad intra* in the communion and fellowship of the three glorious persons, determined to glorify himself also by the exercise of his power *ad extra*. Hence the whole creation. Oneness of motive and design, is the universal tie by which all orders of beings are bound together. Moral beings also are created, many and various classes of them, who become the subjects of government. Through the nature of these, and through his government of them, God's glory is declared. But so long as all these are holy, there is only a partial exhibition of the divine perfections: for however wisdom, power, goodness and holiness may appear, there can be no display of mercy and punitive justice. Hence a race is created whose whole destiny is linked with this high purpose of God, the discovery to the universe of his love and grace. This race is man: one class out of many: but ordained to be the medium through which God will be known to all as the God of grace no less than the God of holiness. One feature in the condition of man, indeed, would show him to be created for this end: which is, that the individuals of the race are not, as in the case of angels, created at once and placed singly upon trial. They spring from one original by derivation: and he who is their natural father is also their moral Head, constituted their representative in that great covenant which was the platform of their probation. What was this arrangement but a staging for the after work of Christ? the headship of Adam being simply the usher to the headship of Christ, and the covenant of works the scaffolding for the covenant of grace. In due season, man, in the full exercise of his powers, sinned, and became apostate: and now the way is clear for the scheme of grace. In the fullness of time the second person of the Godhead descends to earth, assumes human nature, becomes a substitute for his seed, dies for them, rises again, and their redemption is accomplished. The great problem is solved: grace is wedded to law, and as the queen majesty, sways a universal empire. The cre-

ation of this globe is but the erection of a platform upon which shall be enacted the tragedy of redemption: and the fall of man by sin is only the preface to the universal introduction of grace. For the grace thus introduced cannot be confined to the province where it is wrought out; but, as all worlds were created for God's glory, and grace is the highest manifestation of that glory, the grace purchased by Christ is at once engrafted upon the whole government of God. Its application to holy beings is circumstantially different, but just as real and necessary to their confirmation as it can be to the redemption and justification of sinful beings. (17).

We have thus led the reader through what he may consider a tangled forest of abstractions, in the search after golden fruit. But we have dwelt thus long upon the argument from the confirmation of the elect angels, because it brings up to view the great and radical difference between law and grace, which we cannot too clearly apprehend: and because the solution of the problem, "Mercy and truth are met together," affords to the devout materials of the highest praise to "the Lamb who was slain." There are two other lines of argument much less difficult to pursue, and which may therefore be developed in smaller compass. They cannot be omitted, because, being positive in their nature, they do certainly conclude the truth that Christ is the author of grace to angels as well as to men.

We allege, then, in the second place, that the mediatorial dominion of Christ over the angels, is proof of a gracious relation between the two. This general subject has been referred to before, but for a different purpose. Then their

(17) "But that out of his eternal and infinite goodness and love, purposing to become a Creator and to communicate to his creatures, he ordained in his eternal counsel that one person of the Godhead should be united to one nature, and to one particular of his creatures: that so, in the person of the Mediator, the true ladder might be fixed, whereby God might descend to his creatures, and his creatures might ascend to God: so that God, by the reconcilement of the Mediator, turning his countenance towards his creatures, though not in equal light and degree, made way unto the dispensation of his most holy and secret will: whereby some of his creatures might stand, and keep their state, others might possibly fall, and be restored: and others might fall, and not be restored to their estate, but yet remain in being, though under wrath and corruption: all with respect to the Mediator: which is the great mystery and perfect centre of *all* God's ways with his creatures, and unto which all his other works and wonders but serve and refer." Lord Bacon's Confession of Faith—Works (Montague,) vol. 2, p. 407.

recapitulation in Christ was adduced simply to establish the fact of their confirmation: now it is adduced to prove that this confirmation proceeds upon a gracious relation sustained to the work of Christ. Let us attend, in the first instance, to the evidence of Christ's mediatorial dominion over them. In Ephesians it is written: "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather into one all things in Christ, both *which are in heaven* and which are on earth." (18). Again in the same Epistle: "when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all *principality* and *power* and *might* and *dominion*, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him which filleth all in all." (19). In this passage, the testimony is exceedingly full: the angels are clearly designated by the terms *principality*, *power*, *might* and *dominion*; all these are put under Christ's feet, that he may be head over all to the church; and this church, which is called his body, must include elect angels as well as elect men, since it is the fullness of him which filleth all in all. Further on, in the same Epistle, we read: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom *the whole family in heaven and earth* is named," (20) which surely sets forth the actual incorporation into one body of redeemed sinners and elect angels, and their unity as consisting in a common relation to Jesus Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle writes, "thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." (21). Again, the apostle Peter writes: "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels, principalities and powers being made subject unto him." (22). In the Epistle to the Philippians it is written, "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth." (23). This passage is valuable, because it is

(18) Ephesians 1: 10.

(19) Eph. 1; 20-23.

(20) Eph. 3: 14, 15.

(21) Hebrews 2: 8.

(22) 1 Peter, 3: 22.

(23) Phil. 2: 9, 10.

spoken expressly of that “form of a servant” which the Son of God “took upon him,” and makes the homage of angels the reward of Christ’s death when he was “found in fashion as a man.” Lastly, in Colossians, it is recorded: “having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” (2.4). We beg the educated reader to consult this passage in the original, and to determine the exact force of the word *Καταλλάξαι* translated in our version ‘to reconcile,’ viewing it in connection with the angels. To us it appears that the word *reconcile* is altogether appropriate when “the things in earth” are spoken of: these may be reconciled with literal exactness, because they were before at enmity with God. But this meaning is a shade too precise (25) when spoken of “the things in heaven:” these not being at enmity, cannot be said to be reconciled, though their relations to God may be modified, by Christ’s work—so that in reference to this member of the sentence, we are thrown back upon the more general and radical meaning of the word *Καταλλάξαι* to change the relations of any thing. At any rate, this is clearly taught, that elect angels hold a relation to the Mediator closely analogous to that of redeemed sinners, and the relations of both are grounded upon the same atoning work of Christ. (26).

These passages clearly establish two facts: First, that Christ rules and governs the angels; and, secondly, that this dominion is not his essential dominion, which belongs

(24) Colossians 1: 20.

(25) “We say this reconciliation, taken *strictly*, refers to men alone. For since to *reconcile is* to renew a friendship broken off by offence, we alone, from among his enemies, are restored unto the love and favor of God, which we had lost by sinning. But if we may understand it *analogically*, it may be extended to the blessed angels themselves, and to all creatures.” Bishop Davenant upon Col. 1: 20.

(26) “ Sed tamen duabus de causis angelos oportet quoque cum Deo pacificari : nam quum creatures sunt, extra periculum lapsus non erant, nisi Christi gratia fuissent confirmati. \* \* \* \* \* Deinde, in hac ipsa obedientia quam prestant Deo, non est tam exquisita perfectio, ut Deo omni ex parte et citra veniam satisficiat. , Constituendum igitur, non esse tantum in angelis justitiae, quod ad plenam cum Deo conjunctionem sufficiat, itaque pacificatore opus habent, per cujus gratiam penitus Deo adhæreant. Unde recte Paulus, qui in solis hominibus negat residere Christi gratiam, sed angelis etiam communem facit.” Calvin’s Comment upon Col. 1: 20.

to him of right as one of the Persons of the Trinity, but his mediatorial dominion, which he enjoys as God-man. Now, the question arises, how obtains the Mediator this ascendancy over the angels? We easily comprehend how Christ is Head and King of the Saints, because he redeemed them. His mediatorial power over these, is founded strictly upon a mediatorial relation to them. But how is he the Head and King of the Angels, who, not being sinners, were not the objects of redemption? The usual reply furnished to this question, does not satisfy us. It is said, this rule over the angelic world is given to the Mediator in the way of sovereignty, and as the reward of his voluntary humiliation and obedience; that is, if we understand it aright, the angels are put in subjection to the Mediator, not because of any relation to him, but solely in the exercise of sovereignty, and as a mere gratuity to him. We complain of this reply, not because it states what is false, but because it does not state the whole truth. We agree that this mediatorial dominion is given to Christ, as the reward of his obedience, and that the Father, as a sovereign, has the power to bestow it. But all this is equally true of Christ's rule over redeemed sinners, and yet in their case, manifestly, this rule is founded upon a real relation which he sustains. So, while we admit that Christ's dominion over the angels, is freely given as the reward of his work, we still think that it is founded upon a true relation which, as Mediator, he sustains to them.

Let us analyze the reply given above. If Christ's dominion over the angels is only by grant from the Father, and has no other foundation than the sovereign determinations of his will, then this dominion of Christ is not a real dominion, but only a vicegerency: For the obedience rendered to the Mediator will not have respect to his authority, but to the will of the Father, which lies back of that authority. Suppose, in a given case, the Mediator's authority should be challenged: an angel rises up, and inquires, why should I obey your behest? the final answer must be, I am installed into this jurisdiction over you, and God commands your obedience to me. Very well, the angel obeys; but upon what does that obedience rest? Manifestly, not upon the authority of Christ as Mediator, but of God, who appointed him to rule. The Mediator,

then, is not a King, but only the vicegerent of a king: he is not power, but only the exponent of power, and is revered simply as the representative of the sovereign. We then dismiss this opinion, which regards Christ's Mediatorial dominion over the angels, as arbitrary, and seek some other which will harmonize with the Scriptural representations of the same. We think this broad principle altogether sound in every possible application of it: that wherever there is real authority possessed and a true dominion exercised, these must be founded upon a true relation subsisting between the subject and ruler. If Christ, as Mediator, has a mediatorial jurisdiction over the angels, it is because his mediatorial work has established a true relation between him and them.

This conclusion will be rendered stronger, by remembering, that in this case, the inferior nature, in part at least, is exalted to supremacy over the superior: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." (27.) If by arbitrary appointment, simply, the human nature is exalted to this lordship over angelic nature, then the mediatorial authority of Christ, resting, as we have seen, upon the mere will of God, there will be no real distinction between the mediatorial and the essential kingdoms of Christ. His authority in the one will resolve itself in every instance into his authority in the other. His kingdom, as Mediator, will be simply the kingdom he has as God: thus, those things are commingled, between which the Scriptures discriminate.

There is, then, a substantial relation between Christ and the angels, in virtue of which, He is crowned their Head. What is this relation? We answer it is the same relation, not specific, but generic, which he sustains to redeemed men. Having, by his work of obedience and suffering, introduced the principle of grace, God, in his sovereignty, applies it to the confirmation of angels who are holy. The elect of these, as well as the elect of men, are given to Christ, because he is the author of the grace by which they both stand. He is made the Head of both: they enjoy this grace, because of their relation to him; and upon this is erected the whole structure of his mediatorial empire.

(27) Hebrews 2 : 8.

There is but one difficulty, that we are aware of, likely to occur to an inquisitive mind; and this respects the jurisdiction of Christ over the apostate angels. One of the acts of his mediatorial reign will be, to pronounce judgment upon these. But, how is this, if he has never sustained any peculiar relation to them in his mediatorial work? Is not this a case where he exercises mediatorial authority, not upon the ground of a true relation, but by the bare grant of the Father, who “judgeth no man, (28) but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” The same difficulty, however, exists in the case of reprobate men. (29.) Christ sustained no peculiar relations to these; they never were given to him; he never redeemed them; thousands, yea millions of them, perish in sin, who never heard of his grace. Yet, as Mediator, he will judge and condemn these also. How so? We answer, simply by an extension of his mediatorial authority proper, for which extension a valid reason can be rendered. His mediatorial authority, properly relates to the elect of angels and men, who are the subjects of the same. He is their Head, and they stand by his grace. The extension of his mediatorial authority to apostate men and angels, is due to the worth and splendor of his work; nor to this alone, but to this, in conjunction with the service done by him to the law. Having painfully magnified the law, and shed lustre upon the government of God, he fairly purchased the right to administer the law and to decree the penalty which he had himself so fully borne and honored in the bearing. Moreover, after grace became thus engrafted upon law, the majesty of God, which before, was in the keeping of the law, is revealed for the greater manifestation of God’s glory, always in conjunction with grace. But, in the case of the reprobate, this

(28) In the original, there is no word answering to man in our version, οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ, Christ, then, as judge, must preside over the destinies of angels and of men—all judgment is committed to Him. [Text cited is John 5:22]

(29) “Si quis praetextu universalis notae quaestionem moveat de diabolico, an Christus eorum quoque sit pacificator; respondeo ne impiorum quidem. Tametsi fateo esse discrimen; quia his offertur beneficium redemptionis, illis non item: sed hoc nihil ad Pauli verba, quae nihil aliud continent quam solum esse Christum per quem adhaereant Deo omnes creaturae quae quicquam habent cum ipso conjunctionis.”—Calvin on Col. 1: 20.



can be done only by allowing grace, in the person of its Author, to discharge the office of majesty, and enforce the decree of inflexible justice. (30.)

Our final argument for basing the confirmation of elect angels upon the grace wrought out by Christ, is drawn from the worship which they render to him as Mediator. For the sake of brevity, we will introduce but two passages of Scripture, in order to show that this worship is of the highest kind, not civil, but religious; and that it is rendered to him, not as God simply but as God-man. In Hebrews, we have this record; “when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, let the angels of God worship him.” (31.) Evidently, this worship is commanded to him, not merely as the Son, but as the Son Incarnate. In the book of Revelation, the rapt prophet describes his vision of the worship in Heaven thus: “and I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands: saying, with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing: and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing and honor and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever.” (32.) It may be said, as Christ is God, this worship is given to the divine nature exclusively. But, if this worship discriminates between the divine nature and the person of Christ, it is not worship rendered to the Mediator, for this respects his person, as uniting the two natures. It will then be asked, is the human nature of Christ an object of worship? We answer, certainly not, as separate from his person, for this would be rank idolatry. But the hypostatical union forbids the separation of either nature they are both necessarily united in his Mediatorial person;

(30) President Edwards regards the rebellion of the fallen angels as occasioned by the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God, foretold to them. If this conjecture could be reduced to certainty, it would be easy to see how Christ should execute judgment upon apostate angels.

(31) Hebrews 1: 6.

(32) Revelation 5: 11, 13.

and it is the peculiar property of this union, that what is true of either nature, may be affirmed of the person. We have no doubt that the divine nature is the ground of worship, but not as distinct from his person, but as united with the human in that person. Still, the difficulty is not met; if the worship rendered by angels and redeemed men to this person, is rendered because that person includes a divine nature, the question recurs—why worship this divine nature in that person, as distinct from the divine nature alone? for they worship day and night *God and the Lamb*. What is the special foundation of this special worship of the Mediator? Let it be observed that one of the main constituents of worship, is a sense of obligation. Worship, in its proper signification, is the religious homage to one who is supreme of a dependent creature; who, feeling his obligation, at the same time delights in the being whom he serves and trusts. Angels and men worship God, Jehovah, because he is supreme, and they are his creatures; this relation of creatureship creates the obligation of worship. Now, if angels and men all worship the Mediator, it is because he is supreme, and they are dependent upon him, as Mediator. Redeemed sinners are dependent upon him for grace and holiness; hence, the mediatorial relation is the ground of their mediatorial worship. If the angels do not hold some analogous relation, being dependent equally for grace and the security of their holiness, then, it will become those who deny it to explain the difficulty stated above as to angelic worship of the Mediator. Indeed, this is an “Experimentum Crucis”: a more difficult test could hardly be imagined. If the proposition defended and illustrated throughout this article, abides this test, there is at least philosophical ground for receiving it as true.

We have, at length, accomplished our task, so far as the statement and defence of doctrine are concerned; but, before concluding, we solicit the reader to view the whole in its practical relations. This subject is not wholly speculative, for it suggests noble thoughts of God and his government. How vast the scale upon which he projects his plans! With what variety of wisdom has he framed the universe, and interweaved principle with principle, gold and silver threads, into the web of his government! How

sublime, and yet how lovely, is the work of Christ. Like the rainbow, spanning the hemisphere, it reveals the perfections of God, as though prismatic, which, combined, make up the great glory of the great God. Who can fail to adore that Being, who, by his own pains and grief constructs, upon the basis of an immutable law, a platform of grace—the orchestra upon which “an innumerable company of angels,” joined in concert with “the general assembly and church of the first-born,” cause the arches of heaven to reverberate with their glad hosannas.

There is one matter, in connexion with which the subject of this article may be maturely pondered. We allude to the origin of moral evil. Few reflecting minds have not been humbled before this thorniest of all theological points. God certainly had power to prevent the introduction of sin; it is an awful blur upon the glory of creation; it occasions the destruction of many, many thousands; how, then, came it to pass? Many able divines have tried their strength at breaking the shell of this mystery. One thing, we learn from the preceding pages, that the introduction of sin is but a single link, though important, in a chain which girdles the universe and lengthens out through an illimitable eternity. In viewing the divine economy in its detached parts, we are sometimes seriously posed by local difficulties in the system; but in so far as we take in the scope of his government, these difficulties are dwarfed, till they fall out of view. At least, we learn, that all our embarrassment proceeds from ignorance; and that if more enlarged views even now relieve our minds partially of pressure, when we reach a state of perfect knowledge, we shall discover the entire symmetry of the divine administration.

Let the Christian reader especially reflect, that if the human race is chosen, as a burnished reflector, to throw the light of divine grace upon the universe, it is the privilege of each believer to be a point upon its polished surface. Let not a spot dim his lustre; for no more solemn, yet animating reflection, can suggest itself to him than this, that in time and through eternity, he is an exponent of God’s matchless grace to a ravished universe.

NOTE.—The argument, presented in the foregoing pages to the consideration of the reader, is pressed with one serious

difficulty, which occurred indeed more than once to the writer's mind, as he was composing, but has since been forcibly represented to him. It is that in the discussion, the existence of sin seems, to be assumed as necessary to the existence of grace. (33.) Suppose, for instance, it may be asked, that Adam had not betrayed his trust, but had remained steadfast in holiness, would it have been impossible for God to have confirmed him and his posterity forever? In that event, must they have remained forever on trial, enjoying a conditional happiness; and in that event, could not the angels have been confirmed by the good pleasure of God alone, without any reference to a compensation rendered to the law? The reader will perceive that these questions are not inconsistent with the belief, that in fact the angels are confirmed through and by the work of Christ, of which work the fall of man was in fact the antecedent: for angelic confirmation may be supposed to rest upon Christ's atonement, while yet the absolute necessity of such an atonement may not be so admitted as that the confirmation in question could not take place without it.

In reference to this difficulty, we beg leave to suggest a few reflections. In the first place, it is not the doctrine of this article, that the existence of grace in the Divine mind is dependent upon any mode chosen for its development. Indeed, the development involves its prior existence. If there be a stream, there must be an originating fountain; and grace existing in the universe must have its well-head in the bosom and nature of God. The whole atonement of Christ is the fruit, not the original, of God's infinite grace: "then he is gracious unto him and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom;" Job. 33: 24, in which passage "deliverance from the pit," as the end, and the ransom, which is the means, are both traced to grace preëxisting, as the source. God is necessarily the good and gracious being that he is: the only point of inquiry is, what may be necessary to the proper display or manifestation of that grace.

(33) If the term grace be used in its close technical sense, as equivalent to favor bestowed upon the guilty and ill-deserving, this would be strictly true. But, as the term is used by the writer in the broad and liberal sense, in which it is employed by the old writers, as signifying favor to the undeserving, simply, it would not be true.

It may appear to some that God might have engrafted grace upon his government by a simple and sovereign determination of his will, independent of any previous exercise of his power *ad extra*, by which grace might be set upon law, a new shoot upon an old stock. Now, we undertake not to determine what God could do or could not do, under a system materially different from that he has been pleased to adopt. And we are far from saying, that even under this system, God was shut up to this one plan of introducing grace into the universe; for had there been no sin, and still the law required a compensation, in order to its sharing its supremacy with grace, why may not God have power and wisdom to frame a service of which sin should not be the necessary antecedent? All our reasoning is founded upon the actual state of things as God has ordained them. Taking the system as it stands, we discern these facts: that God placed his creatures upon a platform of law, and yet not of law alone, but law as essentially modified by grace. We find this grace introduced into his government through Christ's work, therefore not by a simple exercise of will, but by an exertion of power. In a word, we find that in this actual system, one link in the introduction of grace, is the existence of sin. As to matter of fact, then, we conclude this sin necessary to grace, simply as it is the actual antecedent. We affirm not such an absolute necessity as that grace could in no wise be displayed, but through sin; but, simply, that in the system which God has adopted, grace is predicated upon a service done to law; this service is rendered by Christ, the necessary antecedent of whose work, because the actual antecedent, is the apostasy of man. We are so far, then, from making the existence of sin, in an absolute sense, necessary to the existence of grace, that we are by three degrees removed from it. First, by maintaining that grace to be displayed, must exist originally and infinitely in the divine nature itself. Secondly, by conceding, that for aught we can tell, God might have framed any number of systems, in all of which, though in different modes of discovery, he might still have been recognized as the God of law and as the God of grace: though, it must yet be maintained, that no other system but this actual one is at all conceivable by us. Thirdly, by admitting that in this present system, modified only by

the exclusion of sin, for aught we can know, God might, in many ways, wholly inconceivable by us, have magnified his law and introduced grace. All that we have contended for is this, that taking the system which he has framed, and reasoning from its revealed principles, there does seem to be necessary some work of God in honor of the law, by which it shall be blended with grace in the government of moral beings. The work of Christ in man's redemption, is that by which it is actually accomplished; but whether upon the supposition that man had never fallen, and consequently Christ had never died, the system of law remaining otherwise as it is, some other work of God, magnifying the law, would not have been still necessary to the manifestation of grace, we think altogether probable.