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"A History of the Anglican Church—Part XXXIX: An Essay on the Role of Christian Lawyers and Judges within the Secular State"©

By

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Section Two:

The ideas expressed in this Apostolate Paper are wholly those of the author, and subject to modification as a result of on-going research into this subject matter. This paper is currently being revised and edited, but this version is submitted for the purpose of sharing Christian scholarship with clergy, the legal profession, and the general public.

INTRODUCTION[1]

The Rev. Richard Baxter (1615- 1691) was a rare, self-taught genius who made his mark upon English ecclesiastical history by becoming the "Chief of the Puritan Schoolmen" and "the most prominent English churchman of the 1600s,"[2] even without having degree from Oxford or Cambridge. He was certainly the foremost Christian theologian of his time. Indeed, Rev. Baxter wrote or published 168 separate works, including:

- *The Reformed Pastor* (1656)
- *Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live* (1657)[3]
- *Catholic Theology* (1675)
- *Christian Directory* (1678)(four volumes)
- *Methodus Theologiae Christianae* (1681)

In this paper, we return now from our study of colonial New England, the life and work of the Rev. Roger Williams (1603- 1683), and the origins of the English Baptists, to seventeenth-century English Puritanism, the life and work of Rev. Richard Baxter (1615- 1691), and the origins of Methodism.

Rev. Baxter's work was both pivotal and monumental within the Church of England and for English Protestantism. What did the Protestant Reformation mean

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[1] This paper is dedicated to the work and legacy of **Rev. Lee Andrew Ford (1913 – 2014)** of Nebo, Dowling Park, and Live Oak (Suwannee County), Florida. Rev. Ford was my great uncle (i.e., my grandfather's younger brother). Like many black pastors during the early 1900s, Rev. Ford served in both Baptist and Methodist Churches alike. He was affiliated as a senior pastor at Greater New Bethel A.M.E. Church in Live Oak, Florida when he died in 2014. When I first met him during the early 1970s, Rev. Ford was already in his early 60s and an experienced senior pastor. Like Rev. Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691), Rev. Ford was a self-taught, astute, scholarly, and disciplined minister of the Gospel, who was known for his Christian counseling and leadership in the local community where he served. I knew this fact from first-hand experience, having lived with Rev. Ford during short visits and observed him counsel my cousins, my mother, and several others in the local community, including myself. After I graduated from law school, Rev. Ford's influence upon me was most profound, because only then I was mature enough to comprehend the significance and importance of having a high-quality ministry service within the local community, and especially the local African American community. In 2007, I had the privilege of serving as Rev. Ford's attorney in a property-law case involving an old, defunct A.M.E. Church, a cemetery, and the local county government. It was then when I spent long hours with him, not only talking to him about God, ministry, Christian theology, and the history of the Ford Family, but also about life in general, including children and marriage. Rev. Ford had become the first African American to serve on the School Board of Suwannee County during those turbulent years of racial integration. He was therefore amongst the several generations of black pastors who served many important roles in the local community, including that of education administrator, political advisor, ambassador, and ministry leader. I believe that Rev. Ford was the definition of the "model reformed pastor" which Rev. Richard Baxter had described in his influential work, *The Reformed Pastor* (1656).

[2] https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/richard-baxter.html

[3] See, e.g., https://faithbiblechurchnh.org/baxter_unconverted1.htm#short_account .

for England? Perhaps Rev. Baxter's life and work answers this question more than any others. For one thing, Rev. Baxter believed that the Church of England was corrupted by High-Church Anglicanism and lack of holiness, thus leading to the deterioration in the morals of Englishmen. In order to remedy this in part, Rev. Baxter promoted the Presbyterian ecclesiastical form of church government, although he was not strictly opposed to "episcopal" church government. Although a leading Puritan theologian, Rev. Baxter was not a Calvinist, because Rev. Baxter, unlike Calvin, believed in "universal atonement" and in some form of what might be called "limited free will." Rev. Baxter's dedication to spiritual holiness was also unrivaled and, perhaps, would not be matched until the arrival of John and Charles Wesley a century later.

In fact, the line between the Puritan Richard Baxter and the Methodist John Wesley is direct and unbroken. Both men were Anglican priests, and both men had the same concerns and dedication to spiritual holiness and righteous living. They both confronted the Church of England's iron-clad grip upon England's ecclesiastical and spiritual life. Rev. Baxter was a non-conformist who refused a bishopric within the Church of England, apparently due to his disagreement over certain ecclesiastical doctrines. The result was that Rev. Baxter was barred from preaching. A hundred years later, Rev. John Wesley met the same fate: he was barred from preaching in the Church of England, simply because he wanted to make men and women more holy by having the benefit of hearing the Gospel preached to them. But, even more interesting, is the fact that the parallel theologies between the Puritan Rev. Baxter and the Methodist Rev. J. Wesley lead us to the inevitable conclusion that *Methodist theology originated not with John Wesley, but rather a hundred years earlier with the Rev. Richard Baxter*.[4] See Table 1, "Baxter and Wesley Compared."

Table 1. Richard Baxter and John Wesley Compared

Rev. Richard Baxter (1615- 1691)	**Rev. John Wesley (1703- 1791)**
Anglican Priest (Church of England)	Anglican Priest (Church of England)

[4] At least two church historians have concluded that **"Methodism was originally a part of the Puritan movement within the Anglican Church."** See, e.g., C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 78.

Father of Puritan Theology	Founder of Methodist Theology
Emphasis: Holiness	Emphasis: Holiness
Armenian Soteriology	Armenian Soteriology

If, then, we consider the Methodist Movement of the mid-1700s to be the culmination of English clergymen to purify the Church of England from within, then we might also conclude that Methodism was an extension of, or grew out of, the Puritan movement of the 1600s.[5] Indeed, Rev. John Wesley's grandfather—John Wesley or John Westley—had been a Puritan clergymen who had opposed Charles II. It is thus not a far-fetched proposition to consider the fact that when John and Charles Wesley started the holy club at Oxford, they had at heart their grandfather's Puritan ideals. And the direct link between Rev. J. Wesley's theology to Rev. Richard Baxter has been established by Joseph Cunningham.[6] See Exhibit A, " 'Justification by Faith,'" below.

As Mr. Cunningham's article on Baxter and Wesley states[7], both men were opposed to certain aspects of Calvinist soteriology and thus may have been considered "non-Calvinist but Reformed."[8] See Table 2, "Calvin, Baxter and Wesley: Compared."

[5] Ibid.

[6] Joseph W. Cunningham, *"'Justification by Faith,' Richard Baxter's Influence upon John Wesley,"* The Asbury Journal, 64/1:55-66 , 57 (2009).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Rev. Baxter was an English Puritan and Presbyterian. But he was not a Calvinist. Baxter believed in "universal atonement," having expressly rejected the Calvinist "limited atonement" viewpoint. Rev. Baxter insisted that the Calvinists of his day had run the danger of ignoring the condition that came with God's new covenant. Justification, Baxter insisted, required at least some degree of faith as the human response to the love of God.

Table 2. John Calvin, Richard Baxter, and John Wesley: Compared

The Reformed Church Movement (1520-1800)	**John Calvin (1509-1564)**	**Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691)**	**John Wesley (1703 – 1791)**
Nationality	France/ Switzerland	England	England
Reformed Church	Presbyterian	Reformed Anglican/ Puritan/ Presbyterian	Reformed Anglican/ Methodist
Nature of Christ's Crucifixion and Atonement	Limited Atonement (Available only to a chosen few)	Universal Atonement (Available to all of humanity)	Universal Atonement (Available to all of humanity)
Roman Catholic System of Penance: **Theology of Purgatory** **Human works of piety and holiness as "means of Justification"**	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
Justification through <u>Grace alone</u> achieved by Christ's Death on the Cross	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Individuals have ability and power to choose or to reject Christ's Atonement and	Rejected	Accepted	Accepted

Grace **Human beings have "Limited Free Will" or "Voluntary Will"**			
Preaching is necessary to draw men and women to Christ	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Christ alone controls the work of Sanctification (i.e., the ability to do good works and to live holy, righteous living)	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
Christians who are "Justified by Grace Alone" and "Sanctified by Grace Alone" may not go astray and fall away. **They are "Elect" Christians who are "irresistibly" engrafted into the Kingdom of Christ.** **Therefore, they may not fall away from Grace.**	Accepted	Rejected	Rejected

Priesthood of All Believers	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted
The ecclesiastical authority of the Roman Catholic Church and the College of Bishops as the sole magisterial authoritative interpreter of the Bible	Rejected	Rejected	Rejected
Free Will of Human Beings **Pelagianism**	Rejected	Partially Rejected in favor of "limited free will."	Partially rejected in favor of "limited free will."

Both Rev. Baxter and Rev. Wesley opposed Calvinist soteriology because it made God to appear as despotic, manipulative, and fatalistic, having thus created some human souls to burn in hell for all eternity.

> According to [Calvinist] teaching, God's righteousness is imputed and imparted, literally handed over to the believer, dismissing them of any responsibility to lead lives of holiness. It excuses them, in the name of righteousness, from charitable practice. In essence, one may well be fortified by God's salvific grace and continue to lead a life of cruelty. This theology is problematic, as it does not reconcile God's justifying grace with an authentic conversation from sin. Wesley and Baxter detested this position as well, as it hindered Christian practice and thwarted any genuine move toward holiness….[9]

[9] Joseph W. Cunningham, *"'Justification by Faith,' Richard Baxter's Influence upon John Wesley,"* The Asbury Journal, 64/1:55-66 , 57 (2009).

> Being strictly opposed to High Calvinist soteriology—which suggested that Christ's atonement was meant for a select few, and excluded the reprobate—Wesley was fearful of the negative, impractical consequences that would accompany it: 'All preaching [would be] in vain. The elected would not need it; the reprobated were infallibly damned in any case and no preaching would ever alter the fact.' The effect of such teachings could inadvertently lead to an antinomian theology, which considered any virtuous, loving act of righteousness superfluous and even inconsequential for the Christian life. One needed only happen to 'be' a member of the unconditionally elect to reap the benefits of God's grace. That is to say, one could potentially remain in the graces of god while mindfully continuing a life of turpitude. The Calvinist/ Armeninan debate shaped Wesley's theology of salvation, and provided a background for his preaching on the topic of Justification by Faith.[10]

It is because of this shared cultural, theological, and historical nexus that we might safely *conclude that Methodism originated within the Church of England as a non-Calvinist but Reformed, Puritan movement*.[11] Rev. Richard Baxter's theology, then, is the precursor of Wesleyan and Methodist Church theology.[12]

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Finally, Rev. Baxter's theology includes insights into how British theologians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries viewed the relationship between church and state. Rev. Baxter's Puritanism and Rev. Wesley's Methodism did not stray far from Rev. Richard Hooker's Anglican ecclesiastical polity, and political theory that the church and the state in England were really two sides of the same coin. The doctrine of "Separation of Church and State" did not fit comfortably within either Baxter's or Wesley's theological understanding of divine providence and relationship between Church and State. Indeed, it was

[10] Ibid., p. 58.

[11] At least two church historians have concluded that **"Methodism was originally a part of the Puritan movement within the Anglican Church."** See, e.g., C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 78.

[12] Joseph W. Cunningham, *"'Justification by Faith,' Richard Baxter's Influence upon John Wesley,"* The Asbury Journal, 64/1:55-66 (2009).

Calvinism that made the doctrine of "Separation of Church and State" possible, because the Calvinist doctrine of predestination assumed naturally that many, if not most, persons outside of the church were "doomed to hell" through divine providence. The Church of England, however, never officially adopted Calvinism; and most of England's non-conformists adopted the theological views of Rev. Baxter, who viewed the secular government and legal systems as operating within an Anglican system of divine and natural law.

Up to the seventeenth century, the English Common Law had evolved naturally, under the tutelage of the Church of England, into the supreme law of the realm. The English Common Law had been known as the law of reason and the law of nature. Chief Justice Edward Coke had ruled that the English Common Law, which was the perfection of artificial reason, was even superior to the constitutional doctrine of "divine rights" of the king. And Rev. Baxter, who was England's chief Puritan divine, held the same opinions regarding the nature of law, and its relationship to divine law and the Church. See, e.g, Table 3, "Thomas Woods, Institutes of the Laws of England (1720)".

Table 3. Thomas Woods, *Institutes of the Laws of England* (1720)

"As Law in General is an Art directing to the Knowledge of Justice, and to the well ordering of civil Society, so the Law of England, in particular, is an Art to know what is Justice in England, and to preserve Order in that Kingdom: And this Law is raised upon fix principal Foundations.

1. Upon the *Law of Nature*, though we seldom make Use of the Terms, *The Law of Nature*. *But we say, that such a* ***Thing is reasonable****, or* ***unreasonable****, or against the….*

2. Upon the revealed Law of God, Hence it is that our Law punishes Blasphemies, Perjuries, & etc. and receives the Canons of the Church [of England] duly made, and supported a spiritual Jurisdiction and Authority in the Church [of England].

3. The third Ground are several general *Customs*, these Customs are properly called the *Common Law*. Wherefore when we say, it is so by Common Law, it is as much s to say, by common Right, or of common Justice.

Indeed it is many Times very difficult to know what Cases are grounded on the *Law of Reason*, and what upon the *Custom* of the Kingdom, yet we must endeavor to understand this, to know the perfect Reason of the Law.

Rules concerning *Law*

The *Common Law* is the absolute Perfection of *Reason*. For nothing that is contrary to Reason is consonant to Law

Common Law is common Right.

The Law is the Subject's best Birth-right.

The Law respects the Order of Nature…."

Source: Thomas Wood, LL.D., *An Institute of the laws of England: or, the Laws of England in their Natural Order* (London, England: Strahan and Woodall, 1720), pp. 4-5.

Significantly, as the law of reason, the English Common Law was the manifestation of the divine *Logos*, or the *Word* of God. For "[i]n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[13] Hence, "Reason," "Nature,"[14] and "Logos" became one "fundamental moral law" during first several decades of the seventeenth century. Now, with the doctrines of Martin Luther and John Calvin sweeping across the English Channel, men and women began to re-think the fundamental moral order of things. Why were the Pope and King more divine than the common man? "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"[15]

In England, the result of all this intellectual disturbance was the English Civil War (1642- 1651). And within that war was economic or class struggle, in addition to the struggle between King Charles I and Parliament. Although Rev. Baxter sided with Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan Parliamentarians, he did so with a broken heart and as a conciliator to both sides of the conflict. In fact, after the war, Rev. Baxter tried to bargain with the High-Church Anglicans and he even worked to restore King Charles II to the throne. But once the High-Church Anglicans were restored, they rejected Rev. Baxter's policy on religious freedom. Rev. Baxter was offered an Anglican bishopric, but his religious conscience

[13] John 1:1.

[14] St Augustine defines "nature" as "essential." He writes: "Consequently, to that nature which supremely is, and which created all else that exists, no nature is contrary save that which does not exist. For nonentity is the contrary of that which is. And thus there is no being contrary to God, that Supreme Being, and Author of all beings whatsoever…. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God." *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 382. Similarly, in another section of *The City of God*, St. Augustine describes "God Himself," as "the fountain of all justice." Ibid, p. 27.

[15] James 2:5.

against the Church of England's religious intolerance and brutality force him to decline it. Thereafter, Rev. Baxter became persona non-grata and was barred from his pastoral ministry. When Rev. Baxter tried to preach and teach underground, he was placed under surveillance, arrested, and jailed. His productive, voluminous Christian writings, however, might not have materialized had his fate been any different. For while Rev. Baxter was either imprisoned or banned from preaching, he wrote and published his most influential books. This paper is a brief outline of Rev. Baxter's essential thoughts on practical Christian theology.

SUMMARY

Rev. Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691) is considered to the Chief Protestant Schoolman. A Presbyterian and Puritan, Rev. Baxter was nevertheless not a Calvinist and thus could be considered an orthodox Calvinist-Presbyterian. Rather, Rev. Baxter's Puritan theology was more closely akin to Armenian soteriology and laid the foundation for the Methodist Movement. Today, Rev. Baxter's influence is still the heritage of the Wesleyan and Methodist Churches. Within that heritage, too, is the conception of the Church and the State as being vice-regents of God, as functioning within an Anglican system as two sides of the same coin. This is significant because in England, even non-conformists such as Rev. Baxter did not consider the Protestant Reformation's objectives as simply liberating men and women so that they could become more secular, but rather England's non-conformists believed that the Reformation had been wrought to make men and women more holy, more righteous, and more free. Rev. Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* (1646) exemplified his attitude toward the Protestant Reformation, which he conceptualized as a greater commitment to the Christian faith and holiness on the one hand, and to freedom of religion and conscience, on the other.

Part XXXIX. Anglican Church: "Life and Times of the Rev. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), the Chief of English Protestant Schoolmen"

Section One:

A. Biography: Early Years (1615-1691)

Rev. Richard Baxter was born on November 12, 1615 at Rowton, Shropshire to very humble beginnings. His early education had been described as "poor." He studied Latin at the free school of Wroxeter, which was headed by Rev. John Owen, from 1629 to 1632. Rev. Owen recommended that Baxter continue his studies at Ludlow Castle, where he studied under Richard Wickstead, chaplain to the Council of Wales and the Marches.

Baxter next went to Court, under the patronage of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of Revels. Baxter returned home to study divinity and theology under Rev. Francis Garbet, a local clergyman. Under the guidance of Rev. Garbet, Baxter read a vast amount of writings, including those of Richard Sibbes; William Perkins; Ezekiel Culverwell; Edmund Bunny (Calvinist); Richard Hooker; George Downham; John Sprint (Puritan); and John Burges (Puritan).

In 1634, Rev. Baxter met Joseph Symonds, an assistant to Thomas Gataker and Walter Cradock, two nonconformists. In 1638, Baxter became Master of Freed Grammer School at Dudley. He was later ordained and licensed by John Thornborough, Bishop of London, and assigned to pastor in Bridgnorth (in Shropshire).

In Bridgnorth, Rev. Baxter established a reputation for vigorously discharging the duties of his pastoral office. During this period, non-conformity grabbed his interest, and he became alienated from the Church of England and committed to the goals of Puritan reformation.

In 1641, Rev. Baxter was elected as the minister of St. Mary and All Saint's Church at Kidderminster. He was then only 26 years old. As part of the Long Parliament's effort to reform the clergy, Rev. Baxter was elected on the basis of his trial sermon. He would remain at Kidderminster for the next 19 years. Rev. Baxter organized the ministers in the country into an association, attempting to unite them

irrespective of their theological differences. Included amongst this group of clergymen were Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Independents. Indeed, it was then when Rev. Baxter's career published his book titled *The Reformed Pastor*. In this book, Rev. Baxter sought to advise Anglican clergymen as to how to discharge their pastoral duties.

B. Biography: The English Civil War (1642 – 1651)

During the outbreak of the English Civil War, Rev. Baxter blamed both sides of the conflict, both the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. He promoted the "Protestation," which had been designed mediate the conflict and to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict. But because Rev. Baxter was a non-conformist, he was forced to flee his residence at Kidderminster, as it became a Royalist stronghold during the war. Hence, Rev. Baxter moved to Coventry, where he found himself with no fewer than 30 other fugitive like-minded Puritan ministers.

In Coventry, Rev. Baxter officiated each Sunday service as chaplain to the Parliamentary garrison, preaching sermons to the soldiery. After the Battle of Naseby, Rev. Baxter became chaplain to the Colonel Edward Whalley's Regiment in 1647. Rev. Baxter met Oliver Cromwell during this period, when he was summoned to London to assist in settling "the fundamentals of religion." It is reported that Cromwell did not particularly get along with Rev. Baxter.

After the end of the Second English Civil War in 1649, Rev. Baxter returned to Kidderminster, where he became a political leader. Rev. Baxter next moved to London, and maintained the same hard work ethics which he had developed while serving as a clergyman in the countryside. From 1651 to 1660, Rev. Baxter rose in eminence and leadership among England's clergy. He helped to bring about the Restoration of 1660 of King Charles II. But Rev. Baxter was unable to stem the rising tide of High-Church Anglicanism which again swept England, resulting in the Act of Uniformity of 1662. Rev . Baxter had been made the King's Chaplain and was offered the Bishopric of Hereford, which he refused, due to his concerns over some of the doctrines of the Church of England. After this refusal to accept a bishopric, Rev. Baxter was unable to again pastor within the Church of England and was oppressed by the Anglican clerical elite. In fact, Rev. Baxter was barred from preaching in most churches, and thereafter found it difficult to earn a living.

C. Biography: Years of Persecutions and Prolific Christian Writings (1662- 1691)

In 1662, Rev. Baxter married Margaret Charlton, a woman like-minded with himself. He retired to Acton, Middlesex, but he then encountered legal troubles, persecution, and imprisonment for keeping a conventicle. In 1672, his preaching license was recalled by the king.

> In 1680, he was taken from his house; and though he was released that he might die at home, his books and goods were seized.
>
> In 1684, he was carried three times to the sessions house, being scarcely able to stand, and without any apparent cause was made to enter into a band for £ 400 in security for his good behavior.
>
> But his worst encounter was with the Chief Justice, Sir George Jeffreys in May 1685. He had been committed to the King's Bench Prison on the charge of libeling the Church in his Paraphrase on the New Testament, and was tried before Jeffreys on this accusation….
>
> Baxter was sentenced to pay 500 marks, to lie in prison till the money was paid, and to be bound to his good behavior for seven years.
>
> Baxter was now approaching 70 years old, and remained in prison for 18 months, until he government, hoping to win his influence, remitted the fine and released him.

This period of persecution was Baxter's most prolific period as a theological writer. He wrote or published 168 separate works, including:

- *The Reformed Pastor* (1656)
- *Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live* (1657)[16]
- *Catholic Theology* (1675)
- *Christian Directory* (1678)(four volumes)
- *Methodus Theologiae Christianae* (1681)

From the year 1687 onward, Baxter lived peacefully until his death in London.

[16] See, e.g., https://faithbiblechurchnh.org/baxter_unconverted1.htm#short_account .

Section Two:

D. Theology: Perspective of the Protestant Reformation

For Rev. Baxter, the purpose of the Protestant Reformation was to make men and women more holy, not more secular. Rev. Baxter disagreed with those persons who believed that the primary objective of the Protestant Reformation was simply to establish the political autonomy of the kings and princes of Europe through breaking the powerful grip of Rome and the Pope. Instead, for Rev. Baxter, the purpose of the Protestant Reformation was to establish true holiness amongst the Christian faithful and to establish true justice within the Christian polity or commonwealth.

By the time of the English Civil War, the Puritans had wished to improve the Church of England through implementing various reforms, and Rev. Baxter was one of clergymen who were called upon to help the church to implement those reforms. He was then pastor of St. Mary and All Saint's Church at Kidderminster. During this period, Rev. Baxter published a series of essays or articles, which eventually became his book *The Reformed Pastor* (1656), which set forth Rev. Baxter's recommendation for reform amongst England's clergy. In *The Reformed Pastor*, Baxter set forth certain practical steps for actually making the Reformation a practical reality:

> Why, the case is plain; they thought of a reformation to be given by God, but not of a reformation to be wrought on and by themselves. They considered the blessing, but never thought of a reformation to be wrought on and by themselves. They considered the blessing but never though of the means of accomplishing it. But as if they had expected that all things besides themselves should be mended without them, or that the Holy Ghost should again descend miraculously, or every sermon should convert it thousands, or that some angel from heaven or some Elias should be sent to restore all things, or that the law of the parliament, and the sword of the magistrate, would have converted or constrained all, and have done the deed; and little did they think of a reformation that must be wrought by their own diligence and unwearied labors, by earnest preaching and catechizing,

> and personal instructions, and taking heed to all the flook, whatever pains or reproaches it should cost them They thought not that a thorough reformation would multiply their own work; but we had all of us too carnal thoughts, that when we had ungodly men at our mercy, all would be done, and conquering them was converting them, or such a means as would have frightened them to heaven. But the business is far otherwise, and had we then known how a reformation must be attained, perhaps some would have been colder in the prosecution of it. And yet I know that even foreseen labors seem small matters at a distance, while we do but hear and talk of them; but when we come nearer them, and must lay our hands to the work, and put on our armor, and charge through the thickets of opposing difficulties, then is the sincerity and the strength of men's hearts brought to trial, and it will appear how they purposed and promised before.
>
> Reformation is to many of us, as the Messiah was to the Jews. Before he came, they looked and longed for him, and boasted of him, and rejoiced in hope of him; but when he came they could not abide him, but hated him, and would not believe that he was indeed the person, and therefore persecuted and put him to death, to the curse and confusion of the main body of their nation. … So it is with too many about reformation. They hoped or a reformation, that would bring them more wealth and honor with the people, and power to force men to do what they would have them; and now they see a reformation, that must put them to more condescension and pains than they were ever at before. They thought of having the opposers of godliness under their feet, but now they see they must go to them with humble entreaties…. O how many carnal expectations are here crossed![17]

The ravishes of church corruption, whether by Rome or the High-Church Anglicans, had left seventeenth-century England unspiritual and morally obtuse, and thus Rev. Baxter tried to remind England of the Protestant Reformation's original aims of liberty and holiness. "Brethren," Rev. Baxter admonished, "may I

[17] Ibid., pp. 128-129.

expostulate this case a little with my own heart and yours, that we may see the evil of our sins, and be reformed."[18]

Pre-Civil War England had witnessed the rise of inefficient and corrupted Anglican clergy. Some of the reasons why the quality of England's clergy had deteriorated, according to Rev. Baxter, were the following:

1. "One of our most heinous and palpable sins is PRIDE."[19]

2. "We do not so seriously, unreservedly, and laboriously lay out ourselves in the work of the Lord as beseemeth men of our profession and engagements."[20]

3. "Another sad discovery that we have not so devoted ourselves and all we have to the service of God as we ought, is our prevailing regard to our worldly interests in opposition to the interest and work of Christ."[21]

4. "Lastly, We are sadly negligent in performing acknowledged duties, for example, church discipline."[22]

Thus, the key to a successful Protestant Reformation, according to Rev. Baxter, was to develop trained ministers who actually ministered to every need of the parish and church. In the *The Reformed Pastor*, Rev. Baxter admonished England's clergy to not simply preach good sermons and to visit the poor, but also to minister to the individual needs of their churches and parishes and to avail themselves of the use of assistant pastors and deacons to fulfill this mission. Rev. Baxter was concerned that "individual souls" were being lost through the lack of personal attention from ministers—this dearth of ministry lay at the seat of England's moral crisis, as Rev. Baxter saw it. What was needed, according to Rev. Baxter was for England's ministers to learn how to administer thorough ministerial "oversight" over their churches and parishes.[23] Rev. Baxter felt that the Protestant clergy had negligently omitted any duty to minister to the needs of individuals because this duty is time-consuming and laborious, and because it was falsely

[18] Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (United States: ReadaClassic.com, 2012), p. 91.
[19] Ibid., p. 87.
[20] Ibid., p. 93.
[21] Ibid., p. 97.
[22] Ibid., p 107.
[23] Ibid., pp. 114- 180.

believed that such ministry too much resembled the Roman Catholic sacrament of penance. In *The Reformed Pastor*, Rev. Baxter sought to dispel this false notion. Personal one-on-one ministry was absolutely indispensible for "ministering to souls."[24] Rev. Baxter felt that when Pastors won the affection of their congregations, they could also win their souls for Christ.[25]

For Rev. Baxter, no Protestant Reformation could succeed without pastoral reform and fundamental changes in ministry habits and practices. Some of Rev. Baxter's recommendations to Anglican pastors included:

1. "See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought in your own souls."[26]

2. "Content not yourselves with being in a state of grace, but be also careful that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons which you study, before you preach them to others."[27]

3. "Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as my be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors."[28]

4. "Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn."[29]

5. "Take heed to yourselves, for you have a heaven to win or lose, and souls that must be happy or miserably for ever; and therefore it concerneth you to begin at home, and to take heed to yourselves as well as to others."[30]

6. "Take heed to yourselves, for you have a depraved nature, and sinful inclinations, as well as others."[31]

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[24] Ibid., p. 115.
[25] Ibid., p. 117.
[26] Ibid., p. 18.
[27] Ibid., p. 24
[28] Ibid., p. 25.
[29] Ibid., p. 29
[30] Ibid., p. 33.

7. “Take heed to yourselves, because the tempter will more ply you with his temptations than other men.”[32]

8. “Take heed to yourselves, because there are many eyes upon you, and there will be many to observe your falls.”[33]

9. “Take need to yourselves, for your sins have more heinous aggravations then other men’s.”[34]

10. “Take heed to yourselves, because such great works as ours require greater grace than other men’s.”[35]

11. “Lastly, Take heed to yourselves, for the success of all your labors doth very much depend upon this.”[36]

12. “Every flock should have its own pastor, and every pastor his own flock.”[37]

13. “When we are commanded to take heed to all the flock, it is plainly implied, that flocks must ordinarily be no greater than we are capable of overseeing, or ‘taking heed to.’”[38]

14. “We must labor, in a special manner, for the conversion of the unconverted.”[39]

15. “We must be ready to give advice to inquirers, who come to us with case of conscience; especially the great case which the Jews put to Peter, and the gaoler to Paul and Silas, ‘What must we do to be saved?’”[40]

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[31] Ibid., p. 34.
[32] Ibid., p. 35.
[33] Ibid., p. 36.
[34] Ibid., p 37.
[35] Ibid., p. 38.
[36] Ibid., p. 39.
[37] Ibid., p. 46.
[38] Ibid., p. 47.
[39] Ibid., p. 51.
[40] Ibid., p. 52.

16. “We must study to build up those who are already truly converted. In this respect our work is various, according to the various states of Christians.”[41]

17. “We must have a special eye upon families, to see that they are well ordered, and the duties of each relation performed.”[42]

18. “We must be diligent in visiting the sick, and helping them to prepare either for a fruitful life, or a happy death.”[43]

19. “We must reprove and admonish those who live offensively or impenitently.”[44]

20. “The last part of our oversight, which I shall notice, consisteth in the exercise of Church discipline.”[45]

21. “The ministerial work must be carried on purely for God and salvation of souls, not for any private ends of our own.”[46]

22. “The ministerial work must be carried on diligently and laboriously, as being of such unspeakable consequences to ourselves and others.”[47]

23. “The ministerial work must be carried on prudently and orderly. Milk must go before strong meat; the foundation must be laid before we attempt to raise the superstructure.”[48]

24. “Throughout the whole course of our ministry, we must insist chiefly upon the greatest, most certain, and most necessary truths, and be more seldom and sparing upon the rest.”[49]

[41] Ibid., p. 53.
[42] Ibid., p. 56.
[43] Ibid., p. 57.
[44] Ibid., p. 59.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 65.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., p. 66.
[49] Ibid.

25. “All our teaching must be as plain and simple as plain and simple as possible. This doth best suit a teacher’s ends. He that would be understood must speak to the capacity of his hearers.”[50]

26. “Our work must be carried on with great humility.”[51]

27. “There must be a prudent mixture of severity and mildness both in our preaching and discipline; each must be predominant, according to the quality or character of the person, or matter, that we have in hand.”[52]

28. “We must be serious, earnest, and zealous in every part of our work. Our work requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal than any of us bring to it.”[53]

29. “The whole of our ministry must be carried on in tender love to our people.”[54]

30. “We must carry on our work with patience.”[55]

31. “All our work must be managed reverently, as beseemeth them that believe the presence of God, and use not holy things as if they were common.”[56]

32. “All our work must be done spiritually, as by men possessed of the Holy Ghost.”[57]

33. “If you would prosper in your work, be sure to keep up earnest desires and expectations of success.”[58]

34. “Our work must be carried on under a deep sense of our own insufficiency, and of our entire dependence on Christ.”[59]

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[50] Ibid., p. 68.
[51] Ibid., p. 69.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid, p. 70.
[55] Ibid., p. 71.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., p. 72.
[58] Ibid., p. 73.
[59] Ibid., p. 74.

35. "We must be very studious of union and communion among ourselves and of the unity and peace of the churches that we oversee."[60]

Hence, Rev. Baxter believed that in order for the Protestant Reformation to achieve its original objectives and aims, the clergy needed to be more committed to holiness and ministerial duties.

E. Theology: On the Special Duties of Family Prayer

For Rev. Baxter, the Protestant Reformation needed to occur at the basic unit of civil society, the family. Observe "the difference between praying and prayerless families" suggested the erudite Puritan theologian Richard Baxter, and one will observe significant differences in their prosperity and felicity.[61] Prayerful families delight in the Lord in good times and in bad times and are generally quite healthy, content, and prosperous, whereas prayerless families tend toward family feuding and dislocation. [62] Thus, the grace and power of God is readily observable in this regard, that a "family that prays together, stays together" and as a rule is more prosperous than the family that does not. For this reason, the Puritans stressed frequent and daily family prayer.

1. Priesthood of All Believers

The "family prayer" is premised upon the theological concept of the "priesthood of all believers." "Christians are a 'holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices to God, acceptable through Jesus Christ," observed Rev. Baxter.[63] Therefore, "family worship" under the New Covenant is to occur not less frequently or intensely as "family worship" under the Old Testament: the Puritan family was directed to pray together daily, as frequently and as often as practicable.[64] Rev. Baxter recommended that the family worship occur in the morning and during the evening, or as often as possible. He opined that family worship occur daily, stating "We are bound to take all fit occasions and

[60] Ibid.
[61] Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory*, Part 2, p. 39.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid. p. 38.
[64] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

opportunities to worship God. Families have daily (morning and evening) such occasions and opportunities; therefore they are bound to take them."[65]

The Puritan theological viewpoint as to the justification of "family worship" was grounded in the reformist idea of "priesthood of all believers" and in Old Testament authority, such as:

Old Testament—Rules for Prayer

Book of Daniel: ["Daniel prayed in his house thrice a day; therefore less than twice under the gospel is to us unreasonable"[66]].

Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19 ["…it is expressly commanded that parents teach their children the word of God, when they 'lie down , and when they rise up;' and the parity of reason, and conjunction of the word and prayer, will prove, that they should also pray with them lying down and rising up."[67]]

1 Chron. 23:30; Exodus 30:7, 34:3; Leviticus 6: 12; 2 Chron. 8:11; Ezekiel 46: 13-15; Amos 4:4 ["The priests were to offer 'sacrifices' and 'thanks to God every morning'…."[68]]

1 Chron. 16:40; 2 Chron. 2:4; 13:11; 31:3; Ezra 3:3; 2 Kings 15:16; 1 Kings 18:29, 36 ["So morning and evening were sacrifices and burnt offerings offered to the Lord; and there is at least equal reason that **gospel worship should be as frequent**…."[69]]

Psalm 119: David praised God seven times a day.

Psalm 145: "Every day will I bless thee."

Psalm 5:3: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and will look up."

Psalm 59:16: "I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning."

Psalm 92:12: "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises to thy name, O Most High: to show forth thy loving-kindness I the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

Psalm 119: "I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried, I hoped in thy word: mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on they word."

[65]Ibid., p. 38.
[66]Ibid., p. 38.
[67]Ibid., p. 38.
[68]Ibid., p. 38.
[69]Ibid., p. 38.

Psalm 130: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say more than they that watch for the morning."

Psalm 4:17: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice."

Psalm 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

According to Rev. Baxter and the Puritans, the Old Testament's examples of prayer (including the content of prayer, frequency of prayer, and nature of prayer) had not been changed or modified by the New Testament. Therefore, "New Testament" saints had the same obligations of prayer as did the "Old Testament" saints. They cited ample authority for conclusion, including:

New Testament—Rules for Prayers

1 Tim. 4:5 "She that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayer night and day."

Luke 6: 14, 2:37, 18:17; Acts 26:7; 1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:3; Rev. 7: 15 ["… show that night and day Christ himself prayed, and his servants prayed, and meditated, and read the Scripture.

Moreover, the Puritans reasoned that if the Old Testament Law required daily prayer, then today's Christians must be expected to exceed the requirements of this Mosaic Law through a far superior Christian holiness, which is the "law of Faith."

2. The Father as Priest of the Household

The father, as "master of the family"[70] should normally lead in family prayer. The family prayer should be used as a time of instruction, discipline, and building family cohesion. The family governors should teach "children and servants how to pray"[71] during the family prayer. Normally, the family prayer should be at a time that is convenient for all members of the family to be together.

[70] Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (Part 2), pp. 132-133.
[71] Ibid.

At no time can the family prayer be a regular substitute for church attendance or public prayer services.

The family prayer should be special and meet the needs of each individual family. Everything should be done to make the "family prayer" engaging, and boredom should be avoided. "Rote prayers" and "general, pre-recorded" prayers should be sparingly utilized for "family worship."[72] Instead, the family worship should be creative, thoughtful, well-planned, and spiritually uplifting. "Let it neither be so short as to end before their hearts can be warm and their wants expressed…," writes Rev. Baxter, "nor yet so tedious as to make it an ungrateful burden on the family."[73] "Let not the coldness and dullness of the speaker rock the family asleep; but keep awake your own heart, that you may keep the rest awake, and force them to attention."[74]

F. Theology: Perspectives on Law and Government and the Duty of Christian Lawyers

Rev. Baxter conceptualized the relationship of the secular civil government to God as one of principal and agent. The purpose of the civil government was to govern in accordance with God's law. Indeed, this was the classic Christian teaching on the duty, obligations, and role of secular governments since the first century, A.D. "Remember that your power is from God," Rev. Baxter wrote, "and not against God. Rom. Xiii. 2-4. You are his ministers, and can have no power except it be given you from above, John XIX.11. Remember therefore that as constables are your officers and subjects, so you are the officers and subjects of God and the Redeemer; and are infinitely more below him than the lowest subject is below you; and that you owe him more obedience than can be due to you; and therefore should study his laws, (in nature and Scripture,) and make them yhour daily meditation and delight, Josh. i. 3-5….. Remember that, under God, your end is the public good; therefore desire nothing to yourselves, nor do any thing to others, which is really against your end."[75]

[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] *A Christian Directory*, Part 4 (Christian Politics), p. 15.

On the relationship of secular law to God's moral laws, Rev. Baxter wrote: "[r]emember therefore that all your laws are to be but subservient to the laws of God, to promote the obedience of them with your subjects, and never to be either contrary to them, nor co-ordinate, or independent on them; but s the by-laws of corporations are in respect to the laws and will of the sovereign power, which have all their life and power therefrom."[76]

Since both the civil magistrate and the church exercised jurisdiction over human souls, Rev. Baxter could not conceptualize the idea of a complete separation of church and state, even suggesting that political science which holds that the civil government need only concern itself with the "bodies" but not the well-being of the "souls" of their subjects promotes government by "heathen governors" over "terrestrial animals."[77] "Let none persuade you that you are such terrestrial animals that have nothing to do with the heavenly concernments of your subjects," Rev. Baxter concluded. "for if once men think that the end of your office is only the bodily prosperity of the people, and the end of the ministry is the good of their souls, it will tempt them to prefer a minister before you, as they prefer their souls before their bodies; and they that are taught to contemn these earthly things, will be ready to think they must contemn your office…. Therefore you are *custodies utriusque tabulae* ("Keepers of Two Tables"), and must bend the force of all your government to the saving of the people's souls."[78]

"Rulers therefore are God's officers, placed under him in his kingdom, as he is the universal, absolute Sovereign of the world; and they receive their power from God, who is the only original power." [79] "Romans 13:1-3 'There is no power, but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God.'"[80]

Rev. Baxter did not believe in popular sovereignty of the people or in democracy, but rather he strongly supported a limited monarchy and a divine right of kings, together with the fundamental law guaranteeing the rights of all subjects:

[76] Ibid., p. 15.
[77] Ibid., p. 15.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

> For those that are no governors at all, cannot perform the chief act of government, which is the making of governing laws; but the people are no governors at all, either as a community, or as subjects; so that you may easily perceive, that all the arguments for a natural democracy, are built upon false suppositions; and wherever the people have any part in the sovereignty, it is by the after constitution, and not by nature; and that kings receive not their power from the people's gift, (who never had it themselves to use or give), but from God alone."[81]

To be clear, Rev. Baxter preferred no definite form of government, so long as God's moral laws were implemented. "Though God have not made a universal determination," wrote Rev. Baxter, "for any one sort of government, against the rest (whether monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy,) because that is best for one people, which may be worse for others, yet ordinarily monarchy is accounted better than aristocracy, and aristocracy better than democracy. So much briefly of the original of power."[82]

Hence, as an Anglican Tory, Rev. Baxter preferred a limited monarchy, *while reserving to the common man the fundamental right of civil disobedience and protest against tyranny*. "Obey inferior magistrates according to the authority derived to them from the supreme, but never against the supreme, from what is derived…. No human power is at all to be obeyed against God: for they have no power, but what they received from God; and all that is from him, is for him. He giveth no power against himself; he is the first efficient, the chief dirigent, and ultimate final cause of all. It is no act of authority, but resistence of his authority, which contradicteth his law, and is against him. All human laws are subservient to his laws, and not co-ordinate, much less superior. Therefore they are ispo facto null, or have no obligation, which are against him: yet is not the office itself null, hwen it is in some things thus abused; nor the magistrate's power null, as to other things. No man must commit the least sin against God, to please the greatest prince on earth, or to avoid the greatest corporal suffering."[83]

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[81] Ibid., p. 21.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., p. 37.

Rev. Baxter did not believe that the people collectively had the power to vote down moral laws or the laws of God. "Their consent to God's laws was required indeed, as naturally necessary to their obedience, but not as necessary to the being or obligation of the law. Can you think that it had been no sin in them to have disobeyed God's laws, unless they had first consented to them? Then all the world might escape sin and damnation, by denying consent to the laws of God."[84]

> "1. It is no sin to break a law which is no law, as being against God, or not authorized by him, (as of a usuper, & c) See R. Hooker, Conclus. Lib. Viii.
>
> "2. Is is no law far as it is no signification of the true will of the ruler, whatever the words be: therefore so far it is no sin to break it.
>
> "3. The will of the ruler is to be judged of, not only by the words, but by the ends of government, and by the rules of humanity."

Rev. Baxter thus believed that the Fifth Commandment (i.e., the 5th Commandment of the "Ten Commandments"), "Honor thy Father and Mother…," is the natural-law foundation and basis of monarchial government.[85] Rev. Baxter believed that just as children have a duty to obey their parents, subjects have a duty to obey their king. At the same time, he held that both parents and kings are accountable to God to rule humanely, justly, and for the public good.

For Rev. Baxter, the ideal Christian polity (and, indeed, the actual polity of England) imposed ethical standards upon every member of the society, governing even the secular professions. For example, to Christian physicians, Rev. Baxter admonished: "[b]e sure that the saving of men's lives and health, be first and chiefly in your intention, before any gain or honour of your own…. Be ready to help the poor as well as the rich; differencing them no further than the public good requireth you to do. Let not the health or lives of men be neglected, because they have no money to give you: many poor people perish for want of means, because they are discouraged from going to physicians, though the emptiness o their purses;

[84] Ibid., p. 24.
[85] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

in such a case you must not only help them gratis, but also appoint the cheapest medicines for them."[86]

To Christian lawyers, Rev. Baxter thus admonished: "[i]f your calling be not to be sanctified by serving God in it, and regulating it by his law, it is then neither honourable nor desirable."[87] Indeed, "[a] man may be a good divine that is no lawyer, but he can be no good lawyer that understandeth not theology."[88]

Rev. Baxter admonished England's attorneys to "let the government and laws of God have the first and chiefest place in your [legal] studies, and in all your observation and regard."[89] "Be sure that you make not the getting of money to be your principal end in the exercise of your function; but the promoting of justice, for the righting of the just, and the public good; and therein the pleasing of the most righteous God."[90] "[T]here is no cause so bad but can find and advocate for a fee…. [therefore] [b]e not counselors or advocates against God, that is, against justice, truth, and innocency."[91] "Make the cause of the innocent as it were your own; and suffer it not to miscarry through your slothfulness and neglect."[92]

Indeed, Rev. Baxter held that lawyers and judges should study theology because:

1. It is the ground of human government, and the fountain of man's power and laws;

2. The divine polity is also the end of human policy; man's laws being ultimately to promote our obedience to the laws of God, and the honour of his government;

3. God's laws are the measure and bound of human laws; against which no man can have power; and,

4. God's rewards and punishments are incomparably more regardable than man's; eternal joy or misery being so much considerable than temporal peace

[86] Ibid., p. 57.
[87] Ibid., p. 54.
[8888] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., p. 54.
[91] Ibid., p. 55.
[92] Ibid., p. 56.

or suffering; therefore though it be a dishonor to lawyers to be ignorant of languages, history, and other needful parts of learning, yet it is much more their dishonor to be ignorant of the universal government and laws of God.[93]

G. Theology: Perspectives on Slavery

Finally, the theological positions on slavery held by St. Augustine and John Calvin were also embraced by one of the most influential Puritans of the seventeenth Century, Rev. Richard Baxter. Rev. Baxter has been described as the "Chief of the Puritan Schoolmen," and as "the most prominent English churchman of the 1600s."[94] Rev. Baxter's writings on slavery certainly reflected the official theological viewpoint of Puritans and New Englanders regarding slavery.

According to Rev. Baxter, there were three basic types of slaves: slaves for life by voluntary consent due to poverty; slaves for a limited period of time by voluntary contract; and slaves as a result of punishment for crime.[95] The slavery due to poverty carries with it expressed "limitations of God and nature", as follows:

> The limitations of a necessitated slavery by contract or consent through poverty are these: (1). Such a one's soul must be cared for and preserved, though he should consent to the contrary. He must have time to learn the word of God, and time to pray, and he must rest on the Lord's day, and employ it in God's service; he must be instructed, and exhorted, and kept from sin. (2) He may not be forced to commit any sin against God. (3.) He may not (though he forcedly consent) be denied such comforts of this life, as are needful to his cheerful serving of God in love and thankfulness, according to the peace of the gospel state; and which are called by the name of our daily bread. No man may deny a slave any of this, that it is not a criminal, punished slave.[96]

Therefore, Rev. Baxter held that *lawful slavery constituted aChristian stewardship and trusteeship*. He reminded Christian slave-owners to treat their slaves with

[93] Ibid., p. 54.
[94] https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/richard-baxter.html
[95] Ibid.
[96] Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory: Part 2 (Christian Economics)*,[publisher/ publication date omitted] p. 92.

humanity and decency, while keeping in mind that only God is their true owner. "Remember that you are Christ's trustees, or the guardians of their souls," Rev. Baxter wrote "and that the greater your power is over them, the greater your charge is of them, and your duty for them. … As Abraham was to circumcise all his servants that were bought with money, and the fourth commandment requireth masters to see that all within their gates observe the Sabbath day; so must you exercise both your power and love to bring them to the knowledge and faith of Christ, and to the just obedience of God's commands…. Those therefore that keep their negroes and slaves from hearing God's word, and from becoming Christians, because by the law they shall then be either made free, or they shall lose part of their service, do openly profess rebellion against God, and contempt of Christ the Redeemer of souls, and a contempt of the souls of men; and indeed they declare, that their worldly profit is their treasure and their god."[97]

Rev. Baxter believed that the chief objective of slave-ownership among Christians is charity, education, aid, assistance, and conversion to Christ. Rev. Baxter insisted that "even a slave may be one of these neighbors that you are bound to love as yourselves, and to do to as you would be done by, if your case were his. Which if you do, you will need no more direction for his relief."[98] Masters should "prefer God's interest" in the care of slaves; they must work towards the slaves' "spiritual and everlasting happiness. Teach them the way to heaven, and do all for their souls which I have before directed you to do for all your other servants."[99]Furthermore, Rev. Baxter held that slaves are "as good a kind" as the master[100]; slaves are "born to as much natural liberty" as the master[101]; and "nature made them… equals" of the master.[102] Therefore, the master classes have "no power to do anything which shall hinder [the slaves'] salvation."[103] All slaves have an inherent right to free worship and religion.

Rev. Baxter applauded Christians who purchased slaves in order to save their souls and win them to Christ or purchase their liberty. "Make it your chief

[97] Ibid., p. 90.
[98]Ibid., p. 93.
[99]Ibid., p. 92.
[100]Ibid., p. 90.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

end in buying and using slaves, to win them to Christ," Rev. Baxter wrote, "and save their souls."[104] "[L]et their salvation be far more valued by you than their service: and carry yourselves to them, as those that are sensible that they are redeemed with them by Christ from the slavery of Satan, and may live with them in the liberty of the saints in glory."[105]

According to Rev. Baxter, innocent slaves, such as persons born into slavery, should be treated no differently than free laborers. "Remember that you may require no more of an innocent slave, than you would or might do of an ordinary servant,"[106] wrote Rev. Baxter."There is a slavery to which some men may be lawfully put," he insisted, "and there is a slavery to which none may be put; and there is a slavery to which only the criminal may be put, by way of penalty."[107] Rev. Baxter thus admonished slave-holders to: "[u]nderstand well how far your power over your slaves extendeth, and what limits God hath set thereto."[108]God alone is the "absolute owner" of the slaves; slave masters "have none but a derived and limited propriety in [the slaves]. [The slaves] can be no further yours, than [the slave master] have God's consent, who is the Lord of [the slaves] and the [slave masters]."[109] Further, Rev. Baxter held that slaves are "the redeemed ones of Christ, and that he hath not sold [the slaves] to [the slave masters] his title to them."[110] Slave owners may "use" the slaves, but only "as to preserve Christ's right and interest in them."[111]

Rev. Baxter expressly prohibited slavery based upon men-stealing. "To go as pirates and catch up poor negroes or people of another land, that never forfeited life or liberty, and to make them slaves, and sell them, is one of the worst kinds of thievery in the world; and such persons are to be taken for the common enemies of mankind; and they that buy them and use them as beasts, for their mere commodity, and betray, or destroy, or neglect their souls, are fitter to be called

[104]Ibid., p. 93.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107]Ibid., p. 91.
[108]Ibid., p. 90.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

incarnate devils than Christians, though they be so Christians whom they so abuse."[112]

Rev. Baxter also disdained the idea of "chattel slavery" as unchristian, and against the laws of nature, because even slaves have immortal, rational souls. Therefore, Rev. Baxter concluded that slavery which is not permitted, under any circumstances, is "such as shall injure God's interest and service, or the man's salvation,"[113] because there is "[s]ufficiently difference between men and brutes."[114]

Rev. Baxter was aware of the nature of the inhumane treatment of African slaves throughout North America and the West Indies. And he inveighed against this inhumane treatment. To the slave owners of the British West Indies, Rev. Baxter asked:

> How cursed a crime is it to equal men and beasts! Is not this your practice? Do you not buy them and use them merely to the same end, as you do your horses? To labour for your commodity, as if they were baser than you, and made to serve you? Do you not see show you reproach and condemn yourselves, while you vilify them as savages and barbarous wretches? Did they ever do any thing more savage, than to use not only men's bodies as beasts, but their souls as if they were made for nothing but to actuate their bodies in your worldly drudgery? Did the veriest cannibals ever do any thing more cruel or odious, than to sell so many souls to the devil for a little worldly gain? Did ever the cursedest miscreants on earth, do any thing more rebellious, and contrary to the will of the most merciful God, than to keep those souls from Christ, and holiness, and heaven, for a little money, who were made and redeemed for the same ends, and at the same precious price as yours? Did your poor slaves ever commit such villanies as these? Is not the basest wretch and the most barbarous savage, who committeth the greatest and most inhuman wickedness? And are theirs comparable to these of yours? Do not the very example

[112]Ibid., p. 92.
[113]Ibid., p. 91.
[114]Ibid., p. 90.

> of such cruelty, besides your keeping them from Christianity, directly tend to teach them and all others, to hate Christianity, as if it taught men to be so much worse than dogs and tigers?[115]

According to Rev. Baxter, under the Mosaic Law (i.e., the law of nature), slaves are equally under the government and laws of God" as the master classes.[116] Therefore, "all God's laws must be first obeyed by [the slaves], and [the master classes] have no power to command them to omit any duty which God commandeth them, nor to commit any sin which God forbiddeth them; nor can [the master class], without rebellion or impiety, expect that your work or command should be preferred before God's."[117] In other words, Puritan or Christian slave owners are to function as "Christ's trustees" and as "the guardians of" the souls of the slaves.[118] Slaveholders were encouraged to prepare their slaves for independence and freedom, and to manumit them within a reasonable number of years of service. This was the law of the Gospel and of Moses. And in colonial New England, many of the Puritans heeded these divine commands.

The institution of slavery in British North America and the British West Indies, however, took on a markedly different character than what Rev. Baxter has prescribed. Far removed from the Bishop of London and ecclesiastical regulations, most of the English slaveholders in the Western Hemisphere were free to practice forms of chattel or plantation slavery that were revolting and shocking of the Christian conscience. For this reason, many men and women in the Anglican Church early and largely moved to abolish the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

H. Theology: Perspective of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1653)

Finally, Rev. Baxter, who was himself a Presbyterian, sought ways to heal the theological divide between the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the Independents. During the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell and other Parliamentarians, however, swept aside the Episcopalians (i.e., the High-Church

[115] Ibid., pp. 90-91.
[116] Ibid. p. 90.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

Anglicans) and summoned only their own trusted divines (or friends?) to provide input on reformulating the new Church of England. This esteemed assembly of Westminster divines would meet periodically to discuss and debate points of theology, religion, and government, leading to their promulgation of the famed *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), which was widely held out as a reflection of the Reformed-Calvinist-Presbyterian wing of the Church of England. Rev. Baxter felt, however, that this whole process had unfairly and unnecessarily excluded the Episcopalians and other Independents, thus widening the divine amongst England's Christians.

In a tract written about this subject, Rev. Baxter wrote:

> And because I have past it by before, I shall say something of the *Westminster* Assembly here. **This Synod was not a Convocation according to the Diocesan way of Government**, **nor was it called by the Votes of the Ministers according to the Presbyterian way**: But the **Parliament** not intending to call an Assembly which should pretend a Divine Right to make obliging Laws or Canons to bind their Brethren, but **an Ecclesiastical Council to be Advisers to themselves**, **did think that they best knew who were the fittest to give them Advice**, and **therefore chose them all themselves**. Two were to be chosen out of each County; but some few Counties (I know not upon what reason) had but one: I suppose it was long of the Parliament Men of those Counties.
>
> And because **they would seem Impartial**, and have each Party to have liberty to speak, **they over and above the number chose many Episcopal Divines**, even the **Learnedest of them in the Land**, as Archbishop *Usher* Primateof *Ireland*, Dr. *Holdsworth*, Dr. *Hammond,* Dr. *Wincop*, Bishop *Westford*, Bishop *Prideaux*, and many more. **But they would not come, because it was not a Legal Convocation, and because the King declared himself against it**: Dr. *Dan[iel]. Featley* and very few more of that Party came: (But at last he was charged with sending Intelligence to the King's Quarters at *Oxford,* of what was done in the Synod and Parliament, and was imprisoned; which much reflected on the Parliament, because whatever his Fact were, he was so Learned a Man, as was sufficient to dishonour those he suffered by).

The Prolocutor or Moderator was **Dr. *William Twisse* (a Man very famous for his Scholastical Wit and Writings in a very smooth triumphant Stile**): The **Divines there Congregate were Men of Eminent Learning and Godliness**, and Ministerial Abilities and Fidelity: And **being not worthy to be one of them my self**, I may the more freely speak that Truth which I know even in the Face of Malice and Envy, that, **as far as I am able to judge by the Information of all History of that kind, and by any other Evidences left us, the Christian World, since the days of the Apostles, had never a Synod of more Excellent Divines** (taking one thing with another) than this Synod and the Synod of *Dort* were.

This Assembly was confined by the Parliament to debate *only such things as they proposed to them*: And many Lords and Commons were joined in Commission with them, to see that they did not go beyond their Commission: Six or seven Independents were joined with them, that all sides may be heard; of whom five were called the *Dissenting Brethren, (Philip Nye, Thomas Goodwyn, Jeremiah Burroughs, Sydrach Simpson,* and *William Bridge*) who joined with the rest **till they had drawn up a *Confession of Faith*, a larger and a shorter Catechism**.

But when they came to Church Government, they engaged them in many long Debates, and kept that Business as long as possibly they could undetermined; and after that kept it so long unexecuted in almost all parts of the Land, saving *London* and *Lancashire*, that their Party had time to strengthen themselves in the Army and the Parliament, and hinder the Execution after all, and keep the Government determined of, a Stranger to most of the People of this Land, who knew it but by hearsay, as it was represented by Reporters.

For my own part, as highly as I honour the Men, I am not of their Mind, in every Point of the Government which they would have set up; and **some words in their Catechism I could wish had been more clear**; and above all, **I could wish that the Parliament and their more skillful Hand, had done more than was done to heal our Breaches**, and had hit upon the right way either to unite with the Episcopal and Independents (which was possible, as distant as they are) or at least had pitched on the Terms that **are fit for Universal Concord**, and left all to come in upon those Terms that would. But for

> all this dissent I must testify my Love and Honour to the Persons of such great Sincerity, and Eminent Ministerial Sufficiency, as were *Gataker, Vines, Burgess, White,* and the greater part of that Assembly.[119]

For this reason, Rev. Baxter, who was himself a Puritan and a Presbyterian, nevertheless had sharp differences of opinion with other members within his own faction. Whereas the English Civil War and the Parliamentarian victory on the battlefield brought along an opportunity for a power grab within the Church of England, Rev. Baxter cautioned his own triumphant Presbyterian faction against non-inclusiveness. Even in victory over the Royalists and the High-Church Anglicans, Rev. Baxter still sought ways to win their affection and to return to the mother Church of England.[120]

CONCLUSION

Rev. Richard Baxter was the "Chief of the Puritan Schoolmen" and "the most prominent English churchman of the 1600s."[121] From his writings we learn that the Christian religion was certainly part and parcel of every aspect of English life. According to Rev. Baxter, Christianity was the foundation of English law, and that in order for lawyers or judges to know and understand law, they must also understand theology. Indeed, Rev. Baxter believed that a theologian could be a good theologian without knowing the law, but a lawyer could not be a good lawyer without knowing theology. Therefore, *Rev. Baxter advised English lawyers and judges to study Christian theology along with their studies of secular laws*. This advice is even more significant, when we consider the fact that Rev. Baxter was also a leading interpreter of the English Protestant Reformation. For Rev. Baxter, the Reformation had been wrought to make men and women more holy, not more secular. Like Rev. Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* all of Rev. Baxter's writings on law and government concluded that man-made secular laws were subordinate to divine and natural law. The Providence of God continued to rule the secular state, and laws that conflicted with God's laws were thus void.

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[119] https://reformedcovenanter.wordpress.com/2019/04/22/richard-baxter-on-the-westminster-assembly/

[120] Baxter's diplomacy, however, went unheeded and unrewarded. When the Anglicans and King Charles II returned power, Rev. Baxter was offered a bishopric. When he refused it, the Anglicans turned on him and persecuted him.

[121] https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/richard-baxter.html

This meant that constitutional ideas such as the "divine right of kings" had to yield to divine law and natural law, including the fundamental rights of individual citizens who retained the right of conscience and of civil disobedience. Hence, the parameters of the *American Declaration of Independence* (1776) and *United States Constitution* (1789), which came a century later, grew out of an English constitutional ideal that placed the Christian faith at the foundation of its fundamental constitutional law.

THE END

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Appendix A:

"'Justification by Faith' Richard Baxter's Influence upon John Wesley"

by Joseph W. Cunningham

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Joseph W. Cunningham

"Justification by Faith": Richard Baxter's Influence upon John Wesley

I. Introduction

Justification by Faith, one of John Wesley's most soteriologically mature sermons, was first preached on May 28, 1738, and later published in 1746.[1] This homily presented not only his maturing theology of salvation, but also conveyed his affinity for the protestant keystone, *sola fide*. His work, however, was not fashioned without noteworthy influence. Within a year prior to first preaching the sermon, Wesley published in Newcastle upon Tyne an extract of Richard Baxter's *Aphorisms of Justification*. Originally composed by Baxter in 1640, this vehement work sought to 'once and for all' crush the doctrine of antinomianism and fasten in its place a more developed view of human participation in salvation. It was received unfavorably, however, as Baxter's contemporaries dissected the work with stringent criticism, objecting to the notion that "obeying trust" preconditioned justification.[2] Yet, not all of his theology would be repudiated. Certain of its elements remained congruent with earlier protestant assumptions. Recognizing the work's great significance, John Wesley, founder of the Methodist reform movement, extracted and published certain of Baxter's *Aphorisms*, so that they might, in his words, "once again [be] a powerful antidote against the spreading poison of antinomianism."[3] By putting them to press, Wesley exposed the depth of Baxter's impact upon his own theology that would later manifest itself in his sermon on *Justification by Faith*. The aim of this particular study is to identify and trace the similarities found in Wesley's sermon on *Justification by Faith* and Baxter's *Aphorisms of Justification* (which Wesley later extracted), and to understand the contextual situations that occasioned their respective development and publication.[4] By doing so, that is, by highlighting the two minister's commonly held positions, the present study aims to both strengthen and invigorate the bond between Reformed and Wesleyan theology.

II. Likeminded Polemicists

The seventeenth century puritan reform had an overwhelming influence on Richard Baxter's religious convictions. Having been infected by its contagious religious fervor, he came to question his own long-held ecclesial assumptions. Finding his leanings incongruent with the national church, he

reluctantly bore the label of non-conformist and opposed the Church of England.[5] In part to propound his newfound message, Baxter became Chaplain of the parliamentary army.[6] This particular tenure helped him to grow in discernment and, as he put it, to press on "toward the resolution of many theological questions."[7] However, the army exposed him to a kaleidoscope of personal beliefs, ranging from Arminianism and Dutch Remonstrance to moral laxity and antinomianism. This in turn led Baxter to embrace a polemical attitude towards those who considered themselves unbound theologically to the moral law of righteousness. His contempt for such "libertarianism" swelled into fear and borderline obsession, when he became terribly afraid that "London was apparently being overrun by Antinomians",[8] a phobic claim, which fueled his ministerial passions, though without substantial socio-religious warrant. Nevertheless, Baxter's commitment to fostering puritan reform resulted in an immense outpouring of theological literature.

Among his writings, *Aphorisms of Justification* (1649) was a piece he thought might equilibrate the swells of antinomianism. His impetus for writing was to challenge any who considered righteous living (subsequent to justification) inconsequential to the process of salvation. Underlying his theology of justification then, was the conviction that human participation and response were needed to actuate God's redemptive offer of salvation. However, many of his contemporaries remained apprehensive. They suspected that his theology refracted glints of Pelagianism. Nevertheless, he strove at length to disassociate himself from any doctrine wherein recipients of God's grace were exempt from the laws of love and morality, especially as regarded the doctrine of imputed righteousness. According to Baxter, such a theology invariably led to lax Christian practice. For, once we are justified by the work of Christ, and receive the exact fruit of his labor, we need not ourselves live accordingly, as the work has already been done for us. On the other hand, he did not intend his *Aphorisms* to warrant the opposite extreme of "moralism." Baxter simply sought to "confound the antinomians who misconstrued the doctrine of justification by faith to mean that works are unnecessary," while acknowledging Christ's atonement as the primary cause of justification.[9] Amid similar circumstances, John Wesley later shared Baxter's commitment to exploring a *via media* between moralism and antinomianism.

However, before moving on to Wesley's context, it would be wise to carve out the roots of both "moralism" and "antinomianism." To both Baxter and Wesley, these words connoted ravenous depravity. The theological tenets of moralism can be traced far back into the annals of Christian antiquity, finding their base in the teachings of Pelagius. This patristic writer envisioned the morally upright nature of human beings to be a sufficient medium for carrying out righteousness and holy living. To him, God had fastened human

nature with such a capacity at creation, which enabled humans to lead ethically sound lives. We do not *need* any special gift from God to be good, because our nature has already been conditioned to uphold God's statutes. One might posit, to use other words, that a primordial grace has been infused with humanity at the ground of creation, whereby we have been equipped with every tool necessary to carry out our moral responsibilities. To be sure, Pelagius did not abnegate the meritorious work of Christ; rather, he appropriated it differently. God's grace is given to those who strive for the righteous life. It aids them in Christian discernment. Even so, since God has already fashioned humanity with the ability to keep the commandments, soteriological grace becomes unnecessary. It is here that Wesley and Baxter poignantly took issue with moralist doctrine, stressing its usurpation of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Together, they recognized its destructive implications, which more than diminished the efficacy of God's grace and supplanted beneficence with human agency.

Secondly, moralism is contrasted by an opposite extreme, antinomianism, with which both Baxter and Wesley were heavily occupied. If moralism placed too high a priority on human agency in effecting salvation, then the latter moved to the other end of the pendulum swing. According to this teaching, God's righteousness is imputed and imparted, literally handed over to the believer, dismissing them of any responsibility to lead lives of holiness. It excuses them, in the name of righteousness, from charitable practice. In essence, one may well be fortified by God's salvific grace and continue to lead a life of cruelty. This theology is problematic, as it does not reconcile God's justifying grace with an authentic conversion from sin. Wesley and Baxter detested this position as well, as it hindered Christian practice and thwarted any genuine move toward holiness. Baxter and Wesley were loath to accept two such heterodox ideas, which spawned controversy in the latter's context as well.

Like Baxter, Wesley took profound influence from the Puritan reform movement. He was convicted by their zeal for the gospel, and their diligent propensity to evangelize the world over. While embracing certain puritan ideals, however, his sympathies did not move him to abandon his confessions. Even so, while remaining a steadfast Anglican minister, Wesley allowed the puritan emphasis on spirituality both to permeate his theology of faith and Christian living, and to inform his practice of liturgy. An implicit hope was that the fire of reform would rekindle the awareness of *sola fide* Protestantism. Like Baxter, Wesley expressed the need for faith-filled response to God's offer of salvation, which could not be merited by any performed work of righteousness. Wesley's soteriology hinged on this, that faith alone justifies and restores the sinner to right relationship with the Father. In other words, since humans were originally created for communion with God, for concert

and friendship toward this end, the process of justification was one that refashioned human beings into a state reminiscent of their original, created nature (deliverance from culpability). In Wesley's view, to participate in the experience of justification by faith, is to conjointly allow God's presence to manifest in our lives and accompany us on the road to Christian perfection. As with Baxter before him, Wesley's convictions sparked heated polemicism. Not all theologians shared his understanding of the nature of God's grace. According to Alan Clifford, Wesley's "long ministry," as evangelical preacher and minister, "was frequently punctuated by the [Calvinist/Arminian] controversy."[10] Engaged in dialogue with the Calvinistic Methodist, George Whitefield, Wesley defended the freedom of personal response to God's offer of salvation, and labored to illustrate the inadequacy of any position suggesting otherwise.[11] He maintained that the grace given to humans by God is "universal," reaching out to the entirety of humankind. Yet, we are justified by God's grace to the extent that we faithfully respond to God's offer of redemption. God is not whimsical or random; God justifies those who approach with contrition and repentance.

Such arguments exposed Wesley's inherent evangelical Arminianism, in which the gift of grace cannot be relegated to a status of particularity, since freely offered to everyone. Being strictly opposed to High Calvinist soteriology—which suggested that Christ's atonement was meant for a select few, and excluded the reprobate—Wesley was fearful of the negative, impractical consequences that would accompany it: "All preaching [would be] in vain. The elected would not need it; the reprobated were infallibly damned in any case and no preaching would ever alter the fact."[12] The effect of such teachings could inadvertently lead to an antinomian theology, which considered any virtuous, loving act of righteousness superfluous and even inconsequential for the Christian life. One needed only happen to "be" a member of the unconditionally elect to reap the benefits of God's grace. That is to say, one could potentially remain in the graces of God while mindfully continuing a life of turpitude.

The Calvinist/Arminian debate shaped Wesley's theology of salvation, and provided a background for his preaching on the topic of justification by faith. Like Baxter, Wesley was concerned for the eternal well being of souls, that all should embrace the merits of Christ's life and atoning death, and likewise be conformed in heart and mind to his genuine example of holiness. Through moralism and antinomianism, the practical consequences of God's justifying grace are compromised and subdued. Attempting to navigate the choppy seas of "divine sovereignty" and "human freedom," Wesley salvaged from his puritan predecessor not only a pastoral spirit committed to fostering authentic, Christian practice, but also an important body of theological writings confronting the same issues plaguing Wesley's ministry. Turning now to the

documents themselves, the breadth of similarity between the respective writings can hardly be overstated. The influence of the earlier on the later is obvious.

III. A Critical Comparison of Wesley's Sermon on "Justification by Faith" and Extract of "Aphorisms of Justification"

The intent of both authors centered on the salient matter of justification by faith. They sought to clarify a severely misunderstood doctrine. Concerning the theological relevance of justification, Wesley stated, "it contains the foundation of all our hope," while angrily continuing, "And yet how little hath this important question been understood."[13] His corrective mood is addressed to those who suggested that God had designated justification only for the elect, that the reprobate were precluded from receiving the fruits of God's grace. Baxter also warned against this, that God arbitrarily bestowed justifying grace upon unsuspecting individuals: "there is no more required to the perfect irrevocable justification of the vilest murderer or whore-master, but to believe that he is justified, or to be persuaded that God loveth him."[14] Being "persuaded" of one's forgiveness—as Baxter here uses the term—does not imply faithful repentance, but mental assent to a given proposition. Wesley and Baxter were mutual in their contempt for a position where no change in heart, mind, or practice needed to accompany justification, as long as one has been imputed the righteousness of Christ that covered any sinful blemish the elect might incur. Wesley and Baxter starkly countered such a claim in their writings, suggesting that any theology forgoing charitable Christian practice ought to be seriously questioned.

Even so, neither Wesley or Baxter envisioned human beings to be the meriting principle of God's favor, nor that by practicing charity one could earn justification or saving faith. Wesley was adamant in this regard, as he summarized "justification" as God's act of "pardon, [or] the forgiveness of sins."[15] He believed that as sinful human beings, we are unable to cause our own justification, for it "implies what God *does for us* through his Son."[16] Wesley maintained that all of humanity inherited the sin of our first father, Adam, but are regenerated by "the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all," grounded in the reality that "God is so far reconciled to all the world that he hath given them a new covenant."[17] We are justified by the freely offered grace of the Father through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, his Son. No longer bound to the law of sin and death, we become recipients of his grace as we respond in faith to his newly established covenant, and are pardoned from sinfulness and forgiven of all transgressions.

To be sure, this echoed an earlier sentiment put forth by Baxter: namely, the human inability to merit salvation. He affirmed as Wesley would later,

that humanity has fallen short of God's law and moral precepts. Only one can fulfill our need for right-standing by atoning for our sinfulness. "Jesus Christ, at the will of his Father, and upon his own will, being perfectly furnished for this work, with a divine power and personal righteousness, first undertook, and afterwards discharged this debt, by suffering what the law did threaten, and the offender himself was unable to bear."[18] By willingly subjecting himself to our would-be punishment for contravening God's law, Jesus atones for our sins and reconciles us unto the Father. Baxter's theology of justification matched Wesley's in this regard, as both held the person of Jesus Christ to be the redeemer who fulfills God's strict commandments, where we fail. By his atonement, God provisions our righteousness as we respond to the offer of salvation with faithful repentance.

Furthermore, both writers asserted that, prior to God's gift of grace, we cannot exhibit righteousness of any sort, nor can we act charitably toward others. We must first be justified by God's righteousness, be put into a standing of right relationship with the divine, before decent living can be occasioned. Goodness inheres to our works only after we are justified by the Father through Christ's atoning death. By his act of expiation, we are delivered of culpability and made recipients of his favor. Upon reception, we are made able to live as God has commanded. As Wesley maintained, "all our works should be done in charity, in love, in that love to God which produces love to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love while the love of the Father is not in us."[19] Until we experience the forgiveness of the Father, we cannot live charitably, for the nature of charitable living assumes life in accordance with the Father's will. To Wesley, we are sinners saved by God's free offer of justifying grace to which we respond and receive with faith. "Without grace we can no more believe than perfectly obey, as a dead man can no more remove a straw than a mountain."[20] Grace goes before righteousness and pre-conditions our ability to follow Christ's example of love and self-sacrifice. God does not justify those who are already righteous, for "it is only sinners that have any occasion for pardon: it is sin alone which admits of being forgiven."[21]

Wesley maintained in his sermon that justification was not synonymous with sanctification, the latter being "what [God] works in us by his Spirit" that leads us to holiness and Christian perfection.[22] The believer's moment of justification does not entail "the being made actually just and righteous. This is *sanctification*; which is indeed in some degree the immediate *fruit* of justification, but nevertheless is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature."[23] Still, when one is justified unto the Father, God delivers him or her of all blameworthiness. In the strictest sense of Wesley's definition, the believer is pardoned from sin and graced with the possibility of growth and Christian betterment. She is not, however imputed the righteousness of

Christ. Imputation suggests a transmission of Christ's meritorious activity. The substance of his work is different from our own. To assimilate the two, is to run the risk of the antinomian fallacy, which takes Christ's righteousness to be our own, excusing our lives from the decency of moral uprightness. As Woodrow Whidden suggests, "When Wesley speaks of imputation, he always seems to sense the ominous specter of quietistic Moravianism or hyper-Calvinism lurking about."[24] As Baxter so avidly pointed out, one must distinguish between the quality of Christ's merits, and the righteousness practiced by those whom the Father justifies. "The primary, and most proper righteousness, lieth in the conformity of our actions to the precept."[25] As Baxter maintained, the *first* order of righteousness belongs only to Jesus of Nazareth who modeled his life after the law without committing any sin or moral offense. Our situation is a bit different, however. As humans tainted by willful disobedience, we are unable to follow his perfect example of love. We can only hope for the *second* order, "when, though we have [broken] the precepts, yet we have satisfied for our breach, either by our own suffering, or some other way."[26] To him, our hope of righteousness lay in "some other way," as we ourselves have flouted God's demanded perfection. Jesus appropriates the *second* order of righteousness to humankind through his steadfast abidance by the Mosaic Law. Emulating his selfless example of holiness, we too can participate in Christ's first order of righteousness, though it belongs to him alone. Our righteousness, which is of the *second* sort, germinates from Christ's exemplary act of atonement. As Baxter differentiates the two, "the righteousness we have in Christ, is one of the same sort with his; for his is a righteousness of the first kind. But Christ's righteousness, imputed to us, is only that of the second sort; and cannot therefore possibly be joined with our perfect obedience, to make up one righteousness for us."[27]

We are not imputed the righteousness of Christ, for his is perfect and sinless. Instead, God mends our sinful infirmity when we acknowledge its imperfection and allow his grace to take root in our lives. To Baxter then, second order righteousness is imputed to believers. As he understood it, the righteousness of God was appropriated by God alone, which contoured those enabled ascension to God in faith. God's imputed righteousness is participatory, that is, involves both the divine and human. God is gracious lover and gift-giver, which in turn correlates to our part: to the extent that humans receive God's gift through belief and holiness in and through the expiatory work performed by the Son, we are made righteous. The "righteousness of God" is not merited by any human endeavor (works of the Law), but manifests in those who are justified freely by the grace of God. God's righteousness alone reverses our errant ways; and it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who freely offers himself as the medium unto this profound

reality. Laying groundwork for Wesley and his sermon, Baxter distinguished between Christ's righteousness and ours, the latter of which begins to develop pending our faithful reception of God's gracious offer of pardon.

To both Baxter and Wesley, the process of becoming righteous is not instantaneous, but gradual. It begins in the moment when one is justified, and comes to fruition (holiness) with continued faithful obedience to God's will. Unable to merit the rewards of salvation, we are justified by faith alone. Humanity must recognize its frailty and plead for God's mercy and forgiveness. Baxter further explicated this notion, which was deeply embedded within Wesley's sermon as well. "It is faith which justifieth men, 1. In the nearest sense directly and properly, as it is the fulfilling of the condition of the new covenant, 2. In the remote and more proper sense, as it is the receiving of Christ and his satisfactory righteousness."[28] According to Baxter then, one is justified when she repents of her sin and grasps the righteousness of Christ. Not received according to merit but through mercy and grace, God imputes saving faith and unfailingly guides us toward righteousness.[29] Baxter's definition of faith was broad and overarching. It included 1) repentance, the pleading for mercy from what we actually deserve, 2) prayer for pardon, closely linked with repentance, and 3) living a life of genuine love and service, which entailed works of charity and forgiveness of others. In short, faith assumes the general quality of Christian practice that causes us to live in accord with the Father's commandments. We are imputed this all-encompassing Christian faith through obedience and servitude, as it is the necessary condition of our salvation: "even to our taking the Lord for our God, and Christ for our Redeemer and Lord, doth imply our sincere obedience to him, and is the sum of the conditions on our part."[30] When we are obedient to the will of the Father, and to Christ who atones for our sins, we are justified by faith and made fertile for righteousness.

Likewise, Wesley posited the same in his sermon. Faith was essential to experiencing the righteousness of Christ: "But on what terms then is he justified who is altogether 'ungodly', and till that time 'worketh not'? On one alone, which is faith."[31] Wesley defines faith as our conviction of the redeeming significance of Christ, and the acknowledgement of our sin and culpability. In Christ, we experience God's forgiving affability and are reconciled to the Father by the Son's meritorious work. In recognizing this objective, salvific reality, we too are justified to the Father by our belief in Christ's atoning sacrifice. As Wesley explained it, "Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself', but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*."[32] Only by recognizing God's genuine offer of grace, in and through the Redeemer of sins who extends his love even to "me," one is justified to the Father and forgiven of all her past

transgressions. In their respective soteriology then, it is clear that Baxter and Wesley held much in common.

IV. Conclusion

Wesley resonates with Baxter that the Father imputes to the believer justifying faith. Wesley maintained that "[It] is the *necessary* condition of justification."[33] Since we cannot will our own salvation, the prerequisite to our forgiveness is wrought by the Father alone, who imputes faith to the sinner in the instant of justification. Prior to which, we remain in our sin, lacking the empowerment to respond to God's loving call. However, in "the very moment God giveth faith (for 'it is the gift of God') to the 'ungodly', 'that worketh not', that 'faith is counted to him for righteousness' "[34] Convicted of his guilt, and made aware of Christ's saving presence, "faith is imputed to him for righteousness," and he is reconciled to the Father.[35] By faith alone is one justified and enabled to live the life of Christ, the life of righteousness. God imputes this faith to sinners who look to Christ for forgiveness and redemption. Justification by faith then is both something that God does in and for us which we cannot do ourselves, and an obedient act of contrition by which we recognize our sinful nature.

This rondo resounds throughout the movements of John Wesley's sermon, and corresponds in detail with much of the material extracted from Richard Baxter's *Aphorisms of Justification*. As noted, the two shared much in common: a deep disdain for the antinomian doctrine of salvation, a high esteem for Christ's atonement, a mutual recognition of unmerited grace, a shared valuing of imputed faith as the condition of justification, and a profound emphasis on the call to righteousness which we are presented in and through Christ's self-sacrificial death. Common throughout the two texts, these features illustrate the influence sustained by Wesley's sermon from Baxter's earlier *Aphorisms*. That Wesley incorporated into his own soteriological framework certain theological implications previously held by Baxter is significant. By publishing—and prefacing with positive remarks—his predecessor's material, Wesley affirmed the text's validity, and allowed its meaning and intention to contour his own mission and purpose. Moreover, by composing a sermon on the same matter, that incorporated similar language, intentions, and theological content from Baxter's earlier work, Wesley exposed an indebtedness to the seventeenth century non-conformist, whose immense influence helped to lay the foundations for his sermon on *Justification by Faith*.

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Footnotes

[1] Richard P. Heitzenrater and Albert C. Outler, ed. John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1991), 111. Throughout this analysis the title of Wesley's homily, Justification by Faith, will be interchanged with its ordinal designation, "sermon no. 5."

[2] C. F. Allison. The Rise of Moralism: the Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter (New York: Seabury Press, 1966) 156. For a detailed description of the controversy incited by Baxter's theology of Justification, pay special attention to chapter eight.

[3] John Wesley, ed. An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification (4th ed. Dublin, Ireland: Bride-Street, 1802) 3.

[4] Though it was John Wesley who published the extract, the text itself belongs to Richard Baxter; the brief synopsis provided of the work's historical emergence will reflect this, and be placed within Baxter's 17th century context of debate.

[5] Alan Charles Clifford, Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology, 1640-1790 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 22.

[6] Hans Boersma, A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in its 17th-Century Context of Controversy (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Boekencentrum, 1993), 31.

[7] Ibid., 31.

[8] Tim Cooper, Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: Richard Baxter and Antinomianism (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001) 92.

[9] Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, "Moralism, Justification, and the Controversy over Methodism" in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44 (1993) 663. He neatly defines the term, moralism, as "any system which assigns merit or causation in salvation to human effort," 655.

[10] Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology, 1640-1790, 55.

[11] Albert Brown-Lawson, John Wesley and the Anglican Evangelicals of the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Cooperation and Separation with Special Reference to the Calvinistic Controversies (Edinburgh, Scotland: Pentland, 1994), 161.

[12] Ibid., 164.

[13] John Wesley, "Justification by Faith" in John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater and Albert C. Outler (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1991), 112.

[14] John Wesley, ed. An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification, 4th ed. (Dublin, Ireland: Bride-Street, 1802), 47

[15] Justification by Faith, 115.

[16] Ibid., 114.

[17] Ibid., 114.

[18] An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification, 6.

[19] Justification by Faith, 117

[20] An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification, 13.

[21] Justification by Faith, 116.

[22] Ibid., 114.

[23] Ibid., 114.

[24] Woodrow W Whidden "Wesley on Imputation: A Truly Reckoned Reality or Antinomian Polemical Wreckage?" in *Asbury Theological Journal* no. 52 (Fall 1997)

[25] An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification, 20.

[26] Ibid., 20.

[27] Ibid., 22.

[28] Ibid., 23.

[29] Ibid., 37

[30] Ibid., 39.

[31] Justification by Faith, 117

[32] Ibid., 118.

[33] Ibid., 119.

[34] Ibid., 119.

[35] Ibid., 119.