

MISREPRESENTATIONS CORRECTED,

AND

TRUTH VINDICATED.

IN A REPLY TO THE REV. SOLOMON WILLIAMS'S BOOK,
INTITLED "THE TRUE STATE OF THE QUESTION
CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY
TO LAWFUL COMMUNION IN THE CHRIST-
IAN SACRAMENTS."

PREFACE.

SINCE I have been so repeatedly charged by Mr. Williams, with indecent and injurious treatment of Mr. Stoddard, (whom doubtless I ought to treat with much respect) I may expect from what appears of Mr. Williams's disposition this way, to be charged with ill treatment of him too. I desire therefore that it may be justly considered by the reader, what is, and what is not, injurious or unhandsome treatment of an author in a controversy. And here I would crave leave to say, that I humbly conceive, a distinction ought to be made between opposing and exposing a cause, or the arguments used to defend it, and reproaching persons. He is a weak writer indeed, who undertakes to confute an opinion, but dares not expose the nakedness and absurdity of it, nor the weakness nor inconsistency of the methods taken and arguments used by any to maintain it, for fear he should be guilty of speaking evil of those things, and be charged with reproaching them. If an antagonist is angry at this, he thereby gives his readers too much occasion of suspicion towards himself, as chargeable with weakness, or bitterness.

I therefore now give notice, that I have taken full liberty in this respect ; only endeavoring to avoid pointed and exaggerating expressions. If to set forth what I suppose to be the true absurdity of Mr. Williams's scheme, or any part of it, that it may be viewed justly in all its nakedness ; withal observing the weakness of the defence he has made, not fearing to shew wherein it is weak, and how the badness of his cause obliges him to be inconsistent with himself, inconsistent with his own professed principles in religion, and with things conceded and asserted by him in the book especially under consideration ; and declaring particularly wherein I think his arguments fail, whether it be in begging the question, or being impertinent and beside the question, or arguing in effect against himself ; also observing wherein Mr.

Williams has made misrepresentations of words or things ; I say, if to do these things be reproaching him, and injurious treatment of him, then I have injured him. But I think I should be foolish, if I were afraid to do that (and to do it as thoroughly as I can) which must be the design of my writing, if I write at all in opposition to his tenets, and to the defence he makes of them.

Indeed if I misrepresent what he says, in order to make it appear in the worst colors ; altering his words to another sense, to make them appear more ridiculous ; or adding other words, that carry the sense beyond the proper import of his words, to heighten the supposed absurdity, and give me greater advantage to exclaim ; if I set myself to aggravate matters, and strain them beyond bounds, making mighty things of mere trifles ; or if I use exclamations and invectives, instead of arguments ; then Mr. Williams might have just cause to complain and the reader would have just reason for disgust. But whether I have done so or not, must be judged by the reader ; of whom I desire nothing more than the most impartial and exact consideration of the merits of the cause, and examination of the force and weight of every argument. I desire, that no bitter reproachful invectives, no vehement exclamations, no supercilious assuming words and phrases may be taken for reasoning, on either side. If the reader thinks he finds any such in what I have written, I am willing he should set them aside as nothing worth ; carefully distinguishing between them and the strength of the argument. I desire not, that the cause should be judged of by the skill which either Mr. Williams or I do manifest, in flinging one at another.

If in places where the argument pinches most, and there is the greatest appearance of strong reason, in Mr. Williams's book, I do (as some other disputants) instead of entering thoroughly into the matter, begin to flounce and fling, and go about to divert and drown the reader's attention to the argument, by the noise of big words, or magisterial and disdainful expressions ; let the reader take it (as justly he may) for a shrewd sign of a consciousness of the weakness of my cause in that particular, or at least of a distrust of my own ability to defend myself well in the reader's apprehension, and to come off with a good grace any other way.

In this case, I shall not think it any injustice done me by the reader, though he suspects that I feel myself pressed, and begin to be in trouble, for fear I should not seem to come off like a champion, if I should trust to mere reasoning. I can uprightly say, I never have endeavored by such means to evade a proper consideration of any part of Mr. Williams's reasoning; nor have designedly contrived, in this or any other method, to free myself from the trouble of a just answer to any thing material in his book; and I have been especially careful to speak most particularly to the main parts of his scheme, and such of his reasonings, as I could suppose those of his readers who are on his side, would be most likely to have their chief dependence on and to think most difficult to be answered.

With regard to my method in this reply, I judged it most convenient to reduce my remarks on Mr. Williams's principles, and the part of his scheme, and kinds of arguing which repeatedly appear in various parts of his book, to their proper heads. I thought, this tended to give the reader a clearer and more comprehensive view of the whole controversy, and the nature of the arguments made use of; and that it also would make my work the shorter. For otherwise, I must have had the same things, or things of the same nature, to have observed often, as I found them repeated in different parts of his book, and the same remarks to make over and over again. And that the reader may not be without any advantages which he might have had in the other method, of keeping, in my reply, to the order in which things lie in the book replied to, following my author from one page and paragraph to another I have therefore subjoined a table, by which the reader may readily turn to what is said on each particular, that is wont to be brought into this debate, on one side or the other.

With regard to my citations from Mr. Williams's book, I have never designedly altered his words: And where I have for brevity's sake referred to any sentiment of his, without citing the words at large, I have used care not to change or heighten the sense, or in any respect to vary from the just import of what he delivers. And that the reader may himself more easily and readily judge of the fairness of my citations and references I

*have mentioned the page, and the part of the page, where the thing referred to is to be found : Supposing each page to be divided into five equal parts, I have noted the several parts of the page by the letters a. b. c. d. e. So that when I have referred to the top of the page, or the first fifth part of it, I have mentioned the number of the page, and added the letter a, to the number : And if the middle, or third fifth part, then I have added the letter c. And so of the rest, as the reader will see. I have ever done thus, unless the thing referred to is to be found through the whole or great part of the page. I have also done the same very often, where I have occasion to cite other authors. Only when I have before quoted the same thing I am not always so exact and particular in noting the place again, in my second quotation or reference.**

* It was not thought necessary to insert these references, nor the table mentioned above in this work, as it is probable few readers will possess Mr. Williams's Book, or wish to attend so closely to the controversy.

MISREPRESENTATIONS CORRECTED,

AND

TRUTH VINDICATED

PART I.

Observing the general Misrepresentations Mr. WILLIAMS makes concerning the Book he writes against.

SECTION I.

Concerning the DESIGN of my writing and publishing my Book, and the QUESTION debated in it.

MR. WILLIAMS asserts it to be my professed and declared *design*, in writing the book, which he has undertaken an answer to, to oppose Mr. STODDARD. He has taken a great liberty in this matter. He charges me with a declared design of writing in opposition to Mr. Stoddard, no less than nine or ten times in his book. And he does not content himself with saying, there are passages in my preface, or elsewhere, whence this may be *inferred*; but he says expressly, that *I profess to be disputing* against Mr. Stoddard's doctrine p. 14. That I tell my readers, *I am disputing* against Mr. Stoddard's question. p. 37. That I tell them so in my preface, p. 107. That I often declare that *I am opposing* Mr. Stoddard's opinion, p. 132. And on this foundation he charges me with "blot-

ting a great deal of paper, dis-serving the cause of truth by changing the question, and putting it in such terms as Mr. Stoddard expressly disclaims, and then confuting it as Mr. Stoddard's principle ; unfair treatment of Mr. Stoddard." p. 2. " Surprizingly going off from Mr. Stoddard's argument to cast an odium upon it, treating Mr. Stoddard and his doctrine in such a manner as to reproach him and his principles, tending to render them odious to the unthinking multitude, and telling a manifest untruth." p. 14. &c. 15. Whereas, I never once signified it to be the thing I aimed at, to oppose Mr. Stoddard, or appear as *his* antagonist. But the very reverse was true ; and meddling with him, or what he had said, I studied to avoid, as much as the circumstances of the debate with my people would allow, who had been taught by him, and who so greatly and continually alleged against me the things which he had said. Nor is there any appearance in those passages Mr. Williams cites from my preface, as though this was the thing I sought or aimed at. Nay, one of those passages which he produces to prove it, shews the contrary : As it shews, that its being so (as I supposed) that what I wrote was not consistent with, but opposite to what Mr. Stoddard had maintained, was an unsought for and displeasing circumstance of that publication. My words are, " 'Tis far from a pleasing circumstance of this publication, that it is against what my honored grandfather strenuously maintained, both from the pulpit and the press." Certainly my *regretting* and *excusing* such an unavoidable circumstance was a thing exceeding diverse from giving notice to the world, that the thing I aimed at was to set myself up as Mr. Stoddard's antagonist, and to write an answer to, and confute what he had written. It will, at first sight, be manifest to every impartial reader, that the design of my preface was not to state the subject and intention of the book : This is done professedly, and very particularly, afterwards, in the first part of the essay itself. And if I might have common justice, surely I might be allowed to tell my own opinion, and declare my own design without being so confidently and frequently charged with *misrepresenting* my own thoughts and intentions.

The very *nature of the case* is such as must lead every impartial person to a conviction, that the design of my writing must be to defend myself, in that controversy, which I had with my people at Northampton ; as it is notorious and publicly known, that *that controversy* was the occasion of my writing ; and that therefore my business must be to defend that opinion or position of *mine* which I had declared to them, which had been the occasion of the controversy, and so the grand subject of debate between us ; whether this were exactly agreeable to any words that might be found in Mr. Stoddard's writings on the subject, or not. Now this opinion or position was the same with that which I expressed in the first part of my book. In such terms I expressed myself to the committee of the church, when I first made that declaration of my opinion, which was the beginning of the controversy, and when writing in defence of my opinion was first proposed : And this was the point continually talked of in all conversation at Northampton, for more than two years, even until Mr. Williams's book came out. The controversy was, *Whether there was any need of making a credible profession of godliness, in order to persons being admitted to full communion ; Whether they must profess saving faith, or whether a profession of common faith were not sufficient ; whether persons must be esteemed truly godly, and must be taken in under that notion, or whether if they appeared morally sincere, that were not sufficient ?* And when my book came abroad, there was no objection made, that I had not truly expressed the subject of debate, in my stating the question : But the subject of debate afterwards, in parish meetings, church meetings, and in all conversation, was the question laid down in my book. No suggestion among them, that the profession persons made in Mr. Stoddard's way, was taken as a profession of *real* godliness, or gospel holiness ; or that they were taken in *under a notion of their being truly pious persons*, as Mr. Williams would have it : No suggestion, that the dispute was only about the *degree of evidence*. But the dispute was, what was the thing to be made evident ; whether *real godliness* or, *moral sincerity* ? It was constantly insisted on, with the greatest vehemence, that

it was not saving religion, which needed to be *professed*; or *pretended to* ; but another thing, religion of a lower kind. The public *acts* of the church and parish from time to time, shew, that the point in controversy was, *whether the professors of godliness only, ought to be admitted ?* Public votes, of which I made a record, were several times to know the church's mind concerning the admission of *those who are able and willing to make a profession of godliness* ; using these terms. And once it was passed, that, *such should not be admitted in the way of publicly making such a profession.* And at another time the vote passed, *that the admission of such persons in such a way (described in the same words) should not be referred to the judgment of certain neighboring ministers.* At another time, it was insisted on by the parish, in a parish meeting, that I should put a vote in the church, in these words, *Whether there be not a dispute between Mr. Edwards pastor of the church, and the church, respecting the question he hath argued in his book last published ?* And accordingly the vote was put and affirmed, in a church meeting, in the same terms. And this was the question I insisted on in my public lectures at Northampton, appointed for giving the reasons of my opinion. My doctrine was in these words, " It is the mind and will of God, that none should be admitted to full communion in the church of Christ, but such as in profession, and in the eye of a reasonable judgment, are truly saints, or godly persons." The town was full of objections against those sermons : But none, as ever I heard, objected, that my doctrine was *beside the controversy.* And this was all along the point of difference between me and the neighboring *Ministers.* This was the grand subject of debate with them, at a meeting of ministers, appointed on purpose for conference on the subject. It was wholly concerning the *matter* of profession, or the *thing* to be exhibited and made evident or visible ; and not about the *manner* of professing, and the *degree* of evidence. And this was the doctrine directly opposed by Mr. A—y, one of the neighboring ministers, whom my people had got as their champion to defend their cause in the pulpit at Northampton. Thus one of the corollaries he drew from his doctrine

(as it was taken from his mouth in writing) was, that “a man may be a visible saint, and yet there be no sufficient grounds for our charity, that he is regenerate.” Quite contrary to what Mr. Williams maintains. Another of his corollaries was in these words, “a minister or church may judge a man a saint, and upon good grounds, and not have grounds to judge him regenerate.” He proposed this enquiry, “do not such as join themselves to the church, covenant, not only to be visible saints, but saints in heart?” The answer was in the *negative*; quite contrary to Mr. Williams. Another was, “does not a visible saint imply a visibility of grace, or an appearance of it?” The answer was, “not always.” Quite contrary to Mr. Williams. Another was, “Is it not hypocrisy in any man, to make a profession of religion, and join himself to the church, and not have grace?” The answer was in the *negative*; also quite contrary to Mr. Williams. But these sermons of Mr. A—y, were highly approved by the generality of the people of Northampton, as agreeable to their minds.

And the controversy, as I have stated it in my book, was the controversy in which the church and I appeared before the *council*, who determined our separation, when we each of us declared our sentiments before them: The point of difference was entirely the *matter* of profession, and the *thing* to be made *visible*; not the *degree* of evidence or *visibility*. No hint was given as though we both agreed, that true piety or gospel holiness was the thing to be made visible, and that such only should be received as are truly godly persons in the eye of the church’s judgment (as Mr. Williams holds) and that we only differed about the proper grounds of such a judgment.

And therefore it is apparent, it was this controversy, and its consequences, that were the ground of my separation from my people; and not any thing like the controversy which Mr. Williams professes to manage in his answer. This controversy, when it came out in Mr. Williams’s book, was new in Northampton, and entirely alien from all the dispute which had filled that part of the country, and a great part of Neweng-

land, with noise and uproar, for about two years and an half. The thing which Mr. Williams over and over allows to be true, was the very same, both in effect and in terms, which the people had been most vehemently fighting against, from week to week, and from month to month, during all this time : And therefore the design of my writing led and obliged me to maintain that position or doctrine of mine, which was the occasion of this debate.

And, be it so, that I did suppose this position was contrary to Mr. Stoddard's opinion, and was opposed by him, * and therefore thought fit in my preface to excuse myself to the world for differing from him ; did this oblige me, in all that I wrote for the maintaining my position, to keep myself strictly to the words which he had expressed *his question* in, and to regulate and limit myself in every argument I used, and objection I answered, by the terms which he made use of in proposing his opinion and arguments ? And if I have not done it, do I therefore deserve to be charged before the world with *changing the question*, with *unfair treatment of Mr. Stoddard*, with *surprisingly going off from his argument*, with *dis-serving the cause of truth*, &c.

It would have been no great condescension in Mr. Williams if he had allowed that I knew what the question was, which was disputed between me and my people, as well as he, in a distant part of the country : Yea, if he had acknowledged, that I was as likely as he, to understand Mr. Stoddard's real sentiments and practice ; since I was in the ministry two years with him, as copastor of the same church, and was united with him in ecclesiastical administrations, in admitting members, and in examining them as to their qualifications, and have stood for more than twenty three years in a pastoral relation to his church, most intimately acquainted with the nature of its constitution, its sentiments and method of administration, and all its religious concerns, have myself been immediately concerned in the admission of more than three quarters of its present members, and have had the greatest occasion to look

* Whether I was mistaken in this, will appear in the sequel.

into their way of admission, and have been acquainted with every living member that Mr. Stoddard had admitted before my coming ; and have been particularly informed, by many of them, of the manner of Mr. Stoddard's conduct in admitting them, their own apprehensions concerning the terms of their admission, and the profession they made in order to it ; and also the sentiments of the whole of that large town, who were born and brought up under his ministry, concerning his constant doctrine and practice, relating to the admission of members, from their infancy. Whereas, Mr. Williams from his youth had lived in another part of the country, at seventy miles distance.



SECTION II.

Observing Mr. Williams's Misrepresentations of the principles and tenets, delivered in the book which he undertakes to answer.

MR. WILLIAMS does very greatly misrepresent the opinion I am of, and the principles I maintain in my book, in many respects.

I. He says, p. 5. " The whole argument, and indeed the whole controversy turns upon this single point, viz. What is that *evidence*, which by divine appointment the church is to have, of the *saintship* of those who are admitted to the outward privileges of the covenant of grace ? Mr. Edwards seems to suppose, this must be the *highest* evidence a man can give of sincerity ; and I apprehend it to be the *lowest* evidence the nature of the thing will admit." But this is very strange, since I had particularly declared in my *stating of the question* (p. 5.) that the evidence I insisted on, was *some outward manifestation, that ordinarily rendered the thing probable.* Which

shews that all I insisted on, was only, that the evidence should amount to *probability*. And if the nature of the case will admit of some *lower* kind of evidence than this, or if there be any such thing as a sort of evidence that does not so much as amount to *probability*, then it is possible that I may have some controversy with him and others about the degree of evidence : Otherwise it is hard to conceive, how he should contrive to make out a controversy with me.

But that the reader may better judge, whether Mr. Williams truly represents me as supposing that the evidence which should be insisted on, is *the highest evidence a man can give of sincerity*, I would here insert an extract of a letter which I wrote to the Rev. Peter Clark of Salem Village, a twelve-month before Mr. Williams's book was published : The original is doubtless in Mr. Clark's hands. In that letter, I declared my sentiments in the following words : " It does not belong to the controversy between me and my people, how particular or large the profession should be that is required. I should not choose to be confined to exact limits as to that matter. But rather than contend, I should content myself with a few words, briefly expressing the cardinal virtues, or acts implied in a hearty compliance with the covenant of grace ; the profession being made (as should appear by inquiry into the person's doctrinal knowledge) understandingly ; if there were an external conversation agreeable thereto. Yea, I should think that such a person, solemnly making such a profession, had a right to be received as the object of a public charity, however he himself might scruple his own conversion, on account of his not remembering the time, not knowing the method of his conversion, or finding so much remaining sin, &c. And (if his own scruples did not hinder)* I

* I added this, because I supposed that such persons as judge themselves unconverted, if of my principles, respecting qualifications for communion, would scruple coming, and could not come with a good conscience : But if they were of Mr. Stoddard's principle, viz. That unconverted men might lawfully come, neither a man's being of that opinion, nor his judging himself unconverted, would hinder my receiving him who exhibited proper evidence to the church of his being a convert.

should think a minister or church had no right to debar such a professor, though he should say, he did not think himself converted. For I call that a profession of godliness, which is a profession of the great things wherein godliness consists, and not a profession of his own opinion of his good estate."

Northampton, May 7, 1750.

In like manner I explained my opinion, very particularly and expressly, before the council that determined my separation from my people, and before the church, in a very public manner in the meetinghouse, many people being present, near a year before Mr. Williams's book was published; and to make it the more sure, that what I maintained might be well observed, I afterwards sent the foregoing extract of my letter to Mr. Clark of Salem village, into the council. And, as I was informed, it was particularly taken notice of in the council, and handed round among them, to be read by them.

The same council, having heard that I had made certain draughts of the covenant, or forms of a public profession of religion, which I stood ready to accept from the candidates for communion, they, for their further information, sent for them. Accordingly I sent them four distinct draughts or forms, which I had drawn up about a twelvemonth before, (near two years before the publishing of Mr. Williams's book) as what I stood ready to accept (any one of them) rather than contend and break with my people. The two shortest of those forms were as follows.

One of them was,

"I hope, I do truly find a heart to give up myself wholly to God, according to the tenor of that covenant of grace which was sealed in my baptism, and to walk in a way of that obedience to all the commandments of God, which the covenant of grace requires, as long as I live.

The other,

"I hope, I truly find in my heart a willingness to comply with all the commandments of God, which require me to give

up myself wholly to Him, and to serve Him with my body and my spirit ; and do accordingly now promise to walk in a way of obedience to all the commandments of God, as long as I live."

Now the reader is left to judge, whether I insist, as Mr. Williams represents, that persons must not be admitted without the *highest* evidence a man *can* give of sincerity.

II. Mr. Williams is abundant in suggesting and insinuating to his readers, that the opinion laid down in my book is, that persons ought not to be admitted to communion without an absolute and peremptory determination in those who admit them, that they are truly godly ; because I suppose it to be necessary, that there should be a *positive* judgment in their favor.

Here I desire the reader to observe, that the word *positive* is used in two senses. (1.) Sometimes it is put in opposition to *doubtful*, or *uncertain* : And then it signifies the same as *certain*, *peremptory*, or *assured*. But (2.) The word *positive* is very often used in a very different sense ; not in opposition to *doubtful*, but in opposition to *negative* : And so understood, it signifies very much the same as *real*, or *actual*. Thus, we often speak of a *negative* good, and a *positive* good. A *negative* good is a mere negation or absence of *evil*. But a *positive* good is something more, it is some *real*, *actual* good, instead of *evil*. So there is a *negative* charity, and a *positive* charity. A *negative* charity is a mere absence of an ill judgment of a man, or forbearing to condemn him. Such a charity a man may have towards any stranger he transiently sees in the street, that he never saw or heard any thing of before. A *positive* charity is something further than merely not condemning, or not judging ill of a man ; it implies a *good thought* of a man. The reader will easily see that the word *positive*, taken in this sense, is an exceeding different thing from *certain*, or *peremptory*. A man may have something more than a mere *negative* charity towards another, or a mere forbearing to condemn him, he may actually entertain some *good thought* of him, and yet there may be no proper *peremptoriness*, no presence of any *certainty* in the case.

Now it is in this sense I use the phrase, *positive judgment*, viz. In opposition to a mere *negative charity*; as I very plainly express the matter, and particularly and fully explain myself in *stating the question*. In my *Inquiry*, (p. 5.) I have the following words: "By *Christian judgment* I intend something further than a kind of mere *negative charity*, implying that we forbear to censure and condemn a man, because we do not know but that he may be godly, and therefore forbear to proceed on the foot of such a censure or judgment in our treatment of him; as we would kindly entertain a stranger, not knowing but, in so doing, we entertain an angel, or precious saint of God: But I mean a *positive judgment*, founded on some *positive* appearance or visibility, some outward manifestation that ordinarily renders the thing *probable*. There is a difference between suspending our judgment, or forbearing to condemn, or having some hope that possibly the thing may be so, and so hoping the best, and a *positive judgment* in favor of a person. For a having some hope, only implies, that a man is not in utter despair of a thing; though his prevailing opinion may be otherwise, or he may suspend his opinion."

Here I think, my meaning is very plainly and carefully explained. However, inasmuch as the word *positive* is sometimes used for *peremptory* or *certain*, Mr. Williams catches at the term, and lays fast hold of the advantage he thinks this gives him, and is abundant, all over his book, in representing as though I insisted on a *positive judgment* in this sense. So he applies the word, referring to my use of it, from time to time. Thus, p. 69. "If there be any thing in this argument, I think it must be what I have observed, viz. That a Christian must make a *positive judgment* and determination, that another man is a saint, and this judgment must have for its ground something which he supposes is, at least ordinarily, a *certain* evidence of his saintship, and by which gracious sincerity is certainly distinguished from every thing else." And p. 141. "The notion of men's being able and fit to determine *positively* the condition of other men, or the *certainty* of their gracious state, has a direct tendency to de-

ceive the souls of men." And thus Mr. Williams makes mention of a *positive judgment* above forty times in his book, with reference to my use of it, and to my declared opinion of the necessity of it ; and every where plainly uses the phrase in that sense, for *absolute* and *peremptory*, in opposition to *doubtfulness* ; continually insinuating, that this is what I professedly insist on. Whereas, every *act* of the judgment whatsoever, is a positive judgment in the sense in which I have fully declared I use it, *viz.* in opposition to *negative* ; which is no *act*, but a mere withholding of the act of the judgment, or forbearing any actual judgment.* Mr. Williams himself does abundantly suppose, that there must be a *positive judgment* in *this* sense : He grants the very thing, though he rejects the term : For he holds, there must be such a "visibility as makes persons to appear to be real saints." p. 5.—He allows, that "the moral image of God or Christ must appear or be supposed to be in them, as the ground and rea-

* Mr. John Glas, in his *Observes upon the original Constitution of the Christian Church*, (p. 55, 56) says as follows. "You seem to have a great prejudice at what you call *positive evidences*, and judging upon them in the admission of church members. And I am at some loss to understand what you mean by them, though I have heard the expression frequently, among people of your opinion, used to express some very ill thing. If you mean by *positive evidences*, infallible evidences of a thing that none but God infallibly knows, and can assure a man's own conscience of, with respect to a man himself ; I think it would be a very great evil for a man to require such evidence to found his judgment of charity, concerning another man's faith and holiness, or concerning his being an object of *brotherly love*. And I think, he is bound by the law of Christ to form his judgment in this matter upon less evidence. But if you mean *positive evidence* in opposition to *negative*, which is no evidence, I must own, I know not how to form a judgment of charity without some *positive evidence*. And is not a *credible profession* something *positive* ? Is not a credible profession of the faith, love, and hope that is in Christ, or of Christianity, a *positive evidence* of a man's being an object of *brotherly love*, which evidence ought to be the ground of my judgment of charity concerning him, that he is a Christian, a believer in Christ, a brother for whom Christ died ? If it be otherwise, and if there be no evidence upon which I can charitably judge, that a man is a brother for whom Christ died, then tell me, how I can evidence my love to Jesus Christ, in the labor of love towards my brother, whom I have seen ; and my love to God, in my love to them that are begotten of him."

son of our charity ; and that there must be some apprehension, some judgment of mind, of the saintship of persons, for its foundation, p. 68, and 69, and 71....That they “ must have such a character appearing in them, p. 55.— That there must be a judgment founded on “ moral Evidence of gospel holiness,” p. 139.

III. Mr. Williams to make my scheme appear the more ridiculous, does more than once represent it as my opinion, that in order to persons being admitted into the church, there must be a judgment of their being regenerate, founded on such a degree of evidence, as that it shall not be liable to be mistaken more than once in ten times. Thus, p. 63. “ Mr. Edwards himself supposes, in his own scheme, when he has made a positive judgment that every one singly whom he admits into the church is regenerate ; yet, when taken collectively, it is probable *one in ten* will be an hypocrite ?” So, p. 71. “ If any thing be intended to the purpose for which this argument is brought, I conceive it must mean, that there must be such a *positive judgment* of the real holiness of persons, as is *not mistaken more than once in ten times*.” Now I desire the reader to observe what is the whole ground, on which he makes such a representation. In explaining my opinion, in the beginning of my inquiry (p. 6) I desired it might be observed, that I did not suppose we ought to expect any such degree of *certainty* of the godliness of those who are admitted into the church, as that when the whole number admitted are taken collectively, or considered in the gross, we should have any reason to suppose every one to be truly godly ; though we might have charity for each one that was admitted, taken *singly*, and by himself. And to shew, that such a thing was possible, I endeavored to illustrate it by a comparison, or supposed case of probability *of ten to one* in the example of certain stones, with such probable marks of a *diamond*, as by experience had been found not to fail more than *once in ten times*. In which case, if a particular stone were found with those marks, there would be a probability of *ten to one*, with respect to that stone, singly taken, that it was genuine : But if ten such were taken together, there would

not be the same probability that every one of them was so ; but in this case, it is as likely as not, that some one in the ten is spurious. Now it is so apparent, that this particular degree of probability of *ten to one* is mentioned only as a *supposed case*, for illustration, and because, in a particular example, some number or other must be mentioned, that it would have been an affront to the sense of my readers to have added any caution, that he should not understand me otherwise. However, Mr. Williams has laid hold on this, as a good handle by which he might exhibit my scheme to the world in a ridiculous light ; as though I had declared it my real opinion, that there must be the probability, of just *ten to one*, of true godliness, in order to persons' admission into the church. He might with as much appearance of sense and justice, have asserted concerning all the supposed cases in books of arithmetic, that the authors intend these cases should be understood as real *facts*, and that they have written their books, with all the sums and numbers in them, as books of *history* ; and if any cases mentioned there only as examples of the several rules, are unlikely to be true accounts of fact, therefore have charged the authors with writing a *false* and *absurd* history.

IV. Another thing, yet further from what is honorable in Mr. Williams is this ; that whereas I said as above, that there ought to be a prevailing opinion concerning those that are admitted, *taken singly, or by themselves*, that they are truly godly or gracious, though when we look on the whole number in the gross, we are far from determining that every one is a true saint, and that not one of the judgments we have passed, has been mistaken ; Mr. Williams, because I used the phrase *singly taken*, has laid hold on the expression and from thence has taken occasion to insinuate to his readers, as if my scheme were so very extravagant, that according to this, when a great multitude are admitted, their admitters must be confident of EVERY ONE'S being *regenerated*. Hence he observes, (p. 98.) "There is no appearance, that John made a positive judgment that *every one* of these people were regenerated." Plainly using the expression as a very strong one ; leading the reader to suppose, I insist the evidence shall be so clear, that when

such a vast multitude as John baptized are viewed, the admitter should be peremptory in it, that his judgment has not failed so much as in a *single* instance; the very *reverse* of what I had expressed. In like manner, Mr. Williams treats the matter from time to time. As in p. 55. "The thing to be proved from hence is, that the apostles and primitive Christians, not only thought that these persons were Christians, by reason of their external calling, and professed compliance with the call; but had formed a positive judgment concerning EVERY ONE OF THEM SINGLY, that they were real saints." Here the expression is plainly used as a very strong one; as implying much more than esteeming so great a multitude, when taken in the gross to be generally true saints, and with a manifest design to carry the same idea in the mind of the reader as was before mentioned. See another like instance p. 62.

V. However, my opinion is not represented bad enough yet; but to make it appear still worse, Mr. Williams is bold to strain his representation of it to that height, as to suggest that what I insist on, is a *certainty* of others' regeneration: Though this be so diverse from what I had largely explained in stating the question, and plainly expressed in other parts of my book, * and also inconsistent with his own representations in other places. For if what I insist on be a probability that *may fail once in ten times*, as he says it is p. 63, then it is not a *certainty* that I insist on; as he suggests, p. 141. Speaking of the evil consequences of my opinion, he says, "the notion of men's being able and fit to determine positively the condition of other men, or the certainty of their gracious estate, has a direct tendency to deceive the souls of men." So again in p. 69. And he suggests, that I require more than *moral evidence*, in p. 6, and p. 139.

* In stating the question, p. 5, I explained the requisite visibility, to be *some outward manifestation, that ordinarily renders the thing probable*. To the like purpose, is what I say in p. 11, and p. 12. And in p. 106, I say expressly. "Not a *certainty*, but a profession and visibility of these things, must be the rule of the church's proceeding."

VI. Mr. Williams represents me as insisting on some way of judging the state of such as are admitted to communion, *by their inward and spiritual experiences*, diverse from judging *by their profession and behavior*. So p. 7. "If their outward profession and behavior be the ground of this judgment, then it is not the inward experience of the heart." p. 55. "Which judgment must be founded on something beyond and beside their external calling, and *visible profession* to comply with it, and to be separated for God: And therefore this judgment must be founded, either upon revelation, or a personal acquaintance with *their experiences*," &c. In like manner he is abundant, from one end of his book to the other, in representing as though I insisted on judging of Men by *their inward and spiritual experiences*, in some peculiar manner. Which is something surprizing, since there is not so much as a word said about *relating, or giving an account of experiences*, or what is commonly so called, as a term of communion. Mr. Williams (p. 6) pretends to quote two passages of mine, as an evidence, that this is what I insist on. One is from the 5th page of my book. It is true I there say thus, "It is a visibility to the eye of the public charity, and not a private judgment, that gives a person a right to be received as a visible saint by the public." And I there say, "a public and serious profession of the great and main things wherein the essence of true religion or godliness consists, together with an honest character, an agreeable conversation, and good understanding of the doctrines of Christianity, and particularly those doctrines that teach the grand condition of salvation, and the nature of true saving religion; this justly recommends persons to the good opinion of the public; whatever suspicions and fears any particular person, either the minister, or some other, may entertain, from what he in particular has observed; perhaps the manner of his expressing himself in giving an account of his experiences, or an obscurity in the order and method of his experiences, &c." But the words do not imply, it may be demanded of the candidate, that he should give an account of his experiences to the minister or any body else, as the term

of his admission into the church ; nor had I respect to any such thing : But I knew it was the manner in many places for those who hoped they were godly persons, to converse with their neighbors, and especially with their minister, about their experiences ; whether it was required of them in order to their coming into the church, or no ; and particularly, I was sensible, that this was the manner at Northampton, for whose sake especially I wrote ; and I supposed it the way of many ministers, and people, to judge of others' state, openly and publicly, by the order and method of their experiences, or the manner of their relating them. But this I condemn in the very passage that Mr. Williams quotes ; and very much condemn, in other writings of mine which have been published ; and have ever loudly condemned, and borne my testimony against.

There is one passage more, which Mr. Williams adds to the preceding, and fathers on me, to prove that I require *an account of experiences* in order to admission ; pretending to rehearse my words, with marks of quotation, saying as follows, p. 6, and as he further explains himself elsewhere ; “ the proper visibility which the public is to have of a man's being a saint, must be on some account of his experience of those doctrines which teach the nature of true saving religion.” I have made long and diligent search for such a passage in my writings, but cannot find it. Mr. Williams says “ I thus explain myself elsewhere :” But I wish he had mentioned in what place.

If there be such a sentence in some of my writings (as I suppose there is not) it will serve little to Mr. Williams's purpose. If we take the word experience according to the common acceptation of it in the English language, viz. a person's perceiving or knowing any thing by trial or experiment, or by immediate sensation or consciousness within himself : In this sense, I own, it may from what I say in my book be inferred, that a man's profession of his experience should be required as a term of communion : And so it may be as justly and as plainly inferred, that Mr. Williams himself insists on a profession of experience as a term of communion ;

experience of a *deep conviction of a man's undone state without Christ* ; experience of a *persuasion of his judgment and conscience, that there is no other way of salvation* ; experience of *unfeigned desires to be brought to the terms of the covenant* : For such things as these, he says, must be professed : So p. 75, and in innumerable other places. There is no such thing possible as a man's professing any thing within himself or belonging to his own mind, either good or bad, either common or saving, unless it be something that he *finds*, or (which is the same thing) *experiences*, within himself.

I know the word *experience* is used by many in a sort of peculiar sense, for the particular order and method of what passes within the mind and heart in conversion. And in this sense, Mr. Williams knows I disclaim the notion of making *experiences* a term of communion. I say he knows it because (in p. 6) he quotes and rehearses the very words wherein I do expressly disclaim it. And I am very large and particular in testifying against it in my book on *Religious Affections* : A book I have good reason to think Mr. Williams has seen and read, having been thus informed by a man of his own principles, that had it from his mouth. There, in p. 300 and 301, I say as follows : “ In order to persons’ making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the scripture directs to, and such as the followers of Christ should require in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their society, it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular *steps* and *method*, by which the holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought, and brought about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians requiring any such relation in order to their receiving and treating others as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purposes ; or of their first examining them concerning the particular method and order of their *experiences*. They required of them a profession of the things wrought ; but no account of the manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the scripture of any such custom in the church of God, from Adam to the

death of the Apostle John." To the same purpose again I express myself in p. 302, and in the preface to the book that Mr. Williams writes against, I make particular mention of this book *on Religious Affections*, wherein these things are said; and there declare expressly, that when I wrote that book, I was of the same mind concerning the qualifications of communicants that I am of now. But,

VII. To make my scheme still more obnoxious and odious, Mr. Williams once and again insinuates, that I insist on an account of such inward FEELINGS, as are by men supposed to be the certain discriminating marks of grace* (so p. 7, and 141) though I never once used the phrase any where in my book. I said not a word, about *inward feelings*, from one end of it to the other: Nor is any *inward feeling* at all more implied in my scheme, than in his. But however, Mr. Williams knew that these phrases, *experiences* and *inward feelings*, were become odious of late to a great part of the country; and especially the latter of them, since Mr. Whitefield used it so much: And he well knew, that to tack these phrases to my scheme, and to suggest to his readers that these were the things I professed to insist on, would tend to render me and my scheme contemptible. If he says, though I use not that phrase, yet the things I insist on, are such as are *inwardly felt*; such as saving repentance, faith, &c. I answer, these things are no more *inward feelings*, than the things he himself insists on; such as a *deep conviction* of a man's undone state, *unfeigned fervent desires* after Christ, a *fixed resolution* for Christ, *engagedness* for heaven, &c.

VIII. Mr. Williams abundantly, in almost all parts of his book, represents my principles to be such as suppose *men* to be the SEARCHERS of *others hearts*. For which I have given no other ground, than only supposing that some such qualifications are necessary in order to communion, which have their seat in the *heart*, and so not to be intuitively seen by others; and that such qualifications must by profession and practice, be made so visible or credible to others, that others may rationally judge they are there. And Mr. Williams supposes the same thing as much as I. In p. 111, he expressly speaks

of the qualifications necessary to communion, as being *in the heart*, and not possible to be known any other way than by their being seen there : And also often allows, that these qualifications must be exhibited, and made *visible*, by a credible profession, and answerable practice : Yea, he goes further, he even supposes that those who admit them to sacraments, ought to be *satisfied* by their profession, that they *really have these qualifications*. Thus he says, p. 54. “ The baptizer ought to be *satisfied* by a person’s profession, that he really believes the gospel, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour.

IX. Mr. Williams is not contented with all these representations of my scheme, but will have it appear more absurd and monstrous still ; and therefore represents me as maintaining, that it is not the *visible profession of experiences*, that I suppose the ground of the church’s judgment ; but these *experiences and inward feelings themselves*, by having the heart *turned inside out*, and viewing them immediately *in the heart itself*, and judging upon the next and immediate *actings of the heart*. Here, I only desire the reader to read down Mr. Williams’s 7th page, and make his own reflections.

X. Whereas, in p. 16, of my book, I observed it to be the opinion of some, that, “ Although the members of the visible church are saints in profession and visibility, and in the acceptance of others, yet this is not with reference to saving holiness, but to quite another sort of saintship, viz. *moral sincerity* ; and that this is the *real saintship, discipleship, and godliness*, that is professed and visible in them.” &c. Mr. Williams, p. 4, 5, says, “ He does not remember that he ever heard of this, or that any body thought of it, before he saw it in my book ; and represents it as a poor man of straw, of my own framing : And he insists upon it, that it is allowed on all hands, that the visibility must be with *reference to saving holiness*.

I will not say, that Mr. Williams knew it to be a false representation which he here makes : But this I will say, that he ought to have been better informed, before he had thus publicly ridiculed this as a fiction of mine ; especially consider-

ing the opportunities and advantages he has had to know otherwise : This being the notion that had been (as was before observed) so loudly and publicly insisted on, for more than two years, by the people of Northampton, and by the neighboring ministers, and those of them that were Mr. Williams's near relatives ; as he has had abundant opportunities to be fully informed, having withal had great inducements to inquire. Besides, that this has been the universal opinion of all that part of the country (who thought themselves Mr. Stoddard's followers) for more than twenty years, is a fact as notorious, as that the people there generally believe Mr. Stoddard's doctrine of the necessity of a work of conversion, in order to get to heaven. And this is the opinion professedly maintained in a pamphlet published in Boston, (Anno 1741) intitled, *A right to the Lord's supper considered : A piece which has long been well known among Mr. Williams's nearest relatives, and in good repute with them ; as I have had occasion to observe. This pamphlet insists expressly and abundantly, that moral sincerity is the REAL discipleship and holiness, with respect to which visible Christians are called disciples and saints, in scripture. Particularly see pages 9, 10, 13, and 14. And which is more strange yet, Mr. Blake, the great author Mr. Williams makes so much use of, and in a book which I know he has long been the possessor of, speaks much of a profession of religion that has respect only to a dogmatical, historical faith, a common faith, a faith true indeed (as he says) in its kind, but short of that which is justifying and saving, and a profession which goes no further, as that which entitles to sealing ordinances. Thus he does expressly. See Blake on the covenant, p. 241, 244, 245. The same author again and again distinguishes between justifying faith and faith of profession ; as in p. 284, 285, 286. And which is more than all this, Mr. Williams (as will appear in the sequel) abundantly contends for the same thing himself, though against himself, and although he charges me in p. 35, with a great misrepresentation, in supposing that according to the scheme of my opposers, the profession required in those that are admitted, does not imply a pretence to any thing more than moral sincerity and common grace.*

PART II.

An Examination of Mr. Williams's SCHEME, in the various Parts of it.

SECTION I.

Mr. Williams's Concessions.

MR. WILLIAMS allows, that, in order to a man's coming to sacraments, " he ought solemnly to profess and declare, that he is really and heartily convinced of the divine truth of the gospel, p. 30, 36, 32, 84. That he does sincerely, and with all his heart believe the gospel, * p. 49, And that they which admit him, ought to be satisfied he really believes the gospel, that Jesus is the son of God, the Saviour p. 54, that he should profess and declare he believes in Christ, and that the gospel is indeed the revelation of God." p. 5, he allows, that " none ought to be admitted, but such as openly profess and declare an hearty consent to the covenant of grace, and compliance with the call of the gospel, and submission to the proposals of it, and satisfaction with that device for our salvation that is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ Je-

* When I first proposed to a certain candidate for communion at Northampton, the publicly making this profession, viz. *That he believed the truth of the gospel with all his heart*, many of the people cried out, that I insisted on what no saint on earth could profess, and that this amounted to a profession of absolute perfection. Hence many reports spread about the country, that I insisted on perfection as a term of communion.

sus,* and that they fall in with the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel, and renounce all other ways." p. 5, 8, 9, 11, 18, 55, 32, He plainly supposes it "not to be lawful for them that are lukewarm in religion, or those that serve two masters, to come to sacraments." p. 32, 35, 36, "He supposes, that there must be "a real determination of a man's judgment and affection for the word of God. p. 53, 'That there ought to be a profession of subjection to Christ with all the heart, p. 16, and of a devotedness to the service of God, p. 49, and a professed giving up themselves to Christ, to be taught, ruled, and led by him in the Gospel way to salvation; p. 31, 32. And that communicants ought to "declare, that they do, with all their hearts, cast themselves upon the mercy of God, to help them to keep covenant." P. 125, That "they ought to profess a proper respect to Christ in their hearts, as well as a true notion of Him in their heads." P. 31. That they must make a profession that "imports a pretence of real friendship to Christ, and love to God above the world." P. 36. That "none ought to be admitted but visible saints, and that this visibility must be such as to a judgment of rational charity makes them appear as real saints, wise virgins, and endowed with gospel holiness." P. 5, 41, 42, 139, 14. That "there should be a charitable presumption, that the Spirit of God has taken hold of them, and turned their hearts to God." P. 52. That "they should be such persons as are in the eye of a Christian judgment truly gracious persons, supposed and believed in charity to be those to whom God has given saving repentance, and an heart purifying faith." P. 65, and 47, "Such as have the moral image of Christ appearing in them, or supposed to be in them, and are to be loved on that account." P. 68, "He allows, that there ought to be some apprehension, some judgment of the mind, that they are Christians and Saints, and have the moral image of God in

* Mr. Williams cites Mr. Guthrie (preface p. 4) as on his side, when he speaks of such a profession, as that which is to be made,

them.* P. 68, 69, and 71, He allows, that “they must be taken into the church under a notion of their being godly, and with respect to such a character appearing on them : And very often insists, that “they the inselves must make such a pretence.” P. 55, † 132, 136, 143, So he allows, that they

* By this it appears, when Mr. W. speaks of the Church's *rational judgment* that persons have *real holiness*, and the like, he does not mean merely a treating them as such, in public ministrations, and external conduct : For here he speaks not of the external conduct, but of the *apprehension of the understanding, and judgment of the mind* ; and this as the foundation of the affection of the heart.

† Mr. Williams's words (P. 55) are pretty remarkable : “The reader (says he) will judge, whether the manner of Mr. Edwards's treating the question, and representing the opinion of Mr. Stoddard and others, in the words I have quoted above, be not *unaccountable* ; though this is neither the first nor the last time of his treating the matter in such a manner : As if Mr. Stoddard and his adherents supposed persons were to be admitted without any notion of their being godly, or any respect to such a character, appearing on them ; and that they themselves are without such a pretence.” Whereas, Mr Stoddard expressly maintains, that men may be *duly qualified and fit* matter for church membership, without saving grace. (Appeal, p. 15, 16.) And that they *may and ought to come, though they know themselves to be in a natural condition.* (Doct. of Instituted Churches, P. 21, See also his Sermon on the subject, p. 13.) And according to Mr. Stoddard, communicants are not so much as *supposed* godly persons. This (Appeal p 43) he says expressly, That, *by the institution, communicants at the Lord's Supper are not supposed to be real saints.* And also asserts, (Appeal, p. 76) That we are not obliged to *believe* visible saints to be real saints. And it seems by what he says in his Appeal, (p. 17) The church *may* admit persons to communion, when at the same time *they are aware that they are hypocrites.* For there, in answer to Dr. Mather, who had cited certain texts to prove, that when hypocrites do come into the church, they come in *unawares* ; he says, *But neither of the places he cites proves that all hypocrites come in unawares.* And in the next page he says, *The discovery of men's hypocrisy is not the reason of their being cast out.* Still evidently on the same foundation, that some known hypocrites are *fit* to be admitted ; for he says, (p. 15) *Such as, being admitted, may not be cast out, are fit to be admitted.* And these things are agreeable to what I know Mr. Stoddard's church and congregation have universally supposed to be his constant doctrine and practice among them. Thus it was, without one dissenting voice among them, during the twentyfour years that I lived with them. And now the reader is desired to judge, as Mr. W. would have him, whether my representing it to be the opinion of Mr. S. and his adherents, that persons *might be admitted into the*

must not only be endowed with Christian piety in appearance ; but that they must be so in profession. P. 3, 41, 44, " That they make a shew of being wise virgins by the nature and purport of their profession." P. 42, And he insists with great strenuousness, over and over, upon its being their scheme, " that they ought to make a profession of real saintship." P. 132, Yea, he holds, that there must be not only some visibility and profession of real piety, but *moral evidence of it*, p. 139. He often uses notes of distinction, distinguishing between *moral sincerity*, and *real piety* ; and insists much upon it as belonging to their scheme ; that there must be a visibility of the latter, as thus distinguished from the former. So, he rejects with great contempt any suggestion of its being the scheme of my opposers, that *moral sincerity* is that saintship, which is to be professed and made visible ; and in distinction from this, he asserts, that it is *real holiness*, p. 4, and 5. And again p. 35, he uses a note of distinction, and insists that the opposers of my opinion hold, that communicants " must make a profession of something MORE than common grace and moral sincerity." And again p. 139, he uses notes of distinction or discrimination, and says, that " they must exhibit a credible profession of gospel holiness, and NOT MERELY of moral sincerity ; and says, it is NOT the visibility of moral sincerity, BUT the moral evidence of gospel sincerity, which God's word makes the rule of judging." And as he holds, that communicants must profess gospel holiness, so he seems to suppose that these professors must judge this of themselves ; several things he says, seem plainly to imply it. This appears evidently implied in that interrogation put by Mr. Williams p. 35, " Mr. Stoddard rightly supposes all visible saints who are not truly pious, to be hypocrites ; and the scripture supposes and calls them so too : But will it

church without any notion of their being godly, or any respect to such a character appearing on them, be unaccountable. By these things it is evident, Mr. Stoddard's scheme was far from being what Mr. Williams represents it to be, and pretends to maintain as his. And if the question he had to controvert with me, were Mr. Stoddard's question, as he asserts, yet he greatly mistakes the true state of the question, though that be given as the title of his book.

therefore follow, that all hypocrites know they are so ?” And he in effect asserts, “ that men should look at such a qualification, as sanctifying grace, in themselves, and inquire whether they have it, or no, in order to determine whether they should present themselves to gospel ordinances :” For he greatly finds fault with me for suggesting, as if those of a different opinion from me supposed, that persons have no manner of need to look at any such qualification in themselves, or at all inquire, whether they have it, in order to present themselves to sacraments. He refers to that passage in my book p. 55. “ I cannot conceive what should move Philip to utter those words, or what he should aim at in them, if he at the same time supposed that the Eunuch had no manner of need to look at any such qualification in himself, or at all to inquire whether he had such a faith, or no, in order to determine whether he MIGHT present himself as the subject of baptism.” It is plain the qualification I have respect to, is *grace*, or *saving faith*. And so Mr. Williams himself understands me ; as appears by his reflections, p. 49. Where, after quoting this passage, he consigns me over to another judgment, for suggesting that my opposers hold what I had there expressed, and for “ representing the matter, as if they looked on it as no matter whether a person coming to gospel ordinances had any GRACE or no, and that he had no manner of need to inquire any thing about his sincerity.”*

* Now let all who have been acquainted with the controversy between me and my people at Northampton, consider these things, which Mr. Williams earnestly insists do belong to his scheme ; and judge whether they be agreeable to the scheme which my opposers there have so vehemently and long contended for ; yea, whether they are not very opposite to it ; or whether in these things Mr. Williams has not intirely yielded up, yea, vehemently asserted the chief things concerning which they contested with me ; and so, whether he has at all helped their cause by writing his book, or rather, on the contrary, has fought against them.

SECTION II.

Some of the plain consequences of the foregoing concessions of Mr. Williams.

1. IF it be as Mr. Williams says, that "The church ought to admit none to their holy communion, in special ordinances, but visible saints, and that this visibility must be such as to a judgment of rational charity, makes them appear as real saints, and those that are admitted must be such as profess real saintship, gospel holiness, in distinction from moral sincerity;" then the whole of my first argument, from the nature of a *visibility* and *profession* of Christianity, is allowed by him, in both *premises* and *consequence*. And indeed Mr. Williams does this not only consequentially, but he is express in it. In p. 4, taking notice of this argument, he says, "The sense and force of it wholly lies in this compass; A *visible saint* is one that to the view, appearance and judgment, of the church, is a *real saint*; and since none but *visible saints* are to be admitted by the church, therefore none are to be admitted but such as *appear* to the view and judgment of the church to be real saints." But these things, which Mr. Williams himself allows as the sum of the argument, both premises and consequence, are expressly allowed by him in what there follows.

2. If there must be a visibility and profession of real piety in distinction from moral sincerity, so that it can be truly said, as Mr. Williams says with discrete terms, and notes of *discrimination*, that "NOT MERELY the one must be professed, BUT the other; and that MORE than moral sincerity must be professed," &c. Then it follows (or rather it is the same thing) that men must profess religion with some *discrimination* or marks of difference in their words, distinguishing what is professed from moral sincerity; contrary to what Mr. Williams strenuously and frequently asserts. (P. 6, 9, and many other places) For if the profession is made in words

that signify no *difference*, then nothing *different* is signified or professed by those words ; and so nothing *MORE* ; contrary also to what Mr. Williams also asserts.

3. If it be as Mr. Williams says, that “ The scripture has determined none ought to be admitted but such as make an open profession and declaration of an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, such as covenant with God with their whole hearts, and profess gospel holiness ;” Then the whole of my second argument, concerning *explicit covenanting with God*, is expressly allowed, in both *premises* and *consequence* ; though Mr. Williams seems at the same time with so much labor and earnestness, to militate against it. For the *premises* are, that *all ought openly and explicitly to own God’s covenant, or consent to the terms of it* : This is the same thing that he asserts as above. And the *consequence*, or thing which I inferred from it, was, that all that are admitted ought to make a profession of real Godliness : And this also he expressly and often allows.

4. Since it is supposed, that in order to admission, men ought to profess real friendship to Christ, and love to him above the world, and to profess a proper respect to Christ in their hearts, as well as a true notion of him in their heads ; and that they ought to profess gospel holiness, and not merely moral sincerity : Therefore the whole of what belongs to my third argument, is allowed, both *premises* and *consequence*. The *premises* were, that the nature of things affords as much reason for professing a proper respect to Christ in the heart, as a true notion of him in the head : This he allows. What I endeavor to infer from hence, was, that therefore men ought to profess true piety, and not moral sincerity only : And this is also allowed by him.

5. It appears that the whole of my fourth argument, both *premises* and *consequence*, is allowed. The *premises* were, that the scripture reckons all visible saints who are not truly pious, to be hypocrites : This Mr. Williams expressly allows, p. 25. The *consequence* I inferred, was, that visible saints are such as make a profession of true godliness, and not moral sincerity only : This also is very fully allowed by him, p. 139.

6. Since it is supposed, that when Christ's rules are attended, they that come to sacraments, *do not know themselves to be hypocrites, but must look at such a qualification in themselves, as grace, and make such a pretence and profess gospel holiness ;* Therefore all is in effect allowed, that I endeavored from the latter part of the 7th chapter of Matthew, which was to shew that professing Christians in general, all those that said *Lord, Lord*, both those that built on the *sand*, and those that built on a *rock*, were such as imagined themselves to have a saving interest in Christ, and *pretended* to be his real disciples, and made such a profession. The same was what I endeavored to shew from the parable of the ten Virgins. And therefore all that I argued from thence is in like manner allowed.

7. Hence in vain is all the opposition Mr. Williams makes to what I allege from the Acts of the Apostles, from chap. ii. from the story of the *Eunuch*, and other parts of that book, concerning the manner and circumstances of the admission of members into the primitive Christian church, and the profession they made ; seeing he grants the main point I endeavored to prove by it, viz. That they *did make*, and all adult persons that are admitted into the church, *must make* a profession of *something MORE than moral sincerity, even gospel holiness.*

8. Hence, in vain is all he says in opposition to my eighth argument, taken from the manner of the apostles treating and addressing the primitive churches in their epistles ; since he does either expressly or virtually grant each of those three things, which he himself reckons up as the sum of what I intend under that argument, viz. (1.) " That the apostles speak to the churches, and of them, as supposing and judging them to be gracious persons. (2.) That the members of these churches had such an opinion of themselves. (3.) That they had this judgment one of another." Mr. Williams allows all these. He abundantly allows and asserts, that the members of churches are such as are supposed and judged, and rationally judged, to be gracious persons, by those that admit them ; that they are taken in under that notion, and *from respect to such a character appearing on them ;* and that they are *rationally judged to be so* by their fellow Christians ;

and that they must *look at such a character in themselves, and must make such a pretence.*

9. Since Mr. Williams abundantly allows that visible Christians, must “Be believed in charity to be truly pious ; and that they are such as have the moral image of Christ appearing in them, and supposed to be in them, and that they are to be loved on that account :” Therefore very impertinent and inconsistent is the opposition he makes to my ninth argument, from the nature of that *brotherly love* required towards all visible Christians ; which was to shew, that visible Christians by the rule of Christ were to be *apprehended* to be true Christians.

10. In like manner, vain and to no purpose is the opposition he makes to my tenth argument, from the Nature of *sacramental actions*, supposed in their intent and signification to be a solemn profession of those things wherein real piety consists, viz. a cordial acceptance of Christ and his benefits ; from thence arguing, that a profession of these things is necessary ; and so inferring that those who perform these actions, should suppose themselves truly to accept of Christ : Since both these things are in effect granted, that communicants must judge that they have sanctifying grace, and also that they must profess gospel holiness, a compliance with the call of the gospel, and falling in with the terms of salvation proposed, &c.

11. In vain also is the opposition he makes to my eleventh argument, from 1 Cor. xi. 28. “Let a man examine himself ; and so let him eat.” Inferring from thence, that a man ought to inquire concerning such a qualification in himself, as grace, in order to know whether he may come to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper. Since Mr. Williams himself plainly supposes this very thing, “That men ought to look at such a qualification in themselves, as grace, and to inquire whether they have it, in order to determine whether they may present themselves to Christian sacraments.”

12. If it be true, according to Mr. Williams’s representation of his own scheme, “That persons may not be admitted to sacraments, but under a notion of their being truly god-

ly, and with respect to such a character appearing on them ; And that persons themselves had need to look at such a qualification in themselves, and inquire whether they have it, in order to determine whether they may come to sacraments ;” it must be because if they find they have it *not*, they *may not* come, or (which is the same thing) *it is not lawful* for them to come. For it would be ridiculous to say that others must look at such a qualification in them, and must not admit them but from respect to such a character on them ; and that they themselves also must look at such a qualification in themselves, and inquire whether they have it in order to determine whether they *MAY* come : When yet they *may* come whether they have it or no, and have as much of a lawful right without it, as with it. So that Mr. Williams has in effect determined against himself the grand point, which he himself insists on, as the point in dispute, according to the *true state of the question*. And therefore,

13. It follows from the foregoing concessions, that Mr. Williams is inconsistent with himself in all his arguments, that men may come to sacraments without such a qualification or character as that of true piety, “ Because God has given no certain rule by which sacraments may be restrained to such ;* or Because that otherwise none might come but those that know they have such a character ;† or because the contrary doctrine tends to bring saints into great perplexities in their attendance on sacraments ;‡ or from the lawfulness of unregenerate men’s attending other duties.”§ If there be any force in this arguing from other duties to an attendance on sacraments, then the argument will infer, that men must not be admitted to other duties, *but under the notion of their being truly godly, and from respect to such a character appearing on them, &c.*—as Mr. Williams insists with regard to Christian sacraments. And so if these things which Mr. Williams concedes and asserts, are true, in vain is all arguing from “ the like tendency in sacraments to convert men.

* See Mr. Williams’s book p. 106. † Ibid. p. 108. ‡ p. 120. § p. 120.

as in other duties :’’§ And in vain is it to argue the lawfulness of men’s coming without this character, “ from their obligation to perform external covenant duties,¶ and to carry themselves like saints :’’** And in vain is all arguing from pretended bad consequences of the contrary doctrine.††

14. The opposition Mr. Williams makes to my argument from Isa. lvi. especially those words v. 5, 6. “ The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to love the Lord and be his servants....will I bring into my holy mountain”.... To prove that none have a right in the sight of God to the privileges of the Christian church, but those that love God, and are truly pious ; I say, the opposition Mr. Williams makes to this argument is frivolous, since he in effect grants the same thing (as above) yea, does expressly allow, that they must make pretences of being God’s real friends, and loving God more than the world. p. 36.

15. If it be true as Mr. Williams allows and abundantly asserts, “ That in order to persons’ being admitted to holy communion in special ordinances, the scripture has determined, that there must be an open profession and declaration of a person’s believing, *or of a personal believing*, in Christ (*which is the same thing*) and of an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace,* and that therein must be a profession of gospel holiness ;” then avails nothing to the contrary that great argument of his, taken from the state of *baptized infants*, ‘That “ They are already in the church, and in covenant, and are members in complete standing,” &c. And that therefore no owning the covenant or professing godliness can be demanded of them :† And in vain is all that he has said to prove this in his discourse on the *Wheat and Tares*.‡

16. To what purpose is it, to object from the parable now mentioned, ‘That the church ought not to go about to make a distinction between *wheat* and *tares*, in their admission of members, by pretending to discern the difference ? When it

§ p. 126. ¶ p. 128. ** p. 131. †† p. 131.

* See how Mr. Williams expresses himself p. 5. † See especially, p. 3. ‡ p. 99, 100.

is so apparent, that there is no pretence to any proper discerning in the case, nor any other distinction pleaded, than what is made by a judgment of charity. And when, according to Mr. Williams's own scheme, churches are obliged to make a distinction, in the rational judgment they pass, and to admit none but what they judge to be true saints ; so that those who are *wheat*, in the eye of their judgment, only are to be admitted, and such as are *tares*, in the eye of their judgment, are to be excluded.

17. What is said by Mr. Williams of the visible church's being the *school of Christ*, and men's being admitted into it as "Disciples or scholars, some of them in order to attain grace," (p. 81, and 83) is nothing to the purpose, if it be as Mr. Williams allows and asserts, that in order to be admitted into this *school*, they must be supposed in a reasonable judgment, to have this attainment already, and make a pretence to it, and a solemn profession of it, and must give moral evidence that they have it, and must be admitted into the school under no other notion than that of their being already possessed of it.

18. If it be as Mr. Williams expressly says, "That persons are not visible saints without a credible profession, visibility and moral evidence, not only of moral sincerity, but true holiness," (p. 139.) then all is wholly insignificant and vain, that is said to prove, that the children of Israel were visible saints without any evidence of such holiness, by reason of the idolatry and gross and open wickedness of vast multitudes of them who are yet called God's people : And so likewise, all that is said to prove that the members of the primitive Church had no other visibility of saintship than they, *because they are grafted into the same olive* : And also all that Mr. Williams has said to prove, that many of the members of the primitive churches were as grossly wicked as they.

19. Since according to Mr. Williams the terms of admission to the Jewish ordinances, were "the same as to Christian ordinances, the like profession and the same visibility of saintship required and no other ;" as he strenuously asserts, p. 57, 61, 65 ; it will therefore follow from his foregoing concessions

and assertions, That none were by God's appointment, to come to the passover, and to have their children *circumcised*, but "such as openly professed and declared that they were convinced of the truth of God's word, and believed it with all their hearts ; and professed a hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace : Such as covenanted with God with their whole hearts, and gave up all their hearts and lives to Christ, such as subjected themselves to Christ with their whole hearts, and gave up themselves to him to be ruled, taught, and led by him ; such as with all their hearts cast themselves on the mercy of God to enable them to keep covenant ; such as professed to love God above the world, and professed more than common faith and moral sincerity, even true holiness, real piety ; and who gave moral evidence, that they had such a qualification ; and were received to the *passover*, &c. under that notion, and with respect to such a character appearing in them, and apprehended *to be in them*." And if these things are so, what is become of the argument from the passover and circumcision against the necessity of the qualifications I have insisted on !

20. To what purpose does Mr. Williams insist (p. 98) "That we read not a word in scripture about John the Baptist's making any inquiry, whether the people he baptized made a credible profession of true piety ?" When he himself insists that in order to admission to Christian sacraments, "Men must make a credible profession of true piety." And why does he urge (p. 96, 97) That the profession the people made which John baptized, did not imply that they had saving repentance, but only an engagement to repent, hereafter ? When he himself holds, that in order to admission to sacraments, men must *profess something more than common grace*, and not only promise it hereafter.

21. It makes nothing to any point in controversy between Mr. Williams and me, whether Judas partook of the Lord's supper or no, since according to Mr. Williams's own fore-mentioned principles, as well as mine, he could not be admitted there "under any other notion than that of being truly pious, and from respect to such a character appearing on him.

and a credible profession of gospel holiness ;” and since he might not lawfully come without some qualifications he had not, viz. *such a friendship for Christ, as is above lukewarmness, and above serving two masters, Christ and mammon, and a giving up all his heart and life to Christ, and a real determination of his judgment and affections for Christ’s word, &c.*

22. If it be true, as Mr. Williams allows, that ministers and churches ought not to admit adult persons to sacraments, without *a pious character appearing on them, and their professing and exhibiting moral evidence of gospel holiness*, then no good argument can be brought against such a way of admission, from the success of ministers in another way, or in any way whatsoever.

Besides these plain and obvious consequences of Mr. Williams’s concessions, some other consequences will hereafter be observed under particular heads.

Thus Mr. Williams has not only abundantly given up the main point in that controversy I have lately been engaged in, and the main point which I have written in defence of ; but he has in effect given up every point belonging to the whole controversy, every thing material insisted on through that whole book which he undertakes to answer. He has established every part of the scheme I have appeared in, and every particular argument I have used to confirm it ; and answered, and overthrown every argument which he brings or pretends to support against it. And I should have no further occasion to say any thing in reply to him, if he had not really through great part of his performance, argued for other things, opposite to those that have been rehearsed, which he so strenuously insists belong to his scheme ; which arguing may seem to support another scheme, though nothing akin to his, any otherwise than as his scheme is indeed a mixture of many schemes, one clashing with, and destroying another ; as will appear in the ensuing part of this reply.

SECTION III.

The Inconsistence of the forementioned Concessions with the Lawfulness of unsanctified Persons coming to the Lord's Supper, and their Right to Sacraments in the sight of God.

MR. WILLIAMS in the book under consideration, which he entitles *the true state of the question*, insists upon it that the question to be debated is the question Mr. Stoddard debated in his dispute with Dr. Mather ; in whose scheme Mr. Williams declares himself to be. Mr. Stoddard in his dispute with Dr. Mather asserted, "that it was lawful for some unsanctified men to come to the Lord's supper, and that they had a right so to do in the sight of God." And he declares that this was the point in dispute between him and Dr. Mather ; as in *Appeal*, p. 20. "That which I am to shew is, that some unsanctified men have a right before God to the Lord's supper." So Mr. Blake (who is so great an author with Mr. Williams) says, in his treatise *on the covenant*, p. 244. "That faith which is the condition of the promise, is not the condition *in Foro dei* (before God) of a title to the seal." And there (in the next p.) he insists, that "it is a common faith, that is believed by men not justified," which gives this title. Agreeably to these things Mr. Williams says (p. 132) some men have "a lawful right to the sacrament without sanctification." Which is the same thing as to say, *they have a right in the sight of God.* For if they have *no right in the sight of God* to come to the Lord's supper, then *it is not lawful in the sight of God* that they should come.

Here I would lay down this as a maxim ;

There is some inward religion and virtue or other, some sincerity of heart, either moral or saving, that is necessary to a right to sacraments in the sight of God, and in order to a lawful coming to them. No man, I trust, will say, that a man has a right in God's sight, who has no sort of serious-

ness of mind ; and that merely outward sounds and motions, give him this right in God's sight, without regard to any property or quality of mind, and though this outward shew is joined with the most horrid and resolved secret irreligion and wickedness. Mr. Williams in particular utterly disclaims such doctrine as this in 3d and 4th pages of his preface, and always maintains that in order to men's lawful coming, they must be *morally sincere* ; as there in his preface, and also in p. 25, 27, 30, 35, 111. In p. 115, he supposes, that if a man *makes a doubt of his moral sincerity, no divine will advise him to come until he knows.*

Having observed this, I now desire it may be considered, whether it be reasonable to suppose, as Mr. Williams does, that God would give men that are without grace, a lawful right to sacraments, so that this qualification itself should be nothing necessary to a proper and rightful claim to these ordinances ; and yet that he would wholly forbid them to come, and others to admit them, without their making some pretence to it, and exhibiting moral evidence that they have it : That moral sincerity is the qualification which by God's own appointment invests persons with a lawful right to sacraments, and that by his institution nothing more is requisite to a lawful right ; and yet that he has commanded them not to come, nor others to allow them to come, without making a profession of something *more* than moral sincerity, as Mr. Williams says. Mr. Williams supposes that God requires us, before we admit persons, to seek credible evidence of true piety, and to see to it that we have reasonable ground to believe they have it ; otherwise, not to allow them to come : And yet that God does not look on such a qualification requisite in itself, when all is done, and that he has given them as true and lawful a right to come without it, as with it. If God insists upon it, as Mr. Williams supposes, that members should be admitted *under no other notion* than of their being truly godly, and *from respect to such a character appearing on them*, is it not plain, that God looks on such a character in itself requisite, in order to a persons's being a rightful subject of such a privilege ? If the want of this qualification does not in the least hinder a

person's lawful right to a thing, on what account can the want of an appearance of it and pretence to it, warrant and oblige others to hinder his taking possession of that thing ?

That we should be obliged to require a credible pretence and evidence of the being of a thing, in order to a certain purpose, the being of which is not requisite to that purpose ; or that some evidence of a thing should be necessary, and yet withal no necessity there should be any foundation of such evidence, in the being of the thing to be made evident ; that it should be necessary for us to seek evidence that something is true, and yet there be no need in order to the intended purpose, that there be any such truth to be made evident ; If these things are the dictates of common sense, I am willing all that are possessed of any degree of common sense should be judges.

If God has plainly revealed, that gospel holiness is not necessary in itself in order to men's lawful right to sacraments, as Mr. Williams greatly insists, then his churches need not *believe it to be necessary* ; yea, it is their duty *to believe that it is not necessary*, as it is their duty to believe what God says to be true. But yet Mr. Williams holds, that God forbids his churches to admit any to sacraments, unless they first have some rational evidence obliging them *to believe that they have gospel holiness*. Now how palpable is the inconsistency, that we must be obliged to believe men have a qualification in order to our suffering them to come, which yet at the same time we need not believe to be necessary for them to have in order to their coming, but which God requires us to believe to be unnecessary ? Or in other words, that God has made it necessary for us to believe or suppose men are truly pious, in order to our lawfully allowing them to take the sacraments, and yet at the same time requires us to believe no such thing as their being pious is necessary in order to their lawfully taking the sacraments ?

Mr. Stoddard (whose principles Mr. Williams in preface, p. 3, declares himself to be fully established in) not only says, that some unsanctified men have " a right before God, to the Lord's Supper," but strongly asserts, over and over, " that

they are FIT to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, that they are DULY QUALIFIED, FIT MATTER for church membership," (Appeal, p. 15, 16) and Mr. Williams argues that "such qualifications as some unsanctified men have, are SUFFICIENT to bring them into the church." Now if it be so, what business have we to demand evidence or a pretence of any thing further? What case in the world can be mentioned parallel to it, in any nation or age? Are there any such laws or regulations to be found in any society, nation, city or family, civil society, military or academic, stated society or occasional, that the society should be required to insist on some credible pretence and evidence of a certain qualification, in order to persons being admitted to the privileges of the society; prohibiting their being admitted *under any other notion* than as persons possessed of that qualification, or *without a respect, in their admission, to such a character appearing on them*: And yet at the same time, by the laws of that very society, or the head of it, that qualification is not necessary; but persons are declared, without any such qualification, to have a LAWFUL RIGHT, to be FIT MATTER, to be DULY QUALIFIED, and to have SUFFICIENT qualifications to be admitted to these privileges, without that qualification?

If some men have a right in the sight of God to sacraments, without true piety, and are *fit*, and *duly qualified* without it, in his sight, and by his institution, and yet the church must not admit them unless they are truly pious in their sight; then the eye of man must require higher terms, than the infinitely holy eye of God himself; they must look for something that the eye of God looks not for, and which he judges them duly qualified without.

Mr. Williams when speaking of the evidence, on which he supposes the church ought to judge persons to be real saints, from time to time adds, that on such evidence "the church is obliged, in their external carriage, *to treat them as saints*, and admit them to the external privileges of the church." So p. 9, 12, &c. p. 13 and 14, and in other places. But what does he mean by treating them *as saints*, in admitting them to the external privileges of the church? If *sinners* have as much

of a lawful right to these privileges, as *saints*, then why is giving them these privileges a treating them as *saints*, any more than as *sinners* ? If it belongs to an ignorant child, to be admitted into school, as much as one that is learned, then how is it treating him as one that is learned, to admit him ? Mr. Williams (p. 11) giving a reason why he that professes conviction of the truth of the gospel, &c. ought to be admitted to sacraments, says, "though this conviction may be only by moral evidence and common illumination, yet the church know not but it is done on a divine and gracious discovery." But how can this be a reason ? What if the church *did know* that it was not on a gracious discovery, if the man has a right in the sight of God without, and God has made it his duty to come to sacraments without ? Surely the church have no right to forbid him to do that which God has given him a right to do, and made it his duty to do ; as Mr. Stoddard says, (*Doct. of Inst. Churches*, p. 20) "The church may not hinder any man from doing his duty."

Therefore if this be Mr. Stoddard's question, "whether some unsanctified men may lawfully come to the Lord's supper," and if this be the grand point in dispute, the thing which Mr. Williams undertakes to maintain, as he often declares, then it is most plainly evident, that in conceding and asserting those things forementioned, he does in effect abundantly give up that which he himself insists on as the grand point in controversy ; and so makes void and vain all his own labor, and for himself effectually confutes all that he has written.

SECTION IV.

Concerning Mr. Williams's Notion of a public Profession of Godliness in terms of an indeterminate and double Signification.

ACCORDING to Mr. Williams the profession of godliness must be in words not of a determinate meaning, or "without any discrimination in the meaning of the words, obliging us to understand them of saving religion." P. 6, They must make an "open declaration of their sincere consent to the terms of the covenant, without any discrimination, by which it can be determined, that the consent signified by the words is a gracious consent." P. 9, And "without any marks of difference, or any distinction in the words, whereby we can be enabled to judge when they mean a saving faith, and when a different one." P. 10, 50 and 53, That "nothing should be expressed in the words of the profession, but what some unsanctified men may say, and speak true." P. 47, he supposes, that the primitive Christians in the profession they made of faith, did not *speak only in that sense*, viz. so as to signify justifying faith; and that "the persons admitted did not understand that their profession was understood by those that admitted them, only in that sense." P. 58.

Agreeably to this notion of making a profession in words of indiscriminate meaning, and professing godliness without godliness, and yet speaking true, Mr. Williams, (in p. 44) allows, "that men must be by profession godly persons, in order to come to the sacrament;" and yet in the next sentence he denies, "that Christian grace itself is requisite in the person who is to come to the sacrament, or that the dictate of his conscience that he has it, is the thing that gives him a right to offer himself." And agreeably to this last clause, Mr. Stoddard (of whose opinion Mr. Williams professes himself fully to be) expressly maintains, that a man "may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, though he knows himself to be

in a natural condition." (*Doct. of Inst. Churches*, p. 21, see also his sermon on this controversy, p. 13.) So that putting these things together, it must be agreeable to Mr. Williams's scheme, that a man has a right to make a profession of godliness, without having godliness, and without any dictate of his conscience that he has the thing he professes, yea though he knows he has it not! And all this is made out by the doctrine of professing godliness in words that are ambiguous, and of two meanings.

This notion of a solemn profession of godliness, in words of a double meaning, *without any marks of difference in their signification*, is the great peculiarity of Mr. Williams's scheme; and in all his controversy with me, this appears to be the main hinge of the whole affair. Therefore I would particularly consider it.

And for the greater distinctness and clearness, I will lay down certain positions, as of most evident truth; observing some of their no less plain and evident consequences.

POSITION I. Words declare or profess nothing any otherwise than by their signification: For to declare or profess something by words, is to signify something by words....And therefore if nothing is signified by words of a pretended profession, nothing is really professed; and if something be professed, no more is professed than the words of the profession signify or import.

POSITION. II. If a man goes about, to declare or profess any particular thing by words which have no distinguishing signification, or without any signs or discriminating marks by which men may be enabled to distinguish what he means, his words are vain to the pretended purpose, and wholly fail of answering the end of words, which is to convey the thing meant, to others' understanding, or to give notice to others of the thing that is to be supposed or understood.*

* The Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 7, "Even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?"—Mr. Locke says, *Hum. Und.* Vol. 2. Edit. 7 p. 103. "He that uses words of any language without DISTINCT ideas in his mind, to which he applies them, does so far as he uses them in discourse, only make a noise without any sense or signification."

Therefore to use words thus in common conversation, is to act in a vain trifling manner, more like children than men : But to use words thus in the sacred services of God's house, and solemn duties of his worship, is something much worse than children's play. But thus Mr. Williams expressly declares, words are to be used in a public profession of religion. He says (p. 10.) " And these words are so used in such cases, without any marks of difference, whereby we are enabled to judge when they mean a saving faith, and when a different one."

POSITION III. A profession made in words that are either equivocal, or general, equally signifying several distinct things, without any marks of difference or distinction, by which we are enabled to judge which is meant, is not a profession or signification of *any one* of those several things ; nor can they afford any rational ground of understanding or apprehending any *particular thing*. Thus, for instance, if a man, using an equivocal term, should say, that such an evening a king was in that room, without any marks of difference or discrimination whatsoever, by which others could discern whether by a king, he meant the ruler of a kingdom, or a king used in a game of chess : The word thus used would be no declaration that the head of a kingdom was there at such a time ; nor would they give any notice of any such thing to those to whom he spoke, or give them any rational ground to understand or judge any such thing.

Or if a man should use a *general* term, comprehending various particular sorts, without at all distinguishing or pointing forth any one particular sort, he thereby professes no one particular sort. Thus if a man professes that he has metal in his pocket, not saying what sort of metal, whether gold, silver, brass, iron, lead, or tin ; his words are no profession that he has gold.

So if a man professes sincerity or religion, designedly using terms of double signification, or (which comes to the same thing) of general signification, equally signifying two entirely

distinct things, either *moral sincerity*, or *real piety*, his words are no profession of real piety ; he makes no credible profession, and indeed no profession at all of *gospel holiness*.

POSITION IV. If a man who knows himself to be destitute of any certain qualification, yet makes a profession or pretence, in words of double meaning, equally signifying that qualification, and something else very different with a design to recommend himself to others' judgment, as possessed of that qualification, he is guilty of deceitful equivocation. This is the notion of deceitful equivocation, viz. the using words of double meaning, or capable of double application, with a design to induce others to judge something to be true, which is not true. But he that goes about to recommend himself by such terms to others' opinion or judgment as being what he at the same time knows he is not, endeavors to induce them to believe what he knows is not true, which is to deceive them.*

But if the scheme which Mr. Williams undertakes to defend, were true, it would follow that such a kind of equivocation as this (be it far from us to suppose it) is what the infinitely wise and holy God has instituted to be publicly made use of in the solemn services of his house, as the very condition of persons' admission to the external privileges of his people ! For Mr. Williams abundantly asserts, that persons must be *esteemed* in the judgment and apprehension of others to have true piety ; and that one thing that must *be done in order to it*, one thing pertaining to the moral evidence that *recommends* them to this judgment, is the profession they make of religion. (P. 5, 139, 47, 132, 44.) In p. 42, speaking of the profession of visible Christians, he has these words, " And it is from the nature and purport of this profession, we say, the church is to judge the members to be wise virgins or what they make a show of." And Mr. Williams insists upon it that according to Christ's institution, this must be in

* " To advance a dubious proposition, knowing it will be understood in a sense different from what you give it in your mind, is an *equivocation*, in breach of good faith and sincerity." *Chambers's Dictionary*, under the word *equivocation*.

words equally signifying true godliness, and something else, without any discrimination or marks of difference. This is the scheme ! And certainly such a doctrine of deceitful equivocation in the public exercises of religion, is more agreeable to the principles and practices of a religion I am loth to name, than the true religion of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Williams says, p. 35, “ I am at a loss to conceive how it will help the cause of truth to represent those who are of Mr. Stoddard’s opinion, as teaching men that they enter into covenant with God with known and allowed guile.” Supposing I had made such a representation, I can tell him how it would have helped the cause of truth (as it would be speaking nothing but the truth) if he be one of Mr. Stoddard’s opinion (as he says he is) and represents his own opinion truly.

But let the unreasonableness of this notion of professing gospel holiness in words of two meanings, without any discrimination or mark of difference, be a little further considered. Since it is allowed that gospel holiness is the thing which is to be exhibited in the profession, and there are words which signify this by a determinate meaning, why must they needs be avoided, and words of doubtful and double signification only made use of ?* Since the design of the profession is to exhibit to others’ understanding that very thing ; if the proper and distinguishing names of that must nevertheless be avoided in the profession, and this, for that very reason, that they point forth to others understanding that very thing by a determinate meaning ; then we are brought to this gross absurdity, viz. That the end of a profession is to exhibit to others’ understanding and reasonable judgment a *particular qualification* ; but at the same time such words only must be made use of as do not distinctly point forth to others’ understanding and judgment that *particular qualification*. The church are to seek and demand a profession, that shall determine their *rational judgment* ; but yet are designedly to

* Mr. Williams (p. 6) speaks of a profession in terms of indiscriminate signification, when not contradicted in life, as “ The sole entire evidence, which the church, as a church, is to have, by divine appointment, in order to that public judgment it is to make of the saintship of men,

avoid such a profession as shall *determine their understandings*. Be it far from us to attribute to the allwise God any such absurd and inconsistent constitution.

Mr. Williams says, "Charity obliges the church to understand the words of the professors in the most favorable sense." But charity does not oblige us to understand their words in any other sense than that in which they professedly use them. But in churches which professedly act on Mr. Williams's scheme (if any such there be) the professors who are admitted, professedly use ambiguous words, or words equally signifying two entirely distinct things, without discrimination or marks of difference; and therefore charity obliges us to understand their words no otherwise, than as signifying that they have one or other of those two things; and not that they have one in particular: For their words do not signify this, in the sense they professedly use them. If a man that is indebted to me, professes that he has either gold or brass, which he promises to pay me; or if he uses an equivocal or general term, that equally, and without marks of difference, signifies either one or the other: Charity may oblige me to believe what he says, which is that he has either gold or brass; but no charity obliges me to believe that he has gold, which he does not say.

Mr. Williams, in his description of such a profession as Christ has instituted, in order to admission to sacraments, often mentions two things, viz. "A profession of something *present*, a present believing in Christ, and cordial consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, &c. And a promise of something *future*." And with regard to the latter he is very full in it, that what is promised for time to come is *saving faith, repentance and obedience*.† Now what reason can be given why we should use words of double meaning in the former part of the profession more than in the latter. Seeing Mr. Williams allows that we must *profess* gospel holiness as well as *promise* it, and seeing we may and must make use of words of indiscriminate and double meaning in professing

† Preface, p. 3, 5, 24, 25, 22, 7, 58, 69.

present gospel holiness, why should we not do so too in promising what is future ; and so equivocate in our solemn vows and oaths as the Papists do ? If Mr. Williams says it is very hard for men to discern the discrimination between moral sincerity and gospel holiness ; I answer there is as much need to discern the difference in order understandingly to *promise* gospel holiness with discrimination, as to *profess* it with discrimination.

Mr. Williams says, (p. 8) “ It is a received rule among mankind, in all public judgments, to interpret words in the most extensive and favorable sense, that the nature of the words or expressions will bear. I know not what he means : But if he means (as he must if he means any thing to the purpose) that it is a received rule amongst mankind, to trust or accept, or regard any professions or declarations that men make with professed design, in words of double and indiscriminate meaning, without any marks of difference by which their meaning can be known, for that very end that they may be used with a safe conscience, though they have no dictates of their own consciences, that they have that which others are to believe they have ; I say, if this be a received rule among mankind, it is a rule that mankind has lately received from Mr. Williams. Heretofore mankind, societies, or particular persons, would have been counted very foolish for regarding such professions. Is this the way in earthly kingdoms, in professions of allegiance to temporal princes, in order to their admission to the privileges of good subjects ? Do they chuse equivocal terms to put into their oaths of allegiance, to that end that men may use them and speak true, though they are secret enemies ? There are two competitors for the kingdom of this world, *Christ* and *Satan* : The design of a public profession of religion is, to declare on which side men are. And is it agreeable to the custom of mankind in such cases, to make laws that no other than ambiguous words shall be used or to accept of such in declarations of this kind ? There are two competitors for the kingdom of Greatbritain, king George, and the Pretender : Is it then the constitution of king George and the British Parliament, that men should take

oaths of allegiance, contrived in words of indeterminate signification, to the end that men who are in their hearts enemies to king George, and friends to the Pretender, may use them and speak true? And certainly mankind, those of them that have common sense, never in any affairs of life look on such professions worth a rush. Would Mr. Williams himself, if tried, in any affair wherein his temporal interest is concerned, trust such professions as these? If any man that he has dealings with, should profess to him that he had pawned for him, in a certain place, an hundred pounds, evidently, yea, professedly using the expression as an ambiguous one, so that there is no understanding by it, what is pawned there, whether an hundred pound in money, or an hundred weight of stones: If he should inquire of the man what he meant, and he should reply, you have no business to *search my heart*, or to go *to turn my heart inside out*; you are obliged in charity to understand my words *in the most favorable sense*; would Mr. Williams in this case stick to his own *received rule*? Would he regard such a profession, or run the venture of one *sixpence* upon it? Would he not rather look on such a man as affronting him, and treating him as though he would make a fool of him? And would not he know, that every body else would think him a fool, if he should suffer himself to be gulled by such professions, in things which concern his own private interest? And yet it seems, this is the way in which he thinks he ought to conduct himself as a minister of Christ, and one entrusted by him in affairs wherein his honor and the interests of his kingdom are concerned.

And now I desire it may be judged by such as are possessed of human understanding, and are not disabled by prejudice from exercising it, whether this notion of Mr. Williams's of making a solemn profession of gospel holiness in words of indiscriminate meaning be not too absurd to be received by the reason God has given mankind. This peculiar notion of his is apparently the life and soul of his scheme; the main pillar of his temple, on which the whole weight of the building rests, which if it be broken, the whole falls to the ground. For if this notion of his be disapproved, then, inasmuch as it is

agreed, that true godliness must be professed it will follow, that it must be professed in words properly signifying the thing by a determinate meaning, which therefore no ungodly men can use, and speak true ; and that therefore men must have true godliness in order to a right in the sight of God to make such profession, and to receive the privileges depending thereon : Which implies and infers all those principles of mine which Mr. Williams opposes in his book, and confutes all that he says in opposition to them.



SECTION V.

Shewing that Mr. Williams, in supposing that unsanctified Men may profess such things, as he allows must be professed, and yet speak true, is inconsistent with Mr. Stoddard, and with himself.

MR. WILLIAMS denies, that in order to men's being admitted to sacraments, they need make any peculiar profession, distinguished from what an unregenerate man may make, p. 44, 50, 6, 9, 10, 45, 46 and 53, or that they need to profess "any thing but what an unregenerate man may say, and speak true," p. 47. And that they need make no profession but what is "compatible with an unregenerate state, p. 8. And yet the reader has seen what things he says all must profess in order to come to sacraments. One thing he says they must profess, is "a real conviction of the heart, of the divine truth of God's word ; that they do sincerely and with all their hearts believe the gospel." And these things he says, are agreeable to the opinion of Mr. Stoddard. and the doctrine he taught, p. 32 and 36. Let us compare these things with the doctrine Mr. Stoddard taught. Mr. Stoddard taught, that natural men do not "believe the gospel." *Ben. of the Gosp.* 39. That they "do not properly believe the word of God."

Guide to Christ, p. 26. That "they do not believe the testimony of God, do not lay weight on the word of God; that they do not believe the report of the gospel." *Safety of Aft.* Edit. 2. p. 229. That they do "not receive God's testimony, nor lay weight on it." (Ibid p. 99, that "There is no man, how great soever his profession, how large soever his knowledge that continues in a natural condition, who thoroughly believes that truth;" i. e. that men may be saved by Christ's righteousness. Ibid. p. 4 and 5. That "common illumination does not convince men of the truth of the gospel." *Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 148, 149. How then could it be the doctrine Mr. Stoddard taught, that natural men may really and with all their hearts believe and be convinced of the truth of the gospel?

And Mr. Williams himself in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 144, 115, says, "man since the fall is naturally ignorant of divine truth, and an enemy to it, and full of prejudices against the truth." And says, further, Ibid. p. 114. "The renewing of the Holy Ghost makes an universal change of the heart and life....He knows the doctrine contained in the bible in a new manner....Before he had a view of the truth as a *doubtful uncertain thing*; he received it as a thing which was probably true;—and perhaps for the most part it appeared something likely to answer the end proposed. But now the gospel appears to him *divinely true* and *real*, &c." But how do these things consist with men's being before conversion, sincerely and with all their hearts convinced of the divine truth of the gospel? Can that be, and yet men *view it as a doubtful, uncertain thing*, it not yet appearing to them *divinely true and real*?

Again, Mr. Williams supposes, that some unsanctified men may speak true, and profess "an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, a compliance with the call of the gospel, submission to the proposals of it, satisfaction with that device for our salvation that is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus, a fervent desire of Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace, and an earnest purpose and resolution to

seek salvation on the terms of it, (p. 11) and a falling in with the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel, with a renouncing of all other ways (which he speaks of as agreeable to Mr. Stoddard's opinion, p. 32.) Quite contrary to the current doctrine of Calvinistic divines; contrary to the opinion of Mr. Guthrie, whom he cites as a witness in his favor, (Pref. p. 4) who insists on satisfaction with that device for our salvation which is revealed in the gospel, and with the offer which God makes of himself to be our God in Christ, as the peculiar nature of saving faith. And contrary to the principles of Mr. Perkins (another author he quotes as his voucher) delivered in these very words, which Mr. Williams cites in the present point, (p. 11) "That a desire of the favor and mercy of God in Christ, and the means to attain that favor, is a special grace of God, and hath the promise of blessedness :.... That wicked men cannot sincerely desire these means of eternal life, *faith, repentance, mortification, reconciliation, &c.*" And exceeding contrary to the constant doctrine of Mr. Stoddard, (though he says it was his opinion) who ever insisted, that all unconverted sinners under the gospel are so far from heartily consenting to the covenant of grace, and complying with the call of the gospel, and falling in with the terms of salvation proposed in it, renouncing all other ways, as Mr. Williams supposes, that they are wilful rejectors of Christ, despisers of the gospel, and obstinate refusers of offered mercy. So he says, "the man that has but common grace.... sets himself against the way of salvation which God prescribes." *Nat. of Sav. Conv.* p. 10. "In awakened sinners, it is not merely from weakness, but from pride and sturdiness of spirit, that they do not come to Christ." *Safety of Aft.* p. 229. And in other places he says, that it is "from the hardness and stubbornness of natural men's hearts," that they do not comply with the gospel: That "there is a mighty opposition in their hearts to believe in Christ," because it is "cross to their haughty spirit: That they are enemies to this way of salvation: That they are dreadfully averse to come to Christ." See *Book of 3 Sermons*, p. 84. *Guide to Christ*, p. 55. *Safety of Aft.* p. 106, and 194.

And this scheme of our author is in a no less glaring manner contrary to the doctrine of Mr. Williams himself, in his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11. (p. 25, 26, 27. Speaking to those "whose natures remain unrenewed and unsanctified. See his words, p. 25, he says p. 27. "You are opposing all the means of your own deliverance and salvation. The offers of grace, the allurements and invitations of the great Saviour of the world, have all been ineffectual to persuade you to accept of deliverance from a slavery you are willingly held in. Nay, you strive against the liberty of the sons of God, and labor to find out all manner of difficulties and hindrances in the way of it. If you pray for it, you do not desire it should yet come, but would stay a while longer," And are these the persons who can truly profess, that they comply with the call of the gospel, and submit to the proposals of it, and are satisfied with the device for our salvation, and with the offers of the gospel, and consent to the terms of the covenant of grace *with all their hearts*, renouncing all other ways?....It is not much more easy to make these things consist with what he says in his answer to Mr. Croswell, (p. 26.) he there says, "there is not a son nor daughter of Adam excluded from salvation, who will accept Christ upon God's offer, and take him in his person and offices, and whole work of redemption, to be their Saviour, and they find themselves willing to accept of Christ as so offered to them, and PLEASED WITH THAT DEVICE for their salvation, and heartily choosing him to be to them and in them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." See also to the same purpose, Ibid. p. 32, 33, and 94.

Mr. Williams, though he holds, that it is lawful for some unsanctified men to come to sacraments, yet supposes it not to be lawful for those that are *lukewarm* in religion to come. P. 35. So that according to his scheme, some unsanctified professors are above *lukewarmness*; that is to say, their hearts within them are truly hot or fervent with Christian zeal, and they such as Christ will never spue out of his mouth; in a great inconsistency with the scripture. He suggests, that it is an injury done to the cause of truth, in me, to repre-

sent Mr. Stoddard as being of another opinion, (p. 35) but let us see whether such a representation be an injury to truth or no. Mr. Stoddard taught, that natural men have "no sincerity in them." *Guide to Christ* p. 60, 61. That "their hearts are dead as a stone that there is no disposition or inclination to any thing that is good, but a total emptiness of all goodness." Ibid. p. 63. That "some of them have considerable shews of goodness, there is an appearance of good desires, &c. but there is nothing of goodness in all this ; that all they do is in hypocrisy," *Benef. of the Gosp.* 73. That "they are acted by a lust of selflove in all their religion : If they are swept and garnished, they are empty : There may be some similitude of faith and love, but no reality, not a spark of goodness in their hearts ; though corruption may be restrained, yet it reigns." He speaks abundantly to the same purpose in his sermon, entitled, *Natural men are under the government of selflove.*

And Mr. Williams himself in his sermon on Psal. xci. 1. describing carnal men, by which he means the same with unconverted men (as is evident through the book, particularly p. 36) he says, p. 27, 28. That to such "religion looks like a dull, unpleasant kind of exercise, and so different from the sensual joys and pleasures which they choose, that they *hate* to set about it, as long as they dare let it alone ; and would do as little as ever they can at it : That when they durst not let it alone any longer, they set about it, but would fain dispatch it as *soon*, and as *easily* as they can ; because it seems to them a *miserable, uncomfortable* sort of life. Ask your own conscience (says he) see if this be not the *truth* of the case." Now let the reader judge, whether this be a description of persons whom it would be injurious to represent as having nothing above *lukewarmness*.

Another thing, which Mr. Williams supposes must be professed in order to come to sacraments, and therefore according to him is what an unsanctified man can profess, and speak true, is, "That they with all their hearts cast themselves upon the mercy of God, to help them to keep covenant." P. 31 and 32. And yet elsewhere he mentions a depending on

Christ for things of this nature, as a discriminating mark of a true Christian. Ser. on *Christ a king and witness*, p. 19. Under a use of examination, he there says, "Do you depend on Christ to protect you from all your spiritual enemies, to restore you to holiness, to subdue all your heart to the will of God, to make you partakers of his image and moral perfections, and in that way to preserve and lead you to your true perfection and eternal happiness?"

Mr. Williams supposes, p. 36, that the profession men must make in order to come to sacraments, implies *real friendship* to God, "loving God more than his enemies, loving him above the world;" and therefore according to Mr. Williams, unsanctified men may make this profession also, *and speak true*; contrary to the whole current of scripture, which represents unsanctified men as "the enemies of God, those that have not the love of God in them, under the power of a carnal mind, &c." And contrary to the unanimous voice of all sound divines, yea, of the whole Christian world. Mr. Williams in the forementioned place blames me, that I had intimated (as he supposes) that the profession which Mr. Stoddard taught to be necessary, did not imply "real friendship, and loving God above his enemies, and above the world." Let us then compare this with Mr. Stoddard's doctrine, as that is extant in his writings. He speaks of it as a "property of saving grace, wherein it specifically differs from common grace, that a true love to God prizes God above all the world. *Nat. of Conv.* p. 7. "That every natural man prefers vain and base things before God." Ibid. p. 96. "That they are all enemies to God, and the very being of God." Ibid. p. 5, and 97. "That their hearts are full of enmity to God." Ibid. p. 55. "That they have an aversion to those gracious actions of loving God, and trusting in Christ, and are under the dominion of a contrary inclination." Ibid. p. 67. "That those of them whose consciences are enlightened, and are reforming their lives, have no love; and that it is a burden to them that they suspect there is such a God, that they wish there was not such an one. And that they are haters of God, and are so addicted to their own interest, that they have a bitter spirit towards God,

have an ill affection to him, and are adversaries to his felicity." *Ibid.* p. 97. *Three Serms.* p. 38, 39. "That they are governed by a spirit of selflove, and are wholly destitute of love to God; that some of them do confess that they have but little love to God; but indeed they have not one spark of love to God in their hearts. *Three Serms.* p. 48. That they set their interest at the right hand of God's glory.....as if God's honor were not to be regarded, compared with their interest, &c. &c." *Ibid.* p. 62, 63.

So Mr. Williams himself (*Christ a king and witness*, p. 145.) plainly supposes, that before conversion, men love the world more than God. For, speaking of the nature of the change wrought in conversion, he says, "things are quite turned about, God and Christ are got into the place the world had before." Again (*Ibid.* p. 18.) he says, "You must know that there is no man who is not either a true subject to Christ, or his enemy. That man who does not submit to Christ as his King and Lord, by bearing true faith and allegiance to him, is the enemy of Christ and his kingdom. Such are all they who will not depend on him, believe in him, give up themselves, and all to him," And again, p. 106, 107. "Man, since the fall, has a natural unlikeness to God, and *hates* the holiness and purity of the divine nature." And in his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11. he says, to his hearers, "If your nature remain unrenewed and unsanctified—you are the enemies of God and Christ by wicked works, and an impure heart." But yet now it seems, some of these may profess *real friendship to Christ and loving him above the world*, and speak true.

And these things are no less inconsistent with what Mr. Williams says in the very book under consideration. He here says, p. 36. "Why should any divine now tell us, that these same professions do not imply that there are any pretences of any real friendship, that they import no pretence of loving God more, yea, not so much as his enemies, no pretence to love God above the world?" When he himself is the divine that tells us so, or plainly supposes so in this very book of his. For, in p. 8, 9, having mentioned the profession communicants may be required to make, he then says, that

“such a profession contains all that is essential to true religion in it ; and if this is the fruit of the love of God, it is true godliness :” Plainly supposing, that persons may have these things without the love of God ; as the reader will see more evidently if he views the place. So that the profession must imply real friendship, and love to God, even above the world ; and yet must contain only such things as may be with or without the love of God, indiscriminately.

Mr. Williams allows, that in order to come to sacraments men ought to profess a “ subjection to Christ with all their hearts, p. 10, and to be devoted to the service of God, p. 49, and to give up themselves to Christ, to be taught, ruled and led by him in a gospel way to salvation.” P. 31 and 32. And though he and Mr. Stoddard taught, that it is lawful for some unsanctified men to come to sacraments, yet Mr. Williams supposes it to be unlawful for any to come to sacraments *serving two masters* ; and says, Mr. Stoddard taught that they ought to covenant with God with their whole hearts, and give up all their hearts and lives to Christ.” We are therefore to understand Mr. Williams, that some unsanctified men can profess all these things, *and speak true*. Strange doctrine for a Christian divine ! Let us see whether Mr. Stoddard taught such doctrine. He taught that “ faith in Christ is the first act of obedience, that any sinner does perform ; that it is by faith that a man first gives himself to be God’s servant.” *Safety of A/h.* p. 228, 229. That “ all those that are not converted, are under the dominion of sin, enemies to God.” *Ibid.* p. 5. That “ there is no obedience to God in what they do,” who have only common grace ; that “ they do not attend the will of God.” *Ibid.* p. 7. That “ all ungodly men are servants of Satan, and live in a way of rebellion against God.” *Ibid.* 94. That “ they are enemies to the authority of God ; to the wisdom, power and justice of God, yea, to the very Being of God ; they have a preparedness of heart to all wickedness that is committed in the world, if God did not restrain them ; that if they were in the circumstances that the fallen angels are in, they would be as the very devils ; *Ibid.* p. 95, that their hearts are like the

hearts of devils, as full of sin as a toad is full of poison, having no inclination to any thing that is good." *Guide to Christ*, p. 68. see also *Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 103. That "they utterly neglect the end they were made for, and make it their business to serve themselves; they care not whether God's glory sinks or swims." *Three Serm.* p. 62. That "they hate God, because God crosses them in his laws." *Ibid.* p. 38. These are the men, which Mr. Williams supposes must, and may (some of them) truly profess a subjection to Christ with all their hearts, and to be devoted to Christ; and the men which he would bear us in hand, that Mr. Stoddard taught, might covenant with God with their whole hearts, and give up all their hearts and lives to Christ. Mr. Stoddard taught, that "Men that have but common grace, go quite in another path than that which God directs to."—That "they set themselves against the way of salvation God prescribes;" *Safety.* p. 10. That "man in his natural state is an enemy to the way of salvation;" That "he is an enemy to the law of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ." *Ibid.* p. 106.

But yet these, if we believe Mr. Williams, may truly profess a subjection to Christ with all their hearts, and give up themselves to him, to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel way of salvation. Yet if we believe him, we must have the trouble of disbelieving him again; for in these things he is as inconsistent with himself, as he is with Mr. Stoddard. For in his Sermon on Isa. xlv. 11, p. 26, 27, he says to those whose natures are *unrenewed and unsanctified*, "If you are without Christ, you are in a state of slavery to sin, led about of divers lusts,† and under the reigning power and dominion of your corruptions, which debase your souls and bring them down from the dignity of their nature, to the vilest, most shameful and accursed bondage. And by means of sin ye are in bondage to the devil, the most hateful and accursed enemy of God and your own souls; and are opposing all the means of your own deliverance. The offers of grace,

† And yet now it seems, some such do serve but one master, and give up themselves to Christ to be led by him.

the calls and invitations of the gospel have been ineffectual to persuade you to accept of deliverance from a slavery you are willingly held in. Nay you strive against the liberty of the sons of God." And yet some of these are (if we believe what Mr. Williams now says) such as are subject to Christ with all their hearts, give up all their hearts and lives to Christ, and give up themselves to be taught, ruled, and led by him in a gospel way to salvation. Mr. Williams, in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 18, under a use of examination is giving marks of trial, says, "Have you unreservedly given up your souls and bodies to him? [viz Christ] you must be all Christ's and have *no other master*. You must be given to him without reserve, both in body and spirit, which are his." But now it seems these are no discriminating evidences of true piety: He says, p. 118, "A man naturally hates God should reign." And p. 119, speaking of the natural man, he says, "He hates to be controled, and in all things subjected to God.He really owns no God but himself." But if so, then certainly he is not subject to God with all his heart.

Our author in the book more especially attended to, says, p. 31, He "knows of nobody who has any controversy with me in *what he calls my loose way of arguing*," in my saying, "The nature of things seems to afford no good reason why the people of Christ should not openly profess a proper respect to him in their hearts, as well as a true notion of him in their heads." And then in that and the following page, proceeds to shew what respect Mr. Stoddard, and those that think with him, suppose men must profess in order to come to the Lord's supper; and in p. 33, speaks of such a profession as equally honorable to Christ with a profession of saving grace. And as according to Mr. Williams. no profession, discriminating what is professed from common grace, can be required, so common grace must be supposed to be a *proper respect to Christ in the heart*. Now let us see what Mr. Stoddard says. "There is (says he) an opposition between saving and common grace;....they have a contrariety one to another, and are at war one with the other, and would destroy one the other. Common graces are LUSTS, and do oppose saving grace."

(*Nat. of Sav. Conv.* p. 9.) “Men that are in a natural condition.....such of them as are addicted to morality and religion, are serving their LUSTS therein. The most orderly, natural men do live an *ungodly* life ; yea their very *religion is iniquity*.” (*Ibid*, p. 96, 97.) “Their best works are not only sinful, but *properly sins* ; they are acted by a SPIRIT OF LUST in all that they do.” (*Saf. of App.* p. 163.) “Moral virtues do not render men acceptable to God ; for though they look like virtues, yet they are LUSTS.” (*Ibid*. p. 81.) Now the question plainly is, whether *Lust can be a proper respect to Christ in the heart ?* And, whether a *profession* which implies *no more* in it, be equally honorable to Christ, as a credible profession of a *gracious* respect to him ?



SECTION VI.

Concerning visibility, without apparent probability.

MR. STODDARD, (*Appeal* p. 16) says thus : “Such persons as the apostles did admit into gospel churches, are *fit* to be admitted into them ; but they admitted *many* that had not a thorough work of regeneration. Indeed by the *rule* that God has given for admissions, if carefully attended, *more* unconverted persons will be admitted, than converted.”

This passage I took notice of in my book, where I say, “I would humbly inquire, how those visible qualifications can be the ground of a rational judgment, that a person is circumcised in heart, which nevertheless, at the same time, we are sensible, are so far from being probable signs of it, that they are more frequently without it, than with it,” &c. This seems to be a terrible thing in Mr. Williams’s way, which he strikes at from time to time ; and is an impediment, he boggles at exceedingly. One while he pretends, he can give a sufficient answer ; p. 7, 8. At another time he pretends, that I remove the difficulty myself ; p. 12. Then again, in the same

page he pretends to solve the difficulty ; and then in the next page pretends, that if the case be as I say, " That we cannot form a rational judgment that a thing is, which at the same time, and under that degree of light we then stand in, it is more probable is a mistaken one, than not," yet it can argue nothing to the case ; seeing the judgment we do form, is directed by a rule which is appointed for us. But still, as if not satisfied with these answers and remarks, he seems afterwards to suggest that Mr. Stoddard did not express this as *his own* sentiment, but as Mr. Cotton's, as a gentleman of the same principles with Mr. Mather, using it as *argumentum ad hominem*. See p. 33.

In p. 34, he expressly says, " Mr. Stoddard does not say, that when the rule which God has given for admissions is carefully attended, it leaves reason to believe, that the greater part of those who are admitted, are *enemies to God*, &c." [True, he does not say this in terms ; but he says. " More *unconverted* persons will be admitted than converted ;" which is equivalent.] And in p. 133, Mr. Williams presumes confidently to affirm, that " Mr. Stoddard says this [the thing fore-mentioned] not with peculiar relation to his own scheme, but only as an application of a saying of Mr. Cotton's, who was of a different opinion, and said upon a different scheme ; to shew that upon their own principles, the matter will not be mended." But this is contrary to the most plain fact. For Mr. Stoddard having said " The apostles admitted many *unconverted*," he immediately adds the passage in dispute, " Indeed by the rule," &c. plainly expressing his own sentiment ; though he *back's* it with a saying of Mr. Cotton. So Mr. Cotton's words come in as a confirmation of Mr. Stoddard's ; and not Mr. Stoddard's as an *application* of Mr. Cotton's. However, Mr. Williams delivers the same sentiment as *his own*, once and again in his book : He delivers it as his own sentiment, p. 34, " That probably many more hypocrites, than real saints, do make such a profession, as that which *must* be accepted." He delivers it as his own sentiment, p. 61, That " The apostles judged it likely that of the Christians taken into the church under their direction, as many were hypocrites

in proportion to their number, as of those that were taken into the Jewish church." And as to the latter, he delivers it as his sentiment, p. 24, that "The body of the people were not regenerate." So that, according to his own sentiments, when the Apostolic rule of taking in is observed, the body of those who are admitted will be hypocrites.

Now therefore, I desire that this matter may be examined to the very bottom. And here let it be considered, whether the truth of the following things are not incontestable.

1. If indeed by the rule God has given for admissions, when it is carefully attended, more unconverted persons will be admitted than converted ; then it will follow, that just such a visibility, or visible appearance of saintship as the *rule requires*, is more frequently *without* real saintship than *with* it.

2. If Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Williams had just reason from the holy scripture, and divine Providence to think thus, and to publish such a sentiment, and the Christian church has good reason to believe them ; then God has given the Christian church in its present state (dark and imperfect as it is) good reason to *think so* too.

3. If Christ, by the rule he has given for admissions, requires his churches to receive such a visibility or appearance, which he has given the same churches, at the same time, reason to judge to be an appearance, that *for the most part* is without godliness, or more frequently connected with ungodliness ; then he requires them to receive such an appearance, as he at the same time has given them reason to think does not imply a *probability* of godliness, but is attended rather with a probability of ungodliness. For that is the notion of probability : *An appearance, which, so far as we have means to judge, is for the most part connected with the thing.** Therefore the sign or appearance, let it be what it will, implies a *probability*

* Mr. Locke thus defines *probability* (*Hum. Und.* 7th edit 8vo. vol 2, p. 273) "Probability is nothing but the appearance of such an agreement or disagreement, by the intervention of proofs, whose connexion is not constant and immutable, or at least is not perceived to be so ; but is, or appears FOR THE MOST PART to be so ; and is enough to induce the mind to judge the proposition to be true, or false, rather than the contrary."

of that, which we have reason to think it is for the *most part* connected or attended with. Where there is only probability without certainty, there is a *peradventure* in the case on both sides ; or in vulgar language, the supposition on each side stands a chance to be true : But that side which most commonly proves true in such a case, stands the best chance ; and therefore properly on that side lies the *probability*.

4. That cannot be a *credible* visibility or appearance, which is not a *probable* appearance. To say a thing is *credible* and not *probable*, is a contradiction. And it is impossible rationally to judge a thing true, and at the same time rationally to judge a thing most probably not true. Therefore it is absurd (not to say worse) to talk of any *divine institution* thus to judge. It would be to suppose, that God by his institution has made that judgment rational, which he at the same time makes improbable, and therefore irrational.

This notion of admitting members into the church of Christ without and against *probability* of true piety, is not only very inconsistent with itself, but very inconsistent with what the common light of mankind teaches in their dealings one with another. Common Sense teaches all mankind, in admission of members into societies, at least societies formed for very great and important purposes, to admit none but those, concerning whom there is an *apparent probability*, that they are the hearty friends of the society, and of the main designs and interests of it ; and especially not to admit such, concerning whom there is a greater probability of their being habitual, fixed enemies. But thus it is according to Mr. Stoddard's and Mr. Williams's doctrine, as well as the doctrine of the scripture, with all *unsanctified* men in regard to the church of Christ : They are enemies to the head of the society, enemies to his honor and authority, and the work of salvation in the way of the gospel ; the upholding

And Mr. Williams himself, p. 139, says, " 'Tis moral evidence of gospel sincerity, which God's word makes the church's rule," &c. Now, does such an appearance, as we have reason at the same time to think is *more frequently* without gospel holiness than with it, amount to moral evidence of gospel sincerity ?

and promoting of which is the main design of the society. The church is represented in scripture as the *household of God*, that are in a peculiar manner intrusted with the care of his name and honor in the world, the interests of his kingdom, the care of his jewels and most precious things : And would not common sense teach an earthly prince not to admit into his *household* such, as he had no reason to look upon so much as *probable* friends and loyal subjects in their hearts ; but rather friends and slaves in their hearts to his enemies, and competitors for his crown and dignity ? The visible church of Christ is often represented as his *city* and his *army*. Now would not common sense teach the inhabitants of a besieged city to open the gates to none, but those concerning whom there is at least an *apparent probability* of their not being enemies ? And would any imagine, that in a militant state of things, it is a likely way to promote the interest of the war, to fill up the army with such as are more likely to be on the enemy's side in their hearts, than on the side of their lawful and rightful prince, and his faithful soldiers and subjects ?



SECTION VII.

Concerning the Lord's Supper's being a converting ordinance.

THOUGH Mr. Williams holds, that none are to be admitted to the Lord's supper, but such as make a credible pretence or profession of *real godliness*, and are to be admitted under that *notion*, and with respect to such a character appearing on them ; yet he holds at the same time, that the Lord's supper is a *converting ordinance*, an ordinance designed for the bringing of some men that have not such a character, to be of such a character. P. 14, 15, 35, 83, 100, 101, 126, 127. It is evident that the meaning of those divines who speak of the Lord's supper as a converting ordinance, is not merely that

God in his sovereign Providence will use it as an *occasion* of the conversion of some ; but that it is a converting *means* by *his institution given to men*, appointing them to use it for this purpose. Thus Mr. Stoddard expressly declares, “ That the Lord’s supper is INSTITUTED to be a means of regeneration, (*Doc. of inst. Churches*, p. 22.) INSTITUTED for the conversion of sinners, as well as the confirmation of saints ; *Aphel*, p. 70, 71. That the direct end of it is conversion, when, the subject that it is administered unto stands in need of conversion.” *Ibid.* p. 73, 74. And thus Mr. Williams, after Mr. Stoddard, speaks of the Lord’s supper “ as by Christ’s APPOINTMENT a proper means of the conversion” of some that are unconverted ; p. 100, 101. So he speaks of it as *instituted* for the conversion of sinners, through p. 126 and 127.

Now if so, what need of men’s being to rational charity converted already, in order to their coming to the Lord’s supper ? Is it reasonable to suppose God would *institute* this ordinance *directly for that end*, that sinners might be *converted* by it ; and then charge his ministers and churches not to admit any that they had not reasonable ground to think were converted *already* ?....Mr. Williams, in p. 83, supposes two ends of Christ’s appointing the communion of the Christian church ; “ that such as have grace already should be under proper advantages to gain more, and that those who have none, should be under proper advantages to attain grace.” But this ill consists with other parts of his scheme. If a king should erect a *hospital* for the help of the poor, and therein has two ends ; *one*, the nourishing of such as are in health, and the *other*, the healing of the sick ; and furnishes the hospital accordingly, with proper food for the healthy, and proper remedies for the sick : But at the same time charges the officers, to whom he commits the care of the hospital, by no means to admit any, unless it be under a *notion* of their being in health, and *from respect to such a qualification in them*, and unless they have *reasonable ground, and moral evidence*, to induce them to believe that they are well : And if this pretence should be made to justify such a conduct, that the hospital was indeed designed for the healing of the sick, yet it was designed to confer this

benefit only on such diseased people as were *hypocrites*, and made a *profession and pretence* of being in health ; will any man presume to say, that such a conduct is agreeable to the dictates of the understanding of rational beings ? And to suppose, that such should be the conduct of the infinitely wise God, is as unscriptural, as it is unreasonable. We often read in God's word, of men's being convinced of their wickedness and confessing their sins, as a way to be healed and cleansed from sin : But where do we read of men's pretending to more goodness than they have, and making an hypocritical profession and show of goodness, in order to their becoming good men ?* Where have we a divine institution, that any who are *wolves* should put on *sheep's clothing*, and so come to his people, that they may believe them to be *sheep*, and under *this notion* receive them into the flock, to the end that they may truly become *of his sheep* ?

But to examine this matter, of the Lord's supper being a converting ordinance to ungodly men professing godliness, a little more exactly. If Christ has appointed the Lord's supper to be a converting ordinance to some such as these, then he has appointed it either only for such of them as are *mistaken*, and think themselves *godly* when they are not ; or he has appointed it not only for such, but also for such as are *sensible they are ungodly*.

If the former, if it be appointed as a converting ordinance only for such as are *mistaken*, and think themselves *godly*, or

* Mr. Williams (P. 42.) owns, that persons must make a "profession wherein they make a shew of being wise virgins," in order to come into the visible Church. And (p. 35) he owns, that "all visible saints who are not truly pious, are Hypocrites." Again, it may be observed, he abundantly insists, that men who have no more than common grace and moral sincerity, may lawfully come to sacraments ; and yet by what he says (p. 35) they must profess more. So that men who have no more must profess more ; and this it seems, according to divine institution ! Again he says (p. 35.) That one end God designed by appointing men to be brought into the Church, is, that through divine grace, they might effectually be brought to Christ, "to give him the whole possession of their hearts ; and yet in the very next paragraph (p. 35. & 36.) he speaks of it as unlawful for men to come to sacraments till they "give up all their hearts to Christ.

converted ; then here is an institution of Christ, which never can, in any one instance, be made use of to the end for which he has appointed men to use it. It cannot be made use of for this end by *those who admit* members, and administer the ordinance : For they, as Mr. Williams says, must admit none but such as they are bound by the rule of Christ to look upon as godly men already, and to administer the sacrament to them *under that notion, and with respect to such a character.* Neither can it be made use of to such a purpose by any of the *communicants* : For by the supposition, they must be all such as think they are converted already, and also come *under that notion.* So that by this scheme of things, here is an institution appointed to be upheld and used in the church, which the institution itself makes void and impossible. For, as was observed before, the notion of a converting ordinance has not a reference to any secret decree of God, how he in his sovereign pleasure *will sometimes use it* : But to his institution given to men, appointing the end for which *they should use it.* Therefore, on the present supposition, the institution appoints the Lord's supper to be used in some cases for the conversion of sinners, but at the same time forbids its being either given or received under any other notion than that of the communicant's being converted already : Which is in effect to forbid its being either given or received for the conversion of the communicant, in any one instance. So that the institution effectually destroys and disannuls itself. But God forbid, that we should ascribe any such inconsistent institutions to the divine head of the church !

Or if the other part of the disjunction be taken, and it be said, the Lord's supper is appointed for the conversion of some *that are sensible that they are ungodly or unconverted,* the consequence is no less absurd, on Mr. Williams's principles. For then the scheme is this. The institution requires some men to make a pretence of *real piety*, and to make a public, solemn profession of *gospel holiness*, which at the same time they are *sensible* they have none of ; and this, to the end that others may look upon them to be *real saints* and receive them to the Lord's supper *under that notion* : Not putting on a dis-

guise, and making a shew of what they have not, through mistake, but doing it consciously and wilfully, to the honor and glory of God : And all this strictly required of them, as the *instituted means* of their becoming real saints, and the children of God !

Mr. Williams says, p. 14. “ Since it is God’s will, that his church should admit all such visible saints (viz. such as he had been speaking of) it follows that the Lord’s supper is a converting ordinance to such of them as are *unconverted*.” But Mr. Williams is mistaken as to his consequence. The Lord’s supper is not instituted to be a converting ordinance to all unconverted men, whom it is God’s will the church should admit. For it may be the church’s duty, and so God’s will, to admit those that live *secretly* in the grossest wickedness, as adultery, buggery, deism, &c. Such men as these may make a fair profession, and the church may be ignorant of their secret wickedness, and therefore may have no warrant to reject them : But yet it will not follow, that God by his institution has given *such* a lawful right to the Lord’s supper, having appointed it to be a *converting* ordinance to them.

SECTION VIII.



The Notion of moral Sincerity’s being the Qualification which gives a lawful Right to Christian Sacraments, examined.

THOUGH our author disdains the imputation of any such notion, as that of men’s being called visible and professed saints from respect to a visibility and profession of *moral sincerity* : Yet it is manifest, that in his scheme (whether consistently or no, others must judge) *moral sincerity* is the qualification which entitles, and gives a lawful right, to sacraments. For he holds, that it is lawful for unsanctified men who have

this qualification, to come to sacraments ; and that it is not lawful for them to come without it. Therefore I desire this notion may be thoroughly examined.

And for the greater clearness, let it be observed what *sincerity* in general is. Now *sincerity*, in the general notion of it, is *an honest conformity of some profession or outward shew of some inward property or act of mind, to the truth and reality of it.* If there be shew or pretence of what *is not*, and has *no real existence*, then the pretence is altogether vain ; it is only a pretence, and nothing else : And therefore is a pretence or shew without any *sincerity*, of any kind, either moral or gracious.

I now proceed to offer the following arguments against the notion of *moral sincerity's* being the qualification, which gives a lawful right to sacraments.

I. There is no such thing as moral sincerity, in the *covenant of grace*, distinct from gracious sincerity. If any sincerity, at all be requisite in order to a title to the seals of the covenant of grace, doubtless it is the sincerity which belongs to that covenant. But there is only one sort of sincerity which belongs to that covenant ; and that is a gracious sincerity : The covenant of grace has nothing to do with any other sincerity. There is but one sort of faith belonging to that covenant ; and this is saving faith in Jesus Christ, called in scripture *unfeigned faith*. As for the faith of devils, it is not the faith of the covenant of grace.

Here the distinction of an *internal*, and *external* covenant, will not help at all ; as long as the covenant, of which the sacraments are seals, is a *covenant of salvation*, or a covenant proposing terms of eternal salvation. The sacraments are seals of such a covenant : They are seals of the *New Testament in Christ's blood*, Matth. xxvi. 28. Luke, xxii 28, *a testament which has better promises than the old*, Heb. viii. 6, and which the apostle tells us, “ makes us heirs of the eternal inheritance,” Heb. ix. 15. Mr. Williams himself speaks of the covenant sealed in baptism, as “ the covenant proposing terms of salvation ” P. 23. So he speaks of the covenant entered into by a visible people, as the covenant “ in which God

offers everlasting happiness." P. 24, 25. But there is no other religion, no other sincerity, belonging to this covenant of *salvation*, but that which *accompanies salvation*, or is *saving religion and sincerity*. As it is written, Psal. li. 6. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts."

There is such a thing, as what may be called a *moral sincerity*, in distinction from saving, in many moral things ; as in loving our friends and neighbors, in loving our country, in choosing the Protestant religion before the Popish, in a conscientious care to do many duties, in being willing to take a great deal of pains in religion, in being sorry for the commission of such and such acts of wickedness, &c. But there are some duties, which, unless they are done with a *gracious sincerity*, they cannot be done at all. As Mr. Stoddard observes, *Safety of Aft.* p. 216. "There are some duties which cannot be done but from a gracious respect to God." Thus there is but one sort of sincerity in loving God as God, and setting our hearts on him as our highest happiness, loving him above the world, and loving holiness above all the objects of our lusts. He that does not do these things with a gracious sincerity, never really doth them at all : He that truly does them, is certainly a godly man ; as we are abundantly assured by the word of God. So, there is but one sort of *sincere and cordial consent to the covenant of grace*, but one sort of *giving all our hearts to Jesus Christ* ; which things Mr. Williams allows to be necessary, to come to sacraments. That which a man's heart is full of reigning enmity to, he cannot with any reality at all, cordially consent to and comply with : But the hearts of *unsanctified* men are full of reigning enmity to the covenant of grace, according to the doctrine of scripture, and according to the doctrine of Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Williams too, as we have seen before.

However, if there were any such thing, as a being heartily willing to accept Christ, and a giving all our hearts to Christ, without a saving sincerity, this would not be a complying with the terms of a covenant of salvation. For it is selfevident, that it is only something which is *saving*, that is a compliance with the terms of *salvation*. Now Mr. Williams him-

self often allows (as has been observed) that persons must comply with the terms of the covenant of grace, in order to come to sacraments. Yet because he also in effect denies it, I shall say something further in confirmation of it.

(1.) The sacraments are *covenant privileges*. Mr. Williams calls them so. P. 5. Covenant privileges are covenant benefits, or benefits persons have a right to by the covenant. But persons can have no right to any of the *benefits* of a covenant, without compliance with its *terms*. For that is the very notion of the terms of a covenant, viz. terms of an interest in the benefits of that covenant. It is so in all covenants whatsoever; if a man refuses to comply with the conditions of the covenant, he can claim nothing by that covenant.

(2.) If we consider the sacraments as *seals* of the covenant, the same thing is evident, viz. that a man can have no right to them without a compliance with the terms. The sacraments are not only seals of the offer on God's part, or ordinances God has appointed as confirmations of the truth of his covenant, as Mr. Williams seems to insist. P. 74, 75. For considered merely as seals and confirmations of the truth of the gospel, they are (as miracles and other evidences of the Christian religion) seals equally given to *Christians, Jews, Deists*, moral and vicious, and the whole world that knows of them. Whereas, it is manifest, in the nature of the thing, sacraments are seals of the covenant *to be applied to the communicant*, and of which he is the immediate subject, in a peculiar manner, *as a party in covenant*. Otherwise, what need would there be of his being one of God's *covenant people*, in any sense whatsoever?

But now it is not reasonable to suppose, that the seal of the covenant belongs to any man, *as a party in the covenant*, who will not accept of and comply with the covenant. He that rejects the covenant, and will not comply with it, has no interest in it: And he that has no interest in the covenant, has no right to the seals: For the covenant, and its seals go together. It is so in all covenants among mankind; after a man has come into a bargain proposed and offered by another, yielding to the terms of it, he has a right to have the bargain *sealed* and confirmed to him *as a party in the covenant*; but not before.

And if what the communicant does, be a seal on his part also, as the nature of the thing demonstrates, seeing he is active, in the matter, and as Mr. Williams seems willing to allow p. 75, it will follow, with equal evidence, that a man cannot lawfully partake, unless he yields to, and complies with the covenant. To what purpose is a man's sealing an instrument or contract, but to confirm it *as his own act and deed*, and to declare his compliance with his part of the contract. As when a servant seals his indenture, it is a testimony and ratification of his compliance to the proposed contract with his master. And if a covenant of friendship be proposed between two parties, and they both put their seal to it, hereby they both testify and declare their mutual friendship.

It has been already observed, that unsanctified men, while such, cannot, with any sincerity at all, testify a *present* cordial compliance with the covenant of grace : And as they cannot do this, so neither can they with any sincerity promise a *future* compliance with that covenant. Mr. Williams often allows, that in order to Christian communion men must *promise* a compliance with the covenant, in its spiritual and saving duties ; that they *will believe and repent in the sense of the covenant*, willingly accept of Christ and his salvation, love him and live to him, and will do it “ immediately, henceforward, from this moment.” P. 25, 26, 28 and 76. But how absurd is this ! When at the same instant, while they are making and uttering these promises, they are entirely *averse* to any such thing ; being “ then enemies to Christ, willingly rejecting him, opposing his salvation, striving against it, laboring to find out all manner of difficulties and hinderances in the way of it, not desiring it should come yet,” &c. which our author, in a place forecited, says is the case with *all unsanctified* men.

And when unsanctified men promise, that they will spend the rest of their lives in universal *obedience* to Christ, there is no sincerity in such promises ; because there is not *such a heart* in them. There is no man but a true disciple of Christ, that is willing thoroughly to *deny himself* for him, and follow him in a way of obedience to all his commands, unto the end, through all difficulties which Christ has given his followers

reason to expect, or commanded them to prepare for ; as is evident by Christ's frequent declarations. Luke, xiv. 25....33. Matth. x. 37, 38, 59. chap. xiii. 44, 45, 46. and many parallel places. If an unsanctified man thinks he is willing, he does not know his own heart : If he professes to be willing, he does not know what he says. The difficulty and cost of it is not in his view ; and therefore he has no proper willingness to comply with the cost and difficulty. That which he is willing for, with a moral sincerity, is something else that he conceives of, which is a great deal easier, and less cross to flesh and blood. If a king should propose to a subject his building him such a tower, promising him a certain reward. If the subject should undertake it, *not counting the cost*, thinking with himself that the king meant another sort of tower, much cheaper ; and should be willing only to build that cheap one, which he imagined in his own mind ; when he would by no means have consented to build so costly a tower as the king proposed, if he had understood him right : Such a man could not be said properly to be willing to comply with his prince's proposal, with any sincerity at all. For what he consents to with a moral sincerity, is *not the thing* which the king proposed.

The promises of unsanctified men are like the promises of the man we read of, Luke ix. 57, 58, who said " Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." To whom Christ replied, " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." When he made his promise, he probably quite mistook the thing, and did not imagine, that to follow Christ wherever he went, would be to follow him in such poverty and hardship. I suppose the rich *young man* we read of, Mark x. 17, &c. might have what is called *moral sincerity*. But he had no sincerity in *the covenant of grace*. When he came to Christ to know *what he should do to have eternal life*, it is probable he ignorantly thought himself willing to yield himself to Christ's direction. Yet when it came to a trial, and Christ told him he must *go and sell all that he had and give to the poor*, it proved that he had no sincerity of willingness at all for any such

thing. So that it is evident, however unsanctified men may be morally sincere in some things, yet they have no sincerity of any sort in *that covenant*, of which the sacraments are seals ; and that moral sincerity, distinct from gracious, in *this covenant*, is a mere imagination, there being indeed no such thing.

II. Another argument against this notion of moral sincerity's giving a right to church communion, is this : A quality that is *transient and vanishing*, can be no qualification or fitness for a *standing* privilege. Unsanctified men may be very serious, greatly affected, and much engaged in religion : But the scripture compares their religion to a *lamp* not supplied with *oil*, which will go out, and to a *plant* that has *no root* nor *deepness of earth*, which will soon wither ; and compares such unsanctified men to the *dog* that will *return to his vomit*, and to the *sow*, which, though washed ever so clean, yet, her nature not being changed, will *return to her wallowing in the mire*.

Mr. Williams allows, that persons in order to come to sacraments must have "deep convictions, an earnest concern to obtain salvation," &c. Now every one who is in any degree acquainted with religious matters, knows that such convictions are not wont to last a great while, if they have no saving issue. Mr. Stoddard, in his sermon on the danger of speedy degeneracy, p. 11, says, "unconverted men *will grow weary* of religious duties." And our author himself, p. 78, speaking of those professors in the primitive churches, that fell away to heresy and other wickedness, takes notice that the apostle observes, "IT WILL BE SO....that they which are approved, might be made manifest : " And says Mr. Williams upon it, "Evil and unsanctified men, by such sins, will discover their hypocrisy.

Now seeing this is the case with moral sincerity and common religion, how can it be a qualification for a standing privilege ? Nothing can be a fitness for a *durable privilege* but a *durable qualification*. For no qualification has any fitness or adaptedness for more than it extends to ; as a short scabbard cannot be fit for a long sword. If a man, going a journey in the night, needs a lamp to light him in his way, who will pre-

tend that a flaming wick without oil, which will last but a few rods, is fit for this purpose? Or if a man were building an house for himself and family, should he put into the frame, pieces of timber known to be of such a nature as that they would probably be rotten in a few months; or should he take blocks of ice instead of hewn stone, because during a present cold season they appeared to be hard and firm; and withal should for a covering put only leaves that will soon fade away, instead of tiles or shingles, that are solid and lasting; would not every spectator ridicule his folly!

If it should be said that unsanctified men, when they *lose* their moral sincerity, may be *cast out* again: This is far from helping the case, or shewing that such men were ever *fit* to be admitted. To say, a piece of timber, though not of a durable nature, is *fit* to be put into the frame of a building, because when it begins to rot it may be pulled out again, is so far from proving that it was ever fit to be put in, that the speedy necessity of pulling it out rather proves the contrary. If we had the power of constituting a human body, or it were left to us to add members to our own bodies, as there might be occasion; we should not think such a member was fit to be added to the frame, that had already radically seated in it a cancer or gangrene, by which it could last but a little while itself, and would endanger the other members; though it were true, that when the disease should prevail, there were surgeons who might be procured to cut that member off.

But to consider a little further this point of *moral sincerity's* qualifying persons for the privileges of the church, I would lay down this proposition as a thing of clear evidence: *Those persons have no fitness in themselves to come to the privileges of the church, who, if they were known, would not be fit to be admitted by others.* For to say, they are *fit* to be members, and yet *not* fit to be allowed to be members, is apparently absurd. But they who have no better fitness than moral sincerity, if that were *known*, would not be fit to be admitted by others; as is allowed by Mr. Williams. For he holds, that in order to be fit to be admitted by others, they must credibly appear to them to have something more than moral sincerity,

even gospel holiness. And it is evident in itself, as well as allowed by Mr. Williams that if such were *known*, they would not be *fit* to be admitted, *only* on their moral sincerity, and the profession and promises they make from such a principle : And that for this reason, because such a principle alone *would not be fit to be trusted*. God himself has taught his church, that the religion of unsanctified men is not fit to be trusted ; as a lamp without *oil*, and a plant without *root*, are things not to be trusted. God has directly taught his church to expect, that such a religion will fail ; and that such men, having no higher principle, will return to their wickedness. Job xxvii. 8, 9, 10. “ The hypocrite....will he delight himself in the Almighty ? Will he always call upon God ? ” Dan. xii. 10. “ The wicked will do wickedly.” And therefore God does not require his church to accept their profession and promises. If he has taught us not to credit their profession and promises, then certainly he has taught us not to accept them.

III. Another argument against this supposed rule of allowing and requiring unsanctified men with moral sincerity, to come to sacraments, is this. *That rule*, which if fully attended, would naturally bring it to pass, that the *greater part* of communicants would be *unfit*, even according to that very rule, cannot be a divine rule : But this supposed rule of moral sincerity is such a rule. For if this rule be universally attended, then all unsanctified men, who have present convictions of conscience sufficient to make them morally sincere, must come into the communion of the church. But this conviction and common religion, if it does not issue in conversion (as has been observed) commonly vanishes away in a short time : And yet still these persons, if not convicted of open scandal, are left in the communion of the church, and remain there, *without even moral sincerity*. Experience gives us abundant reason to think, that of those who some time or other have considerable convictions of conscience, so as to make them for the present to be what is called *morally sincere*,

but few are savingly converted.* And if all these must be admitted, (as they must, if this rule be fully attended) then their convictions going away and their sincerity vanishing with it, it will hereby be brought about, that the Lord's table is chiefly surrounded with the worst sort of morally insincere persons, viz. stupid backsliders, that are in themselves far worse than they were before, according to the scripture account, Matth. xii. 45, and 2 Pet. ii. 20. And this as the natural consequence of the forementioned rule, appointing *moral sincerity* to be the qualification for communion. Thus this supposed rule supplants its own design.

IV. Another argument that moral sincerity is not the qualification to which God has annexed a lawful right to sacraments, is, that this qualification is *not at all inconsistent* with a man's living at the same time in the most *heinous wickedness*, in a superlative degree contrary to the Christian religion.

It was before observed to be a thing evident in itself, and allowed by Mr. Williams, That there are some sins, which, while wilfully continued and lived in, though secretly, do wholly disqualify persons for Christian sacraments, and make it *unlawful* for men to partake of them.

Now if it be thus with some sins, doubtless it is because of the heinousness of those sins, the high degree of wickedness which is in them. And hence it will follow, that those sins which are in themselves most heinous, and most contrary to the Christian religion, do especially disqualify persons for Christian sacraments, when wilfully lived in.

Let it therefore now be considered, whether it will not follow from these premises, That for men to live in enmity against God and Christ, and in wilful unbelief and rejection of Christ (as the scriptures teach, and as Mr. Stoddard and Mr Williams too assert, is the case with all unsanctified men

* How small a proportion are there of the vast multitudes, that in the time of the late religious commotion through the land had their consciences awakened, who give hopeful abiding evidences of a saving conversion to God !

under the gospel) wholly *disqualifies* men for Christian sacraments. For it is very manifest by scripture and reason, that to live in these things is to live in some of the most heinous kinds of wickedness ; as is allowed by Calvinistic divines in general, and by Mr. Stoddard in particular, who says, *Saf. of A. p.* 224. “ You cannot anger God more by any thing, than by continuing in the neglect of Christ. This is the great controversy God has with sinners ; not that they have been guilty of these and those particular transgressions, but that they abide in the rejection of the gospel.” Again he says, *Ibid.* p. 249. “ The great sin, that God is angry with you for is your unbelief. Despising the gospel is the great provoking sin.”

A man's continuing in hatred of his brother, especially a fellow communicant, is generally allowed to be a thing that disqualifies for communion : The apostle compares it to leaven in the passover, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8. But now certainly it is as bad, and as contrary to the nature and design of Christian sacraments, for a man to live in hatred of CHRIST, and to remain a *hateful and accursed enemy* (if I may use Mr. Williams's own language) to the glorious Redeemer and head of the Christian church.

None will deny that *lying* and *perjury* are very gross and heinous sins, and (if known) very scandalous ; and therefore it follows from what was observed before, that such sins, if lived in, though secretly, do disqualify persons for Christian sacraments in God's sight. But by our author's own account, all unsanctified men that partake of the Lord's supper, live in *lying and perjury*, and go on to renew these crimes continually ; inasmuch as while they continue ungodly men, they live in a constant violation of their promise and oath. For Mr. Williams often lays it down, that all who enter into covenant with God, do promise spiritual duties, such as repentance, faith, love, &c. And that they promise to perform these *henceforward*, even from the *present moment*, unto the *end of life* ; see p. 25, 26, 28, 76. And that they do not only promise, but *swear* to do this. P. 18, 100, 101, 129, 130, 140. But for a man to violate the promises he makes in covenanting

with God, Mr. Williams once and again speaks of it as *lying*. P. 24, 130. And if so, doubtless their breaking the oath they swear to God, is *perjury*. Now lying to *men* is bad ; but lying to God is worse. Acts v. 4. And, without doubt, perjury towards God is the *worst* sort of perjury. But if unsanctified men, when they entered into covenant with God, promised and swore, that they would *immediately* and *henceforward* accept of Christ as their Saviour, and love him, and live to him ; then while they continue in a wilful rejection of him (which according to Mr. Williams all unregenerate men do) they live continually in the violation of their promise and oath.*

* Here I would observe, that not only in the general do unsanctified men, notwithstanding their moral sincerity, thus live in the most heinous wickedness ; but particularly, according to Mr Williams's own doctrine, their very attendance on the outward ordinances and duties of *worship*, is the *vilest, most flagrant, and abominable impiety*. In his sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 77, 78, he says, " If a man could perform all the outward acts of worship and obedience, which the Bible requires, from the beginning to the end of it, and not do them from *faith in Christ, and love to God*, and not express by them the thoughts, desires, and actings of his soul ; they would be so far from being that obedience which Christ requires, that they would be a *mocking of God, and hateful to him*. These outward acts ought to be no other, and in religion are designed to stand for nothing else but to be representations of a man's soul, and the acts of that : And when they are not so they are in their own nature a LIE, and false pretence of something within, which is not there : Therefore the Lord abhors them, and reckons these false pretences the *vilest wickedness*. Now when a man performs, all outward obedience and worship, but it does not come from his *heart*, he practically denies the omniscience of Christ, while he puts before him a shew and pretence of something for the reality ; and so he belies his own profession. And all this, be it more or less, whatever it pretends to be of religion, instead of being that which Christ requires, is entirely different from it, yea, *infinitely contrary to it*. And those same actions, which when they are in the language of the *heart*, and flow from it, are *pleasing and acceptable* to God and Jesus Christ, are true obedience to him ! when they do *not*, are reckoned the MOST FLAGRANT AND ABOMINABLE IMPIETY, and threatened with the SEVEREST DAMNATION OF HELL." Now, who can believe, that God has, by his own holy institution, made that sort of sincerity, which is nothing better than what is consistent with such a *lying, vile, abominable, flagrantly wicked pretence and shew of religion as this*, the very thing that gives a right, even in his sight, to Christian sacraments !

I would observe one thing further under this head, viz. that ungodly men who live under the gospel, notwithstanding any moral sincerity they may have, *are worse, and more provoking enemies of God, than the very heathen*, who never sinned against gospel light and mercy. This is very manifest by the scriptures, particularly Matth. x. 13, 14. Amos iii. 2. Rom. ii. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 21. Rev. iii. 15, 16.

I having suggested concerning Mr. Stoddard's doctrine of admitting *more* unconverted than converted, by attending Christ's rule, that this supposes it to be the case of the members of the visible church, that the greater part of them are more provoking enemies to God than most of the heathen ; Mr. Williams represents himself as greatly alarmed at this : He calls it an extraordinary passage, and puts five questions about it to my serious consideration. P. 72, 73. The first and chief question is this ; " did Mr. Stoddard ever say in the *Apostle*, or any where else, of most of our fellow worshippers at the sacrament, that we have no reason to think concerning them, but that they are more provoking enemies to the Lord, whom Christians love and adore, than most of the very *heathen* ?" His three next questions are to represent the heinousness of such supposed ill treatment of Mr. Stoddard....And I think will be sufficiently answered, by what I shall offer in reply to the first.

I will tell him what Mr. Stoddard said. Speaking to such as do not come to Christ, living under the gospel, he said, *Safety of Aps.* p. 234, 235. " You may not think to escape as the *heathen* do : Your load will be heavier and your fire will be hotter, and your judgment sorer, than the judgment of other men. God will proportion every man's misery to his iniquity. And as you have enjoyed greater light and love, so you must expect more amazing and exquisite wrath, than other men : Conscience has more to accuse you of and con-

I might here also observe, that if moral sincerity or common grace gives a right to sacraments in the sight of God, then that which (according to Mr. Stoddard's doctrine before observed) is a *spirit of lust*, that which is *contrary to, and at war with, and would destroy saving grace*, is the thing which gives a right, in the sight of God, to Christian sacraments.

demn you for ; and so has God : And you will sink down deeper into hell, than other men. You are treasuring up a greater measure of wrath, than others, against the day of wrath. You will wish you had lived in the *darkest* corners of the earth among Scythians and Barbarians."

And Mr. Williams must allow me to remind him of what another divine has said, and that is himself. In his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11. p. 25, 26. he says, " It is to be feared, there are great numbers here present, that are in an *unconverted, unrenewed, unforgotten state* ; strangers from God, and enemies to him. Yet you now look with great pity and compassion on that poor *captive*, for whom we have now been offering up our earnest prayers, * who has been so long in so pitiable and sorrowful a condition, and who is now in the thickness of *papist* darkness and superstition....If you are out of Christ, and destitute of true faith in him, if your natures remain *unrenewed and unsanctified*, what is your state better than hers, which looks so sorrowful and distressing ? Rather, is it not *worse* ? When you consider, that in the fulness of the means of grace which you have enjoyed all your days, you are as far from any saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, as those who have lived in the dregs and abyss of *papist* ignorance, and know not what to believe, but what the church, that is, *Antichrist*, tells them. If you die thus, your misery will be *aggravated* INCONCEIVABLY beyond theirs : Which Christ has plainly enough shewn us, when he upbraided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, and tells them how much in the comparison they fall below Tyre and Sidon" (heathen cities, notorious for luxury, debauchery, and the grossest idolatry) " and Sodom ; for whom it should be *more tolerable*, than for them."

The same author says also, even in the book under consideration, p. 86. " That the unbelief and impieties of *visible saints*, is what they will be punished for *above all men in the world*."

* Mrs. Eunice Williams, brought up in Canada, among the Caghnawaga Indians, sister to the then pastor of the church in Mansfield, where this sermon was preached, upon a day of prayer kept on her account ; she being then in that place on a visit.

And now, I think it may be proper for Mr. Williams himself to answer his 5th question, which he puts to my serious consideration, viz. “What honor is it to our Lord Jesus Christ, to treat visible saints in such a manner, when at the same time it is his revealed will they should be outwardly treated as visible saints?”



SECTION IX.

A View of what Mr. Williams says concerning the public Covenanting of Professors.

I. MR. WILLIAMS often speaks with contempt, of my supposing it to be a duty required of such as come to sacraments, that they should *explicitly own the covenant*, and disputes largely against it. P. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and many other places. He says concerning me, p. 22. “It is very unhappy, that this good gentleman should use the scripture in such a manner, to prove a divine institution which never had an existence; and after all that is said, is but a mere imagination and chimera; it being evident, there never was any such divine institution for the church under the Old Testament, binding particular persons *publicly and explicitly to own the covenant*, in order to their enjoying the outward ordinances of it.” However it falls out something happily for me, that I am not quite alone in this chimera, but have Mr. Williams himself to join me in it; who abundantly asserts the same thing p. 5, 8, 9, and many other places, who *uses the scripture in the same manner*, and supposes the same *divine institution*; and who in p. 5, of the treatise in hand, having stated the following inquiry, “What is that evidence, which by DIVINE APPOINTMENT the church is to have, of the saintship of those who are admitted to the outward privileges of the covenant of grace?” Makes this answer to it: “The SCRIPTURE has determined the matter thus, that the open profession and

declaration of a PERSON's believing in Christ....And an hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and engagement on his part to fulfil it," &c. "is the sole and entire ground of that public judgment, which the church is to make of the real saintship of professors." It is manifest, he cannot intend merely that they should be the *posterity* of such as thus owned the covenant, or *declared their consent to it*, and so are looked upon as those that owned the covenant in their ancestors, at the beginning of the covenant line (though sometimes he seems to suppose, this is all that is necessary, as I shall take particular notice by and by :) For here he expressly speaks of a *personal* owning the covenant, or the *open profession and declaratian of a PERSONS's* consent to the covenant. And thus he often speaks of the same matter, in like manner, as a *personal* thing, or what is done by the *person judged of*, and *received*. See p. 10, 31, 32, 33, 34, 73, 84, 139. And in the 2d page of his preface, he declares himself fully established in Mr. Stoddard's doctrine concerning this affair of qualifications for the Lord's supper ; who expressly declares it to be his judgment, that "it is requisite, that persons be not admitted unto communion in the Lord's supper, without making a PERSONAL and public profession of their faith and repentance." *Aptcal.* p. 93, 94.

And as Mr. Williams holds that there must be a *public, personal owning the covenant* ; so he also maintains, that this profession must be *explicit*, or *express*. He says p. 20. "Since we have no direction in the bible, at what time, nor in what manner any *personal, explicit* covenanting should be performed....It appears plain to a demonstration, that the people knew nothing of any such institution ; as I suppose, the Christian church did until Mr. Edwards discovered it." But if I was the first discoverer he should have owned, that since I have discovered it, he himself and all my opposers have seen cause to follow me and receive my discovery. For so the case seems to be, if he gives us a true account (in p. 152) where he rejects, with indignation, the imputation of any other opinion. "How often (says he) has Mr. Edwards said none but visible saints are to be admitted ? Do not ALL Mr.

Edwards's OPPOSERS say, that NO MAN is to be admitted, who does not profess his hearty belief of the gospel, and the earnest and sincere purpose of his heart, so far as he knows it, to obey all God's commands, and keep his COVENANT ? NONE, who do not make as full and EXPRESS a profession as the Israelites did, or was ever required by Christ or his apostles, in any instances that can be produced in the bible, of bodies of men or particular persons' admission into visible covenant with God ?" He had before spoken of *the words which the Israelites used in their entering into covenant with God*, p. 5, which must refer to their entering into covenant in the *wilderness* ; for we have no account of any *words* at all, used by that nation, *at their entering into covenant*, if not there. And this he sometimes speaks of as the covenant they made, when God *took them into covenant*, p. 8, 36, 37. And p. 20, he allows that to be an instance of *explicit* covenanting : But ridicules my pretending to shew, that *explicit* covenanting was a divine institution for all ; when, he says, we have an account of but four instances of any *explicit* covenanting with God by the Jews, and those on most extraordinary occasions, and by *the body* of the people. But what matter is it, whether there were four, or but two, or only that one instance in the wilderness ? When he himself with such earnestness declares, that all my opposers hold, *every man* must make as full and express a profession of the covenant as ever the Israelites did, or was ever required, in any instance that can be produced in the bible, whether of *bodies of men* or *particular persons'* admission, &c. If this be so, and what he said before be also true, then all Israel, even every individual person among them, that ever was admitted to the privileges of the church, throughout all their generations, by his own confession and assertion, did personally make as *explicit* a profession of the covenant, as the body of the people did in that instance in the wilderness. And not only so, but the same must every individual person do, that ever comes to sacraments, through all ages, to the end of the world. Thus Mr. Williams fights hard to beat down himself. But I will not say in his own language, that in so doing *he fights hard to beat down a poor man of straw*.

If any should say, that Mr. Williams, when speaking of an *express* profession, does not mean a profession in *words*, but only in *actions*; such as an outward attendance on ordinances and duties of worship: I answer, if such actions are a profession, yet certainly they are not an *express* profession; they are no more than an *implicit* profession. And besides, it is very plain, the profession he speaks of is a verbal profession, or a profession in *words*. Thus p. 36, when describing the profession which ought to be made, he says, "It is in as strong words as were used by any whom the apostles admitted." And elsewhere (as was before noted) he often insists, that a profession should be made in words without any discrimination as to their meaning. Which shews, it is a profession in *words* that he designs. And although p. 104, he speaks of a performance of the outward duties of morality and worship, *as the only way that God ever appointed of making real saintship visible*: Yet this is only another instance of his great *inconsistence* with himself; as appears by what has already been observed, and appears further by this, that when he speaks of a profession of consent to the terms of the covenant, &c. he often speaks of it as a profession which ought to be made *in order* to admission to these ordinances. (P. 5, 10, 35, 36, 132, and other places.) If so, then how can the *attendance* itself, on these ordinances of worship, be all the profession which is to be made? Must men first come to ordinances, in order to admission to ordinances! And moreover, Mr. Williams himself distinguishes between *engaging* and *swearing to keep covenant* in the public profession, and attending on the ordinances and duties of worship, which he speaks of as belonging to the *fulfilment of the engagement and oath*. P. 130. And lastly I would observe, though it could be consistently made out (which it can never be) that Mr. Williams does not mean a professing in *words*, it would be nothing to the purpose. If it be in words, or in other signs which are equivalent to words and which are a *full and express profession* (as Mr. Williams says) it is exactly the same thing as to my purpose, and the consequence of the argument, which was, that real godliness must be professed. And indeed this very thing

which I endeavored to prove by all that I said on this head, is expressly, again and again, allowed by Mr. Williams. Yet he makes a great ado, as if there was a vast difference between him and me in this affair of public covenanting with God ; and as though my notions of it were very singular, absurd, and mischievous.

II. Mr. Williams says a great deal in opposition to me, to shew that *swearing by God's name, swearing to the Lord*, and the like, does not mean *covenanting with God* : But yet in p. 18, in the midst of his earnest dispute against it, he owns it. I mentioned several scripture prophecies, referring to the *Gentile* converts in the days of the gospel, which foretell that they should *swear by God's name, swear to the Lord of Hosts, &c.* as a prediction of the Gentiles *public covenanting with God* ; using that as one thing which confirmed, that this was commonly the meaning of such phrases in the Old Testament. But Mr. Williams despises my interpretation of these prophecies, and my argument from them. Nevertheless, in his reply, he owns the very thing : He in effect owns, that entering into covenant, and owning the covenant is what is meant by these prophecies ; mentioning this, plainly with approbation, as the universal sense of protestant commentators. His words are, p. 18. "As to all these prophecies, which Mr. Edwards has quoted, referring to the Gentiles, and their swearing by the name of the Lord, the sense of protestant commentators upon them, I think, universally is, that when the gentiles, in God's appointed time, should be *brought into covenant with God*, it should be as the Jews were, by being persuaded to *consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, and engaging themselves to God*, to be faithful to him, and *keep covenant with him*. He who heartily consents to the terms of the covenant of grace, gives up himself to the Lord, *gives the hand to the Lord*, engages to own and serve him ; which is the thing signified in all those metaphorical phrases, which describe or point out this event, in the Old Testament language."

III. Mr. Williams in these last cited words, explains the phrase of *giving the hand to the Lord*, as signifying *engaging themselves to God in covenant, and consenting to the terms of the*

covenant (as the reader sees) and yet in the next page but two, he contemns and utterly disallows my interpreting the same phrase in the same manner. Mr. Williams says, p. 21. "As to the words of Hezekiah, when he called the Israelites to the passover, bidding them *yield or give the hand to the Lord* ; and in Ezra, *they gave the hand* to put away their wives ; which he thinks to be an Hebrew phrase for entering into covenant, it carries its own confutation with it."

IV. Mr. Williams often speaks of the professions made by the ancient Israelites and Jewish Christians, *when they entered into covenant, and were admitted into the Church*. Whereas, according to the doctrine of the same author, in the same book, we have no account of any profession made by either, on any such occasion. For he insists, that the *children* of such as are in covenant, are *born in covenant* ; and are *not admitted into covenant* any otherwise than as they were *seminally* in their ancestors ; and that the profession of their ancestors, at the head of the covenant line, is that *individual profession, which brings them into covenant*. His words are p. 135, 136, "It is one and the same individual profession and engagement, which brings them and their children into covenant. And if there is one instance in the bible, where God ever took any man into covenant, and not his children at the same time, I should be glad to see it. It is by virtue of their being in covenant, that they have a right to the seals. And if *these* children are not cast out of covenant by God, *their* children have as good a right to the seals as they had. It is God's will, that his mark and seal should be set upon them, AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN FOREVER, until God casts them out of covenant. It is certain, they have an interest in the covenant, and they have a right to the privileges of the covenant, so long as they remain in covenant ; and that is until God cuts them off, and casts them out."

And accordingly he supposes John the Baptist never inquired into the doctrinal knowledge of those he baptized, because they *were already in covenant with God*, and members of his visible church, and not yet turned out : And he suggests, that John knew many of them not to be of a good moral char-

acter. P. 98. So he largely insists, that the *three thousand Jews* and proselytes, that the apostles baptized, Acts ii. were not taken into covenant, but only *continued in covenant*. P. 46, 47. So he supposes the Eunuch, before Philip baptized him, was a member of the church, and in covenant with God. P. 50. Though he inconsistently mentions those same persons in the 2d of Acts, and the Eunuch, as *admitted into the church* by the apostles, and primitive ministers, p. 9, 10, 59. And so p. 8, 26, he mentions God's *taking all Israel* into covenant : He mentions the *profession* which the Israelites made, p. 25, and p. 5, he speaks of the *words which the Israelites used, in their entering into covenant with God*. And p. 36, 37, he speaks of their profession in Moses's time, *which God trusted so far as to admit them into covenant*. Whereas indeed, according to Mr. Williams, they *were not taken in*, nor did they *enter into covenant*, neither in the plains of Moab, nor at mount Sinai. He says expressly, that they were in covenant before that time, when in Egypt, being taken in their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, p. 91. But then we read of *no words*, that those patriarchs *used at their entering into covenant*. And it will undoubtedly follow, on Mr. Williams's principles, that we must go further back still for Israel's being taken into covenant ; we must go up even to Adam himself, the first father of mankind, who was visibly in covenant, and so his posterity, in the line of Noah's ancestors, without the line's being broken by a visible *cutting off*, and casting *out* by God, as we have all reason to suppose. And after the flood, we have reason to think, God had a covenant race continued in Shem's posterity, especially in the line of Abraham's ancestors. And though Terah, Abraham's Father, was tainted with the then prevailing idolatry ; yet there is no appearance of the line's being then *cut off*, in the way Mr. Williams speaks of, by God's visibly *casting him out*. On the contrary, God took a special, fatherly care of him and his children, in bringing them from Ur of the Chaldees, the land of graven images, to Haran. Gen. xi. 31. And God is called the God of the father of Abraham and Nabor, that is, the God of Terah. Gen. xxxi. 53. And if it be said, that in Abraham began a new dispensation of the

covenant ; so that Abraham might properly on that account be said to be *taken into covenant*, as though his ancestors had not been taken into covenant : I answer, the alteration of the dispensation was in no measure so great as that after Christ's resurrection and ascension ; and yet Mr. Williams will not allow that the Jewish converts, received in Acts ii. on this new dispensation, were any more than *continued in covenant*, and in the church. So that, according to Mr. Williams's scheme, it must be Adam's profession of religion that was *the individual profession* which made all his posterity, in the line of the church, even to the Apostle's days, *visible saints*, or (as he himself explains visible saintship) such as we have rational ground to think are real saints, possessed of gospel holiness, and on that account have a right to sacraments. For so He says it is with the children of them that are in covenant, and their children, and their children *for ever*, until cut off and cast out by God.

So that now we have the scheme in a true view of it. The Pharisees and Sadducees that John baptized, whom Mr. Williams supposes John knew to be not of a good moral character, and whose doctrinal knowledge he did not inquire into before he baptized them ; because they had before been admitted in their ancestors ; even *these* were visible saints, and such as John had rational ground to think had sufficient doctrinal knowledge and were orthodox and real saints, having moral evidence that they had gospel holiness, because Adam, their original ancestor, made a profession of religion, in words of double meaning, without any marks of distinction or discrimination, by which any might know their meaning !

And if we should go back no further than Abraham, it would not much mend the matter ; supposing the case had been so, that we had the words of both Abraham's and Adam's profession written down in our Bibles : Whereas we have neither ; no, nor have we the words of the profession of any one person, either in the old Testament or New, at their being *taken into* the church, if the things which Mr. Williams says are true ; though he speaks so often of professions, and

words of professions, and declarations, made on such occasions, as if we had an express account of them in scripture.

V. As our author abundantly maintains, that unsanctified men in covenanting with God, may and do promise the exercise of saving Faith, repentance, love, &c. So he holds, that they promise to begin the exercise of these graces *immediately, from this moment*, and to live in them from *henceforth*, p. 25, 26, 28, 76.

Now I desire this matter may be looked into, and thoroughly examined. Not only the holy scriptures, and agreeable to them. Mr. Stoddard, and sound divines in general teach us, but Mr. Williams himself, maintains, that men who are unsanctified, do for *the present refuse and oppose* these things. In a forecited place of his sermon on Isa. xlv. 11, our author says, that “Unregenerate and unsanctified men oppose all means for the bringing them to these things, are willingly without them, and labor to find out all manner of difficulties and hindrances in the way of them ; and if they pray for them, do not desire they should come yet, but would stay a while longer.” Now, how is this consistent with such persons’ promising with any sincerity at all, that they will comply with and perform these things *immediately from henceforth* without staying *one moment* longer ? If God calls a man *this moment* to yield his whole heart to him in faith, love and new obedience ; and if he, in answer to the call, solemnly promises and swears* to God, that he will immediately comply with the call, without the least delay, and does it with any *sincerity* inconsistent with the most vile perfidy and perjury ; then how does he now willingly refuse, oppose, and struggle against it, as choosing to *stay a while longer* ?

Besides, such promises and oaths of unregenerate men must not only be contrary to sincerity, but very *presumptuous*, upon these two accounts. (1.) Because herein they take an

* It must be observed, that Mr. Williams often speaks of the promise which an unregenerate man makes in covenanting with God as his oaths. p. 18, 100, 101, 129, 130, 143.

oath to the Most High, which, it is ten thousand to **one**, they will break as soon as the words are out of their mouths, by continuing still unconverted ; yea, an oath which they are breaking even while they are uttering it. And what folly and wickedness is it for men to take such oaths ? And how contrary to the counsel given by the wise man, in Eccl. v. 2, 4, 5, 6 ? And to what purpose should ungodly men be encouraged to utter such promises and oaths before the church, for the church's acceptance ; which are so far from being worthy to be credited, or a fulfilment of them to be expected, that it is many thousands, and perhaps millions of times more likely to be otherwise ? That is, it is so much more likely they will not be converted the very next *moment*. (2.) When an unconverted man makes such a promise, he promises what he has not to give, or that which he has not sufficiency for the performance of ; no sufficiency in himself, nor any sufficiency in any other that he has a claim to, or interest in. There is indeed a sufficiency in God to enable him ; but he has no claim to it. For God's helping a man savingly to believe in Christ is a *saving blessing* : And Mr. Williams himself owns, that a man cannot by promise claim any saving blessings, till he has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant of grace, p. 22, 28. So that in vain it is said by Mr. Williams, p. 27, " I pray that it may be thoroughly considered what is propounded in the covenant of grace, and on what stock a man is to finish." Meaning (as appears by the sequel) the *stock* of God's sufficiency. To what purpose is this said ? When the covenant of grace promises or makes over no such *stock* to him who has no interest in the promises of it, as having not yet complied with the condition of its promises. Nor does an unconverted man promise any thing in a humble dependance on that *stock* ; no such men do *lay hold on God's strength*, or trust in God's sufficiency : For this is a discriminating mark of a true saint ; as our author himself observes, in that forecited passage, in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 19.

I would here take notice of it as remarkable, that though Mr. Williams had owned that a natural man can claim no say-

ing blessings by God's promise, yet to help out his scheme of a natural man's engaging and promising, even with an oath, the exercises of saving grace, he, (in p. 27, 28, especially, 28) speaking of the *great encouragement* on which unsanctified men can promise these things, supposes God has given *such encouragement* to them who promise and engage themselves to God with that degree of earnestness and sincerity which he often speaks of as requisite to communion, that we have reason to determine that God never will fail of bestowing on them saving grace ; so that they shall fulfil their promises. I say, he supposes that we have reason to determine this, because he himself determines it. His words are these : " Though there be no promise of saving good, exclusive of faith, yet there being a command and encouragement, there are suitable springs of his endeavor and hope, in his engaging himself to God and casting himself upon his mercy with all the earnestness and sincerity he can. God NEVER will be worse than his encouragement, nor do less than he has encouraged ; and he has said, *To him that hath, shall be given.*"

Now, if this be so, and if this will make it out, that an unconverted man who is morally sincere may reasonably, on this *encouragement*, promise immediately to believe and repent, though this be not in his own power ; then it will follow that whenever an unconverted man covenants, with such moral sincerity as gives a lawful right to sacraments, *God NEVER will fail of giving him converting grace that moment*, to enable him *from thenceforward* to believe and repent as he promises. And if this be so, and none may lawfully covenant with God *without* moral sincerity (as Mr. Williams also says) then it will follow, that *never* any one person comes, nor can come lawfully to the Lord's supper in an unconverted state ; because when they enter into covenant lawfully (supposing them not converted before) God always converts them in the moment of their covenanting, *before* they come to the Lord's table. And if so, what is become of all this grand dispute about the lawfulness of persons' coming to the Lord's table, who have not converting grace ?

VI. Mr. Williams greatly misrepresents me from time to time, in representing as though I had asserted, that "It is impossible for an unsanctified man to enter into covenant with God;" and that those who were unsanctified among the Israelites, did not enter into covenant with God; that the pretended covenanting of such is *not covenanting, but only lying, wilful lying*; and that no natural man can own the covenant, "But that he certainly lies, knows he lies, and designedly lies, in all these things, when he says them." P. 26, 22, 24, 31, 21. Whereas I never said nor supposed any such thing. I never doubted but that multitudes of unsanctified persons, and in all ages of the Christian church, and in this age, and here in Newengland, have entered visibly, and in profession, into the covenant of grace, and have owned that covenant, and promised a compliance with all the duties of it, without known or wilful lying; for this reason because they were deceived, and did not know their own hearts; and that they (however deceived) were under the obligations of the covenant, and bound by their engagements and promises: And that in that sense, they were God's covenant people, that by their own binding act they were engaged to God in covenant; though such an act, performed without habitual holiness, be an unlawful one. If a thing be externally devoted to God, by doing what ought not to have been done, the thing devoted may, by that act, be the Lord's: As it was with the censers of Korah and his company. Numb. xvi. 37, 38.

What I asserted, was, that none could "Profess a compliance with the covenant of grace, and avouch JEHOVAH to be their God, and Christ to be their Saviour, i. e. that they are so by their own act and choice, and yet love the world more than JEHOVAH, without lying or being deceived. And that he, who is wholly under the power of a carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be, cannot promise to love God with all his heart and with all his soul, without either great deceit, or the most manifest and palpable absurdity: Inasmuch as promising supposes the person to be conscious to himself, or persuaded of himself, that he

has such a heart in him ; because his lips pretend to declare his heart, and the nature of a promise implies real intention, will and compliance of heart. And what can be more evident than these propositions ? Surely they that reject the covenant of grace in their hearts (as Mr. Williams owns, all unsanctified men do) cannot own it with their lips, without either deceiving or being deceived. Words cannot be a true signification of more than is in the mind. *Inward covenanting*, as Mr. Stoddard taught, is by an act of saving faith. (*Safety of Aps.* p. 85, 86.) And *outward covenanting* is an expression of *inward covenanting* : Therefore, if it be not attended with *inward covenanting*, it is a false expression. And Mr. Williams, in effect, owns the same thing : For he says, p. 21, “ That there is no doubt they who are wilful, obstinate sinners, deal *deceitfully and falsely* when they pretend to covenant with God.” But so do all unregenerate sinners under the gospel, according to Mr. Stoddard’s and his own doctrine. And thus the very point, about which he contests so earnestly and so long, and with so many great words, is in the midst of it all, given up fully by his own concession.

VII. Mr. Williams is greatly displeased with my saying (as above) that none who are under the power of a carnal mind can visibly own the covenant, *without lying, or being deceived*, &c. And he finds great fault with my gloss on Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. “ They did flatter him with their mouth, and lied to him with their tongue :” Which I interpret as though they lied in pretending that respect to God, which indeed they had not, p. 35 of my *Inquiry*. But he insists, that what is meant is only their “ Lying in breaking their promise,” p. 24. And he insists upon it (as has been observed already) that natural men may covenant with God and *speak true*. But it seems he has wonderfully changed his mind of late : For a little while ago he declared elsewhere *for* the very same things which he here inveighs *against*, and spoke of natural men’s profession and pretence of respect to God, as being actually a LIE IN ITS OWN NATURE ; and not only becoming so by their breaking covenant afterwards. Particularly, it is

remarkable, he has thus interpreted this very text now in dispute. In his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, speaking of the outward acts of *worship* done by those that do not love God nor believe in Christ, he expressly says, p. 77. "They are *in their own nature a LIE* ; a false pretence of something *within*, that is not there. See (says Mr. Williams) this interpretation of it, in Psal. lxxviii. 34....37. *They did flatter him with their mouths ; they lied to him with their tongues,*" &c. (Ibid. p. 74. "Christ's visible church are such as visibly and outwardly profess to be his subjects, and act outwardly as if they believed on him. But these outward acts in themselves are not that religion and obedience, which Christ requires ; nay of themselves, they have no religion in them ; and Christ has nothing to do with them, *but as* they are the fruits and expressions of the heart, as they are the language and index of the mind and conscience, and outward declarations of the inward frame, temper and actings of the soul. If they are *not so*, they are so far from having any religion in them that they are *hateful* to him, being only the visible resemblance, the pretence and *feigning* of religion ; i. e. they are *mockery, hypocrisy, FALSEHOOD and LIES* ; and belong not to the kingdom of Christ, but of the *Devil*." Let the reader now compare this with my gloss on the text.



CONCLUSION OF THIS SECOND PART.

Thus I have considered the various parts and principles of Mr. Williams's scheme, which are the foundations on which he builds all his superstructure, and the ground on which he proceeds in all his reasonings, through his book ; and many particulars in his answers and arguments have been already considered. Mr. Williams says thus, p. 135, "I own, that at present I have no more expectation to see the scheme which

Mr. Edwards aims to establish, defended upon Calvinistic principles, than the doctrine of *transubstantiation*." On which I shall only say, it might perhaps be thought very impertinent in me, to tell my readers what I do, or what I do not expect, concerning *his* scheme. Every reader, that has reason enough of his own not to take the big words and confident speeches of others for demonstration, is now left to judge for himself, whose scheme is most akin to the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, for inconsistency and self contradiction.

Nevertheless, I will proceed to consider our author's reasonings a little more particularly, in the ensuing part.



PART III.

Containing some remarks on Mr. Williams's exceptionable Way of Reasoning, in support of his own Scheme, and in Opposition to the contrary principles.



SECTION I.

General Observations upon his Way of arguing, and answering Arguments; with some Instances of the first Method excepted against.

MR. WILLIAMS endeavors to support his own opinion, and to confute the book he pretends to answer, by the following methods.

1. By frequently *misrepresenting* what I say, and then disputing or exclaiming against what he wrongfully charges as mine.

2. By misrepresenting what others say in their writings, whose opinions he pretends to *espouse*.

3. By *seeming to oppose* and *confute* arguments, and yet only saying things which have no *reference* at all to them, but relate entirely to *other* matters, that are altogether *foreign* to the argument in hand.

4. By advancing *new* and *extraordinary notions* ; which are both manifestly contrary to *truth*, and also contrary to the *common apprehensions* of the Christian church in all ages.

5. By making use of peremptory and confident *assertions*, instead of arguments.

6. By using great *exclamation*, in the room of arguing ; as though he would amuse and alarm his readers, and excite terror in them, instead of rational conviction.

7. By wholly *overlooking* arguments, and *not answering* at all ; pretending, that there is *no* argument, *nothing* to answer when the case is manifestly far otherwise.

8. By frequently turning off an argument with this reflection, that it is *begging the question* ; when there is not the least shew or pretext for it.

9. By very frequently *begging the question* himself, or doing that which is *equivalent*.

10. By often alleging and insisting on things in which he is *inconsistent* with himself.

As to the *first* of these methods used by Mr. Williams, i. e. his *misrepresenting what I say*, and then disputing or exclaiming against what he injuriously charges as mine, many instances have been already observed : I now would take notice of some other instances.

In p. 15, he charges me with “ affirming vehemently, in a number of repetitions, *that the doctrine taught is, that no manner of pretence to any VISIBLE holiness is made or designed to be made.*” These he cites as my words, marking them with notes of quotation. Whereas I never said any such words, nor said or thought any such *thing*, but the contrary. I knew, that those whose doctrine I opposed, declared that *visible holiness* was necessary : And take particular notice of it (p. 8.) where

I say, "It is granted on all hands, that none ought to be admitted, as members of the visible church of Christ, but visible saints;" and argue on this supposition for fifteen pages together, in that same part of my book where Mr. Williams charges me with asserting the contrary. What I say is, that people are taught that *they come into the church without any pretence to sanctifying grace* (p. 15.) I do not say without a pretence to *visible holiness*. Thus Mr. Williams alters my words, to make them speak something, not only diverse, but contrary to what I do say, and say very often; and so takes occasion, or rather *makes* an occasion, to charge me before the world, with telling a *manifest untruth*, p. 15.

Again, Mr. Williams in answering my argument concerning brotherly *love*, (p. 70, 71) represents me as arguing, "That in the exercise of Christian *love* described in the gospel, there is such an union of hearts, as there cannot be of a saint to an unsanctified man." Which is a thing I never said, and is quite contrary to the sentiments which I have abundantly declared. I indeed speak of that *brotherly love*, as what cannot be of a saint to one that is not *apprehended* and *judged* to be sanctified. But that notion of a peculiar love, which cannot be to an unsanctified man, or without the reality of holiness in the person beloved, is what I ever abhorred, and have borne a most loud and open and large testimony against, again and again, from the press, and did so in the preface to that very book which Mr. Williams writes against.

In p. 74, Mr. Williams represents me as supposing, that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, *both the covenanting parties*, viz. Christ and the communicant, *seal to the truth* of the communicant's faith; or that both seal to this as true, that the communicant *does receive Christ*. Whereas, by me, no such thing was ever thought; nor is any thing said that has such an aspect. What I say, is very plain and express, (p. 75.) *That Christ by his minister professes his part of the covenant, presents himself, and professes the willingness of his heart to be theirs who receive him*. That on the other hand, *the communicant, in receiving the offered symbols, professes his part in the covenant, and the willingness of his heart to re-*

ceive Christ who is offered. How different is this from both parties sealing to the truth of the communicant's faith ?

In p. 76, 77 and 80. He greatly misrepresents my argument from 1 Cor. xi. 28. "Let a man examine himself," &c. as though I supposed *the Greek word translated examine, must necessarily imply an examination to approbation ; that it signifies to approve ; and that a man's examination must mean his approving himself to himself to be sanctified.* This representation he makes over and over, and builds his answer to the argument, upon it ; and in opposition to this, he says, (p. 77) "Wherever the word means to examine to approbation, it is not used in its natural sense, but metonymically." Whereas, there is not the least foundation for such a representation : No such thing is said or suggested by me, as if I supposed that the meaning of the word is to *approve*, or to *examine to approbation*. What I say is, that it properly signifies *proving or trying a thing, whether it be true and of the right sort*, (p. 77.) And I there, in the same place, expressly speak of the word (in the manner Mr. Williams does) as not used in its natural sense, but metonymically, when it is used to signify *approve*. So that Mr. Williams's representation is not only diverse from, but contrary to what I say. Indeed I suppose (as well I may) that when the apostle directs persons to try themselves with respect to their qualifications for the Lord's supper, he would not have them come, if upon trial they find themselves not qualified. But it would be ridiculous to say, that I therefore suppose the meaning of the word, *try or examine*, is to approve, when it is evident that the *trying* is only in order to knowing whether a thing is to be *approved*, or *disapproved*.

In p. 98, on the argument from John's baptism, Mr. Williams alters my words, bringing them the better to comport with the odious representation he had made of my opinion, viz. that I required a giving an account of *experiences*, as a term of communion ; he puts in words as mine, which are not mine, and distinguishes them with marks of quotation ; charging me with *representing it as* "probable that John had as much time to inquire into their experiences as into their

doctrinal knowledge." Whereas, my words are these, p. 101. "He had as much opportunity to inquire into the credibility of their profession, as he had to inquire into their doctrinal knowledge and moral character."

In p. 118, and to the like purpose, p. 134, our author represents me, and others of my principles, as holding, that *the gospel does peremptorily sentence men to damnation for eating and drinking without sanctifying grace*. But surely Mr. Williams would have done well to have referred to the place in my Inquiry, where any thing is said that has such a look. For, I find nothing that I have said in that book, or any other writing of mine, about the gospel's peremptorily sentencing such men to damnation, or signifying how far I thought they were exposed to damnation, or expressing my sentiments more or less about the matter.

In p. 130 and 131, Mr. Williams says, "when one sees with what epithets of honor Mr. Edwards in some parts of his book has complimented Mr. Stoddard, it must look like a strange medley to tack to them....*That he was a weak beggar of his question ; a supposer of what was to be proved ; taking for granted the point in controversy ; inconsistent with himself ; ridiculously contradicting his own arguments.*" These expressions, which Mr. Williams speaks of as tacked to those honorable epithets, he represents as expressions which I had used concerning Mr. Stoddard : And his readers that have not consulted my book, would doubtless take it so from his manner of representation. Whereas, the truth is, no one of these expressions is used concerning Mr. Stoddard any where in my book ; nor is there one disrespectful word spoken of him there. All the ground Mr. Williams had to make such a representation, was, that in answering *arguments* against my opinion I endeavored to shew them to be *weak* (though I do not find that I used that epithet) and certainly for one to pretend to answer arguments, and yet allow them to be strong, would be to shew *himself* to be very weak. In answering some of these arguments, and endeavoring to shew wherein the inconclusiveness of them lay, I have sometimes taken notice that the defect lay in what is called *begging the*

question, or supposing the thing to be proved. And if I had said so concerning Mr. Stoddard's arguments, speaking of them *as his*, I do not know why it should be represented as any *personal* reflection, or unhandsome, dishonorable treatment of him. Every inconclusive argument is weak ; and the business of a disputant is to shew wherein the weakness lies : But to speak of *arguments* as weak, is not to call *men* weak. All the ground Mr. Williams has to speak of me as saying, that Mr. Stoddard *ridiculously contradicted his own arguments*, is, that in p. 11, citing some passages out of Mr. Stoddard's *Appeal*, I use these words ; " But how he reconciled these passages with the rest of his treatise, I would modestly say, I must confess myself at a loss." And particularly I observed, that I could not see how they consist with what he says, p. 16, and so proceed to mention one thing which appears to me not well to consist with them. But certainly this is not indecently to reflect on Mr. Stoddard any more than Mr. Williams indecently reflects on the FIRST REFORMERS, in his answer to Mr. Croswell, p. 74, 75, where speaking of their doctrine of a particular persuasion as of the essence of saving faith, he says, " they are found inconsistent with themselves, and their doctrine lighter than vanity." And again p. 82, " if ever (says Mr. Williams) any men were confuted from their own concessions, these divines are." And more to the like purpose. Which gives me a fair occasion to express the like *wonder* at him, as he does at me p. 131, but I forbear *personal* reflections.

Mr. Williams in the same page, has these words ; " And to say, that all unsanctified men do profess and seal their consent to the covenant of grace in the Lord's supper, when they know at the same time they do not consent to it, nor have their heart at all in the affair, is something *worse* than begging the question." That is, as I suppose, (the same that he charged me with before) *telling a manifest untruth*. By which he plainly suggests, that I have *said* thus. Whereas I no where say, nor in any respect signify that I suppose, all unsanctified communicants do know that they do not consent to the cove-

nant of grace. I never made any doubt, but that multitudes of unsanctified communicants are deceived, and think they do consent to it.

In p. 132, he says of me, "the author endeavors to show, that the admitting unsanctified persons tends to the ruin and and reproach of the Christian church ; and to the ruin of the persons admitted." But how widely different is this from what I express in the place he refers to ? *Inq.* p. 121. That which I say there, is, that "by express liberty given, to open the door to as many as please, of those who have *no visibility* of real saintship, and make no profession of it, nor pretension to it, is a method which tends to the ruin and great reproach of the Christian church, and also to the ruin of the persons admitted." I freely grant, and shew abundantly in my book, it is never to be expected, that all unsanctified men can be kept out, by the most exact attendance on the rules of Christ, by those that admit members.

In p. 136, Mr. Williams, wholly without grounds, speaks of me as representing, that "unconverted men make pretension to nothing but what God's enemies have, remaining in open and avowed rebellion against him." Whereas, I suppose that some natural men do profess, and profess truly, *many things*, which those have not, who are *open* and *avowed* enemies of God. They may truly profess that sort of moral sincerity in many things belonging to morality and religion, which avowed enemies have not : Nor is there any sentence or word in my book, which implies or intimates the contrary.

In p. 141, Mr. Williams evidently insinuates, that I am one of those who, "if men live never so strictly conformable to the laws of the gospel, and never so diligently seek their own salvation, to outward appearance, yet do not stick to speak of them, and act openly towards them, as persons giving no more public evidence, that they are not the enemies of God and haters of Jesus Christ, than the very worst of the heathen." But surely every one that has read my book, every one that knows my constant conduct, and manner of preaching, as well as writing, and how much I have written, said and done

against judging and censuring persons of an externally moral and religious behavior, must know how injurious this representation of me is.



SECTION II.

Instances of the second thing mentioned as exceptionable in Mr. Williams's Method of managing this controversy, viz. His misrepresenting what is said in the writings of others, that he supposes favors his opinion.

PERHAPS instances enough of this have already been taken notice of ; yet I would now mention some others.

In what he says in reply to my answer to the eighth *objection*, he says, p. 108. “ Mr. Stoddard does not say, if sanctifying grace be necessary to a person's lawful partaking of the Lord's supper, then God would have given some certain rule, whereby those who ARE TO ADMIT THEM, may know whether they have such grace, or not.” Mr. Williams there intimates (as the reader may see) as if Mr. Stoddard spake so, that it is to be understood *disjunctively*, meaning he would *either* have given some certain rule to the church who admit them, or else to the persons themselves : So that by one means or other, the *Lord's supper might be restrained to converted men*. And he exclaims against me for representing as though Mr. Stoddard's argument were concerning a *certain rule, whereby those who are to admit them, may know whether they have grace*, (see the foregoing page) and speaks of it as nothing akin to Mr. Stoddard's argument. Now let the reader take notice of Mr. Stoddard's words, and see whether his argument be not something akin to this. He says expressly, *Appeal*, p. 75. “ God does not bind his church to impossibilities. If he had made such an ordinance, he would give

gifts to his church, to distinguish sincere men from hypocrites, whereby the ordinance might have been attended. The *minor* is also evident : He has given no such rule to his CHURCH, whereby it may be restrained to converted men. This appears, because by the rule that they are to go by, they are allowed to GIVE the Lord's supper to many unconverted men. For all visible signs are common to men converted, and unconverted." So that Mr. Stoddard in fact does say, " If sanctifying grace be necessary to a person's lawful partaking of the Lord's supper, then God would have given some certain rule, whereby the church (those who are to admit them) may know, whether they have grace, or not." Though Mr. Williams denies it, and says, this is nothing akin to Mr. Stoddard's argument ; contrary to the plainest fact.

In p. 99, Mr. Williams, replying to my answer to the sixth objection, misrepresents Mr. Hudson, in the following passage. " This [i. e. baptism] says Mr. Hudson, makes them members of the body of Christ. And as for a particular, explicit covenant, besides the general, imposed on churches, I find no mention of it, no example nor warrant for it in all the scripture." Here Mr. Williams is still manifestly endeavoring to discredit my doctrine of an *explicit owning the covenant of grace* ; and he so manages and alters Mr. Hudson's words, as naturally leads the reader to suppose that Mr. Hudson speaks against this : Whereas, he says not a word about it. What Mr. Hudson speaks of, is not an explicit owning the covenant of grace or baptismal covenant ; but a *particular church covenant*, by which a particular society binds themselves explicitly, one to another, jointly to carry on the public worship. Mr. Hudson's words are, p. 19, " I dare not make a *particular, explicit, holy covenant to be the FORM of a PARTICULAR church, as this description seemeth to do* ; because I find no mention of any such covenant, besides the general imposed on churches, nor example nor warrant for it in all the scripture." And then afterwards Mr. Hudson says, " But it is the general covenant sealed by *baptism*, and not this, that makes them members of the body of Christ." Mr. Williams, by citing distant passages in Mr. Hudson, and joining them, in

his own way, by particles and conjunctions, which Mr. Hudson does not use, and leaving out these words....*To be the form of a particular church, as this description seemeth to do....* quite blinds the mind of his reader, as to Mr. Hudson's true sense, which is nothing to Mr. Williams's purpose. Mr. Hudson says not a word here against, or about an *express* or *explicit* *covenanting*, or owning the covenant, in my sense : But in other places, in the same book, he speaks of it, and for it, as necessary for *all Christians*. Thus, in p. 69, " There is one individual, EXPRESS, external covenant ; not only on God's part, but also it is one external, visible covenant, on men's part ; which *all Christians*, as Christians, *enter into*, by their PRO-FESSED acceptance, and EXPRESS restipulation, and promised subjection and obedience ; though not altogether in one place, or at one time." He speaks again to the same purpose, p. 100.



SECTION III.

Instances of the third thing observed in Mr. Williams's manner of arguing, viz. His pretending to oppose and answer arguments, by saying things which have no reference to them, but relate to other matters perfectly foreign to the subject of the argument.

SUCH is his answer, (p. 37) to my argument from Isa. lvi. Particularly from those words, v. 6, 7, " Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants....even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer," &c. For I say nothing under that argument (as Mr. Williams in his answer presumes) which supposes any antithesis or opposition here between the

state of the Gentiles and eunuchs under the *Old Testament*, and under the *gospel*, as to terms of acceptance with God : Nor any opposition as to a greater necessity of sanctifying grace, to the lawful partaking of ordinances, under the *gospel*, than under the *law* ; as Mr. Williams also supposes in his arguments on this head. But the *opposition* I speak of, as plainly pointed forth in the chapter, is this : That whereas under the *law*, *not only* piety of heart and practice were required, but something *else*, even soundness of body and circumcision, it is foretold, that under the *gospel*, piety of heart and practice *only* should be required ; that although they were eunuchs or uncircumcised, yet if it appeared that they *loved the name of the Lord*, &c. they should be admitted.

So when I argued, that Christ, in the latter part of the 7th chapter of *Math.* representing the final issue of things, with regard to the visible church in general, speaks of all as being such as had looked on themselves to be interested in him as their Lord and Saviour, and had an opinion of their good estate ; though the hope of some was built on the *sand*, and others on a *rock* : Mr. Williams, in his Reply, p. 40, 41, intirely overlooks the argument and talks about other things. He says, “ Christ does not fault those that cried, *Lord, Lord*, for entering into covenant, but for not keeping covenant,” p. 41. Here he runs back to another thing, relating to another argument, to which this has no reference, which he dwells wholly upon ; and says nothing to the argument I use in that place.

So in his reply to what I say on the parable of the *wheat and tares*, p. 98, &c. He has entirely overlooked the argument. He says, to vindicate the objection, p. 99, “ Which we think shows us the mind and will of Christ in this matter is, that his servants shall proceed only on certain established rules of his visible kingdom, and not upon any private rules of judging about them.” Whereas, I never said, or supposed, that Christ’s servants must not proceed on *certain established rules of his visible kingdom*, or that they ought to go upon *any private rules of judging* ; but particularly and largely expressed my mind to the contrary, in my explaining the question :

And say, *Inq.* p. 5, "That it is properly a visibility to the eye of the *public* charity, and not of a *private* judgment, that gives a right to be received as visible saints by the public." And repeat the same thing again, p. 125.

And as to what Mr. Williams says in this place about *infants' being born in the church*, it entirely diverts the reader to another point (which I shall hereafter particularly consider) wholly distinct from the subject of the argument; which is about rules of *admission into the church*, whenever they are admitted. If persons are born in the church in complete standing, as Mr. Williams supposes, then they are no *admitted* at all, but in their *ancestors*. But however, the question returns, whether ancestors that are *unsanctified*, can have a lawful right to come into the church? Mr. Williams holds they may. The subject of the argument is about *bringing in* tares into the field, *whenever they are brought in*, whether sooner or later: And whether *tares* have a lawful right, by warrant from Christ to be in the *field*; supposing this to intend the church of Christ. The argument I produced to the contrary was, that the tares were introduced contrary to the owner's design, through men's infirmity, and Satan's procurement. Which argument, being intirely overlooked by my opponent, I desire it may be now particularly considered.

When the *Devil* brought in the *tares*, it is manifest, he brought in something that did not belong there; and therein counteracted the *owner* of the field, and did it under that very notion of crossing his design. *An enemy* (says the parable) *hath done this*. But how does this consist with the tares having a *lawful right*, by the owner's warrant and appointment, to have a standing in his field? If CHRIST by his institution has, in mercy to unsanctified men given them a lawful right to come into the church, that it may be a means of their conversion; then it is a work of his kindness, as the compassionate Redeemer of souls, to bring them in; and not the doing of the great *enemy* and destroyer of souls. If the great physician of souls has built his church, as an infirmary in compassion to those that are sick, for this end that they may be brought in and healed there; shall it be said with

surprize, when such are found there, *how came these sick people HERE !* And shall the compassionate physician, who built the hospital, make answer, *an enemy hath done this !*

Besides, if Christ had appointed that unsanctified men should come into the church, in order to their conversion, it would be an instance of the *faithfulness* of his servants to bring in such. But the bringing in *tares* into the field, is not represented as owing to the faithfulness and watchfulness of the servants ; but on the contrary, is ascribed to their *sleepiness* and remissness : They were brought in while *they slept*, who ought to have done the part of watchmen in keeping them out, and preventing the designs of the subtle enemy that brought them in. Perhaps some would be ready to make the reflection, that those churches whose practice is agreeable to the loose principles Mr. Williams espouses, do that at noon day, in the presence of God, angels and men, which the devil did in the dead of the night, *while men slept !*

Again, Mr. Williams, in his reply to my argument from that *Christian brotherly love*, which is required towards all members of the visible church, goes entirely off from the argument, to things quite alien from it. His first answer, p. 69, is, that “the exercise of this Christian love is not the term of communion or admission into the visible church ;” which is perfectly foreign to the business. For the argument respects the *object* of this love, viz. visible saints, *that are to be thus beloved* ; and not at all the qualifications of the *inherent subject of it*, or the *person that exercises this love*. If they that are admitted, are to be loved *as true saints*, or *for the image of Christ appearing in them*, or *supposed to be in them* (as Mr. Williams allows, p. 68) then it will follow that none are to be admitted, but such as can reasonably be the objects of Christian love, or be loved *as true saints*, and as those who *have the image of Christ appearing in them*. Whether the exercise of this love be the term of communion, or not ; yet if we are commanded to exercise this love to all that are admitted to communion, then it will certainly follow, that some reasonable ground for being thus beloved, must be a term of communion in such as are admitted. To suppose it appoint-

ed, that we should love all that are admitted as true saints, and yet that it is not appointed that such as are admitted should exhibit any reasonable grounds for such a love, is certainly to suppose very inconsistent appointments.*

Mr. Williams's second answer p. 70, is no less impertinent ; viz. " That men's right to communion in gospel ordinances does not depend upon the corruptions of other men, in their forbearing to love them." As if my argument were, that unless men are *actually loved*, as true saints, they have no right to communion ! Whereas, the argument was very diverse, viz. That unless men have a *right to be so loved*, they have no right to communion. If men have an appearance, to reason, of being true saints, they may have a right to be loved as true saints, and to be admitted as such ; however corrupt and void of love other men are : But without such an appearance to reason, it is *no corruption*, not to love them as true saints ; unless it be corrupt, not to act without reason.†

As to Mr. Williams's third answer, and the misrepresentations it is built upon, it has already been taken notice of.

* " The apostles looked on all those, whom they gathered into churches or Christian congregations to eat the Lord's supper, as having the *truth* dwelling in them ; and so they behoved, every one of them, to look upon one another : Seeing they could not love one another as brethren in the truth, without acknowledging that truth as dwelling in them. And so we see the apostles, in their writings to the churches, supposing all their members objects of this brotherly love. Christ's visible church then is the congregation of those whom the apostle could call the *saints and faithful in Christ Jesus*." — *Glass's Notes on Scripture texts*, Numb. 5, p. 32.

† A good argument might also be drawn from the corruption of unsanctified men ; for that they are all so under the power of corruption, that they are not able to love saints, or any one else, with truly Christian love. Agreeable to what Mr. Stoddard says in his *Three Sermons*, p. 40, " Men are obliged to love their neighbors as themselves. But no natural men do in any measure live up to that rule ; but men are great enemies one to another, *hateful* and *hating one another*. They do but little good one to another : They do a great deal of hurt one to another." Now is it reasonable to suppose, that such men have the proper qualifications, by divine institution, for a lawful right to be members of the visible family of God ?

In Mr. Williams's reply to my answer to the *first objection* p. 81. &c. he wholly leaves the argument, and writes in support and defence of other matters, quite different from those which I mentioned, or had any concern with. The objection which I mentioned, and which had been much insisted on by some against my opinion, was, that church members are called *disciples*, or scholars ; a name, that gives us a notion of the visible church as a school ; and leads us to suppose, that all who profess that sort of faith and sincerity, which implies a disposition to seek Christian learning and spiritual attainments, are qualified for admission. But Mr. Williams says nothing at all in support of this objection. In answer to it, I endeavored to shew, that the name *disciples* given to church members, does not argue that unsanctified persons are fit to be members. He says nothing to shew, that it *does*. He says, if it will not follow from Christ's visible church's being represented as Christ's school, that it is in order to *all* good attainments ; *yet it is in order to all that they have not yet attained*. Which is nothing to the purpose, but foreign to the thing in debate, viz. *Whether sanctifying grace is one of those things which are not yet attained by those that are lawfully in the church*. He there says nothing to prove, that it is ; and especially to prove it from the meaning of the word, *disciples* ; which was the argument in hand. He insists, that men may be sufficiently subject to Christ as their master and teacher, in order to be in his school or church, without grace : But then the thing to be proved, was, that church members being called *disciples* makes this evident, in order to support the argument or objection I was upon : Which argument is entirely neglected throughout all his discourse under this head.

So in his reply to my answer to the 11th objection, p. 123, &c. he wholly neglects the argument, and labors to support a different one. I endeavored, without concerning myself about the words of any argument in Mr. Stoddard's Appeal, to answer an argument abundantly used at Northampton against my doctrine, of unsanctified men's not having a right to come to the Lord's supper ; which was this, " You may as

well say, that unsanctified men may not attend any other duty of worship ;” and particularly, “ you may as well forbid them to *pray*.” As for Mr. Stoddard’s objection, in these words, “ If unsanctified men may attend all other ordinances or duties of worship, then they may lawfully attend the Lord’s supper ;” it was an argument I was not obliged to attend to in the words in which *he* delivered it, because it was not an argument brought against *my* scheme of things, but one very diverse : Since it is not my opinion, that unsanctified men may attend “ all other ordinances or duties of worship, besides the Lord’s supper ;” for I do not suppose, such may offer themselves to baptism ; which Mr. Stoddard takes for granted, in his argument. And therefore, what Mr. Williams says in support of it, is quite beside the business. As to the argument I was concerned with, taken especially from the lawfulness of unsanctified men’s *praying*, to prove, that therefore it must be lawful for them to come to the Lord’s supper, certainly if there be any consequence in it, the consequence depends on the truth of this supposition, *That the same thing which makes it lawful for a man to pray, also makes it lawful for him to come to the Lord’s supper.* And seeing this position is proved to be not true, the argument falls to the ground. And Mr. Williams’s nice observations and distinctions, of a *non obstante*, and a *simply* and *per se*, are nothing to the purpose.

This good reason (with several others) may be given why the same that makes it lawful for a man to pray and hear the word, will not make it lawful for him to partake of sacraments, viz. That the sacraments are not only duties, but covenant privileges, and are never lawfully given or received but under that notion. Whereas it is not so with prayer and hearing the word : And therefore they who have no interest in the covenant of grace, and are in no respect God’s covenant people may lawfully hear the word and pray. But it is agreed on all hands, that they who are not in some respects—God’s covenant people, may not come to sacraments : And the reason is this, because sacraments are covenant privileges. And this same reason will prove that none but *true believers*, or those that have saving faith, the only condition of the cove-

nant of grace, have a right to sacraments. For, as was observed before, the condition of any covenant is the condition of all the benefits or privileges of that covenant. See Part II. Sec. 8.



SECTION IV.

The fourth thing observed in Mr. Williams's method of managing the Controversy, particularly considered, viz. His advancing new and extraordinary notions, not only manifestly contrary to Truth, but also to the common and received principles of the Christian Church.

THUS it is with regard to many things which have already been taken notice of. As, that men may be ungodly men, and yet truly profess to love God more than the world : That men may be professors of religion and have no true grace, and yet not be lukewarm, but serve God as their only master : That such may profess to be subject to Christ with all their hearts, and to give up all their hearts and lives to Christ, and speak true, &c. &c.

I shall now take notice of another remarkable instance of this, viz. That Mr. Williams, in his reply to my argument, from the epithets and characters given by the apostles to the members of the visible Christian churches, in their epistles, represents, p. 56, That there "is no difference in all the epithets and characters, which I had heaped up from the New Testament," from those that are given in the Old Testament, to the whole body of the Jewish church ; which he elsewhere abundantly supposes to be the whole body of the Jewish nation ; yea, even in their *worst* times, until the nation was re-

jected and cast off by God from being any longer his people ; as I shall have occasion particularly to observe afterwards.

That it may be the easier judged, how manifestly this is contrary to truth, I shall here repeat some of those epithets and characters I before mentioned, which Mr. Williams has reference to. This is very manifest concerning most of them. But that I may not be tedious, I will now rehearse but a few instances, viz. being “ made free from sin, and becoming the servants of righteousness ;” having “ the spirit of adoption ;” being “ the children of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ ;” being “ vessels of mercy prepared unto glory ;” being such “ as do not live to themselves, nor die to themselves ; but live unto the Lord and die unto the Lord ;” and who, “ living and dying are the Lord’s ;” being those that have “ all things for theirs, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; because they are Christ’s ;” being “ begotten through the gospel ;” being such as “ shall judge the world ;” being “ washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God ;” being “ manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart ;” being such as “ behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory ;” being “ chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love ; and predestinated unto the adoption of children ;” being “ sealed by that holy Spirit of promise ;” being “ quickened, though once dead in trespasses and sins ;” being made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ;” being “ dead, and having their life hid with Christ in God ;” and being those that “ when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, shall also appear with him in glory ; having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him ;” being “ begotten again to a living hope....to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heav-

en for them ; who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ; who love Christ though they have not seen him ; in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit ; knowing him that is from the beginning ; having their sins forgiven ; having overcome the wicked one ; having an unction from the holy one, by which they know all things ; who are now the sons of God ; and who, when Christ shall appear, shall be like him, because they shall see him as he is."

Now let the Christian reader judge, with what face of reason our author could represent, as though there were nothing in all these epithets and characters, more than used of old to be given to the whole nation of the Jews, and that, even in times of their greatest corruption and apostasy, till the nation was rejected of God ! One would think, there is no need of arguing the matter with any that have read the Bible.

This representation of Mr. Williams's is not only very contrary to truth, but also to the common sentiments of the Christian church. Though I pretend not to be a person of great reading, yet I have read enough to warrant this assertion. I never yet (as I remember) met with any author that went the same length in this matter with Mr. Williams, but only Mr. Taylor of Norwich, in England, the author that lately has been so famous for his corrupt doctrine. In his piece which he calls *A Key to the Apostolic Writings*, where he delivers his scheme of religion (which seems scarcely so agreeable to the Christian scheme, as the doctrine of many of the wiser Heathen) he delivers the same opinion, and insists largely upon it ; it being a main thing he makes use of to establish his whole scheme. And it evidently appears in the manner of his delivering it, that he is sensible it is exceeding far from what has hitherto been the commonly received sentiment in the Christian world. He supposes that as all those epithets and characters belong to the whole nation of the Jews, even in their most corrupt times, so they belong to all Christendom, even the most vicious parts of it ; that the most

vicious men who are baptized, and profess to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, are “chosen before the foundation of the world, predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God, regenerated, justified, sanctified children of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, the spouse of Christ, the temple of God, made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, being the family of heaven, &c. &c. And certainly he may with as good reason, and with the same reason, suppose this of all Christendom, even the most vicious parts of it, as of the whole nation of the Jews, however corrupt, till there was a national rejection of them.

Indeed it is manifest there is no other way of evading the force of the argument from the epistles, but by falling into Taylor’s scheme. If his scheme of religion be not true, then it is plain as any fact in the New Testament, that all the Christian churches, through the whole earth, in the apostles’ days, were constituted in the manner that I insist on. The scripture says ten times as much to demonstrate this matter, as it does about the manner of discipline, officers, and government of the church, or as it does about the several parts of the public worship, or about the sanctification of the Christian sabbath.



SECTION V.

Instances of the fifth and sixth particulars, in Mr. Williams’s method of disputing, viz. his using confident and peremptory Assertions, and great Exclamations, instead of Arguments.

WE have an instance of the *former*, in his reply to my answer to the 14th objection, viz. That “it is not unlawful for unsanctified men to carry themselves like saints. I objected against this, if thereby be meant, that they may lawfully car-

ry themselves externally like saints in all respects, remaining ungodly ; and mentioned some things which belonged to the external duty of godly men, which no ungodly man, remaining such, may do. To which Mr. William, makes no reply ; but to prove the point says, “ Mr. Stoddard knew, and all divines know, that the external carriage of some unsanctified men *is*, to the outward appearance, and the public judgment of the church the same with the carriage of the saints ; and they know they are *bound* to such a behavior.” And this peremptory, confident assertion is all the argument he brings to prove the thing asserted.

Again, I observe, that sometimes Mr. Williams uses *great exclamation*, as though he intended to alarm, and excite terror in his readers, and raise their indignation : Though they are perhaps never like to know *for what*. We have two very remarkable instances of this, p. 136 and 137, where he says, “ I shall further take notice of two *extraordinary* and *surprising* passages, if I understand them. And I have with great diligence tried to find out the meaning of them. One is p. 129, between the 17th and 23d lines ; if it be rightly printed.” He does not quote my words : This mighty exclamation would have become too flat, and appeared ridiculous, if he had. The passage referred to is in these words....“ Indeed such a tendency (i. e. a tendency to irreligion and profaneness) it would have, to shut men out from having any part in the Lord, in the sense of the two tribes and half, Josh. xxii. 25, or to fence them out by such a partition wall, as formerly was between Jews and Gentiles ; and so shut them out as to tell them, if they were never so much disposed to serve God, he was not ready to accept them : According to the notion the Jews seem to have had of the uncircumcised Gentiles.” That is, plainly, to shut them out so as to tell them, that let them have hearts never so well and piously disposed to love and serve God, their love and service could not be accepted. This doubtless would have a tendency to discourage religion in men. And how the owning of it is an owning my scheme to have such a tendency, I do not know. Mr. Williams might as well have picked out any other sentence through all

the 136 pages of the book, and called it an *extraordinary passage*, and stood astonished over it, and told how he was ready to doubt whether it was rightly printed, and what *great diligence* he had used *to find out the meaning of it !*

The other extraordinary passage he stands thunderstruck with, is in these words ; “ may it not be suspected, that this way of baptizing children of such as never make any proper profession of godliness, is an expedient, originally invented for that very end, to give ease to ancestors with respect to their posterity, in times of great declension and degeneracy ?” Mr. Williams knows, that through the whole of my book I suppose this practice of baptizing the children of such as are here spoken of, is *wrong* ; and so does *he* too ; for he abundantly allows, that persons, in order to be admitted to the privileges of visible saints, must make a profession of real piety, or gospel holiness. And if it be wrong, as we are both agreed, then surely it is nothing akin to blasphemy, to suspect that it arose from some bad cause.



SECTION VI.

Instances of the seventh particular, observed in Mr. Williams's way of disputing, viz. His wholly overlooking argument, pretending there is no argument, nothing to answer ; when the case is far otherwise.

THUS in his reply to my tenth argument, which was this, “ It is necessary, that those who partake of the Lord's supper should judge themselves truly and cordially to accept Christ as their Saviour, and chief good ; for this is what the actions, which communicants perform at the Lord's table, are a solemn profession of.” I largely endeavored in p. 75, 76 and 77, to prove this, from the nature of those significant

actions, of receiving the symbols of Christ's body and blood when offered, representing their accepting the thing signified, as their spiritual food, &c. To all which Mr. Williams says, p. 74. "I do not find that Mr. Edwards has said any thing to prove the proposition, which is the whole argument offered here in proof of the point proposed to be proved, but only gives his opinion, or paraphrase of the purport and nature of the sacramental actions." Since Mr. Williams esteems it no argument, I desire it may be considered impartially whether there be any argument in it or no.

These sacramental actions all allow to be *significant* actions: They are a signification and profession of something: They are not actions without a meaning. And all allow, that these external actions signify something *inward* and *spiritual*. And if they signify any thing spiritual, they doubtless signify those spiritual things which they represent. But what *inward* thing does the outward taking or accepting the body and blood of Christ represent, but the *inward* accepting Christ's body and blood, or an accepting him in the heart? And what *spiritual* thing is the outward feeding on Christ in this ordinance a sign of, but a spiritual feeding on Christ, or the soul's feeding on him? Now there is no other way of the soul's feeding on him, but by that *faith*, by which Christ becomes our spiritual food, and the refreshment and vital nourishment of our souls. The *outward eating and drinking* in this ordinance is a sign of *spiritual eating and drinking*, as much as the *outward bread* in this ordinance is a sign of *spiritual bread*; or as much as the *outward drink* is a sign of *spiritual drink*. And doubtless those actions, if they are a profession of any thing are a profession of the things they signify.* To say, that these significant actions are appointed

* Mr. Stoddard owns, that the sacramental actions, both in baptism and the Lord's supper, signify *saving faith* in Christ. *Safety of Ap.* p. 175. "By baptism is signified *our fellowship with Christ* in his sufferings. That is signified hereby, that we have an interest in the virtue of his sufferings, that his sufferings are made over unto us, and that we do participate in the good and benefit of them. It was John the Baptist's manner, before he baptized persons, to teach them that they must *believe on Christ*. And the apostles and

to be a *profession* of something, but not to be a profession of the *things* they are appointed to *signify*, is as unreasonable as to say, that certain sounds or words are appointed to be a profession of something, but not to be a profession of the things signified by those words.

Again, Mr. Williams, in his reply to my answer to the *second objection*, with like contempt passes over the main argument which I offered, to prove that the nation of Israel were called *God's people*, and *covenant people*, in another sense besides a being visible saints. My argument in p. 85, 86, was this : That it is manifest, that something diverse from being visible saints, is often intended by that nation's being called *God's people*, and that that nation, the family of Israel, *according to the flesh*, and not with regard to any moral and religious qualifications, were in some sense adopted by God, to be his peculiar and covenant people ; from Rom. ix. 3, 4, 5. " I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren according to the flesh ; who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the COVENANTS and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers," &c. I observed, that these privileges here mentioned, are spoken of as belonging to the Jews, not now as visible saints, not as professors of the true religion, not as members of the visible church of Christ (which they did not belong to but only as a people of such a nation, such a blood, such an external, carnal relation to the patriarchs, their ancestors ; *Israelites, according to the flesh* : Inasmuch as the apostle is speaking here of the *unbelieving Jews*, professed unbelievers, that were out of the Christian church, and open, visible enemies to it ; and such as had no right at all to the external

apostolical men would not baptize any adult persons but such as professed to *believe on Christ*. " he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Baptism is mentioned as the evidence of faith " So concerning the Lord's supper, *Ibid.* p. 122, 123. " In this ordinance we are invited to put our trust in the death of Christ. *Take, eat ; this is my body ; and drink ye all of it.* When the body feeds on the sacramental bread and wine, the *soul* is to do that which answers unto it ; The soul is to feed on Christ crucified ; which is nothing else but the acting *faith* on him "

privileges of Christ's people. I observed further, that in like manner this apostle in Rom. xi. 28, 29, speaks of the same *unbelieving Jews*, that were enemies to the gospel, as in some respect an elect people, and interested in the calling, promises and covenants, God formerly gave their forefathers, and are still beloved for their sakes. "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

All that Mr. Williams says, which has any reference to these things, is, "that he had read my explication of the "name of *the people of God*, as given to the people of Israel, &c. But that he confesses, it is perfectly unintelligible to him." The impartial reader is left to judge, whether the matter did not require some other answer.



SECTION VII.

What is, and what is not begging the question ; and how Mr. Williams charges me, from time to time, with begging the question, without cause.

AMONG the particulars of Mr. Williams's method of disputing, I observed, that *he often causelessly charges me with begging the question, while he frequently begs the question himself, or does that which is equivalent.*

But that it may be determined with justice and clearness, who does, and who does not beg the question, I desire it may be particularly considered, what that is which is called *begging the question* in a dispute. This is more especially needful for the sake of illiterate readers. And here,

1. Let it be observed, that merely to suppose something in a dispute, without bringing any argument to prove it, is not begging the question : For this is done necessarily, in every dispute, and even in the best and clearest demonstrations.

One point is proved by another until at length the matter is reduced to a point that is supposed to need no proof ; either because it is selfevident, or is a thing wherein both parties are agreed, or so clear that it is supposed it will not be denied.

2. Nor is begging the question the same thing as offering a weak argument, to prove the point in question. It is not all weak arguing, but one *particular way* of weak arguing, that is called *begging the question*.

3. Nor is it the same thing as *missing the true question*, and bringing an argument that is impertinent, or *beside the question*.

But the thing which is called *begging the question*, is the making use of the very point, that is the thing in debate, or the thing to be proved, as an argument to prove itself. Thus, if we were endeavoring to prove that none but godly persons might come to sacraments, and should take this for an argument to prove it, that none might come but such as have saving faith, taking this for granted ; I should then beg the question ; for this is the very point in question, whether a man must have saving faith or no ? It is called begging the question, because it is depending as it were on the courtesy of the other side, to grant me the point in question, without offering any argument as the price of it.

And whether the point I thus take for granted, be the main point in question, in the general dispute, or some subordinate point, something under consideration, under a particular argument ; yet if I take this particular point for granted, and then make use of it to prove itself, it is begging the question.

Thus if I were endeavoring, under this *general controversy* between Mr. Williams and me, to prove that *particular point*, that we ought to love all the members of the Church as *true saints* ; and should bring this as a proof of the point, that we ought to love all the members of the church as *true Christians*, taking this for granted ; this is only the same thing, under another term, as the thing to be proved ; and therefore is no argument at all, but only begging the question.

Or if the point I thus take for granted, and make use of as an argument, be neither the general point in controversy, nor

yet the thing nextly to be proved under a particular argument ; yet if it be some known controverted point between the parties, it is begging the question, or equivalent to it : For it is begging a thing known to be in question in the dispute, and using it as if it were a thing allowed.

I would now consider the instances, wherein Mr. Williams, asserts or suggests that I have begged the question.

In p. 30 and 31, he represents the force of my reasoning as built on a supposition, that there is no unsanctified man, but what knows he has no desire of salvation by Christ, no design to fulfil the covenant of grace, but designs to live in stealing, lying, adultery ; or some other known sin : And then says, “ Is it not manifest that such sort of reasoning is a mere quibbling with words, and begging the question ? ” And so insinuates, that I have thus begged the question. Whereas I no where say, or suppose this which he speaks of, nor any thing like it. But on the contrary, often say, what supposes an unsanctified man may *think* he is truly godly, and that he has truly upright and gracious designs and desires. Nor does any argument of mine depend on any such supposition. Nay, under the argument he speaks of, I expressly suppose the contrary, viz. That unsanctified men who visibly enter into covenant, may be deceived.

In p. 38, Mr. Williams makes a certain representation of my arguing from Isa. lvi. And then says upon it, “ It is no arguing, but only begging the question.” But as has been already shown, that which he represents as my argument from that scripture, has no relation to my argument.

In p. 59, in opposition to my arguing from the epistles, that the apostles treated those members of churches which they wrote to, as those who had been received on a positive judgment, i. e. (as I explain myself) a proper and affirmative opinion, that they were real saints ; Mr. Williams argues, that the apostles could make no such judgment of them, without either personal converse, or revelation ; unless it be supposed to be founded on a presumption, that ministers who baptized them, would not have done it, unless they had themselves made such a positive judgment concerning their state :

And then adds these words, "This may do for this scheme, but only it is a begging the question." Whereas it is a point that never has been in question in this controversy, as ever I knew, Whether some ministers or churches might reasonably, and affirmatively suppose, the members of *other churches*, they are united with, were admitted on evidence of proper qualifications, (whatever they be, whether common or saving) trusting to the faithfulness of other ministers and churches. Besides, this can be no point in question between me and Mr. Williams, unless it be a point in question between him and himself. For he holds, as well as I, persons ought not to be received as visible Christians, without *moral evidence* (which is something positive, and not a mere negation of evidence of the contrary) of *gospel holiness*.

In p. 82 of my book I suppose, that none at all do truly subject themselves to Christ as their master, but those who graciously subject themselves to him, and are delivered from the reigning power of sin. Mr. Williams suggests, p. 83, that herein I beg the question. For which there is no pretext, not only as this is no known point in controversy between the parties in this debate ; but also as it is a point I do not take for granted. but offer this argument to prove it, That they who have no grace, *are under the reigning power of sin*, and no man can truly subject himself to two such contrary masters, at the same time, as Christ and sin. I think this argument sufficient to obtain the point, without begging it. And besides, this doctrine, That they who have no grace do not truly subject themselves to Christ, was no point in question between me and Mr. Williams. But a point wherein we were fully agreed, and wherein he had before expressed himself as fully, and more fully than I. In his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 18, he speaks of "all such as do not depend on Christ, believe in him, and give up themselves, and all to him, as not true subjects to Christ ; but enemies to him and his kingdom." We have expressions to the same purpose again, in p. 74 and 91, and in p. 94, of the same book, he says, "It is utterly inconsistent with the nature of the obedience of the gospel, that it should be *a forced subjection*. No

man is a *subject* of Christ, who does not make the laws and will of Christ his choice, and desire to be governed by him, and to live in subjection to the will of Christ, as *good*, and *fit*, and *best* to be the rule of his living, and *way to his happiness*. A forced obedience to Christ is *no obedience*. It is *in terms a contradiction*. Christ draws men with the cords of *love*, and the bands of a man. Our Lord has himself expressly determined this point." There are other passages in the same book, to the same purpose. So that I had no need to beg this point of Mr. Williams, since he had given it largely, and that in full measure, and over and over again, without begging.

In p. 120, he observes, "That to say such a profession of internal, invisible things is the rule to direct the church in admission....is to hide the parallel, and beg the question. For the question here is about the person's right to come, and not about the church's admitting them." Here Mr. Williams would make us believe that he does not know what begging the question is: For it is evident his meaning is, that my saying so is *beside the question*. But to say something beside the question is a different thing from begging the question, as has been observed. My saying that a *profession of invisible things* is the church's rule in admission, is not begging the question; because it is not, nor ever was any thing in question. For Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Williams himself are full in it, that a profession of *invisible things*, such as a believing that Christ is the Son of God, &c. is the church's rule. Yea, Mr. Williams is express in it, that a credible profession and visibility of *gospel holiness* is the church's rule, p. 139. Nor is my saying as above, *beside the question then in hand*, relating to the church of Israel's admitting to the priesthood, those that could not find their register. For that wholly relates to the rule of *admission* to the priesthood, and not to the priests' *assurance of their own right*. For, as I observed, if the priests had been never so fully assured of their pedigree, yet if they could not demonstrate it to others, by a public register, it would not have availed for their admission.

Again in p. 124, Mr. Williams charges me with begging the question, in supposing that sacraments are duties of wor-

ship, whose very nature and design is an exhibition of those vital and active principles and inward exercises, wherein consists the condition of the covenant of grace. He charges the same thing as a begging the question, p. 131. But this is no begging the question, for two reasons ; (1.) Because I had before proved this point, by proofs which Mr. Williams has not seen cause to attempt to answer, as has been just now observed, in the last section. (2.) This, when I wrote was no point in question, wherein Mr. Williams and I differed ; but wherein we were agreed, and in which he had declared himself as fully as I, in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 76. " When we attend sacraments (says he) we are therein visibly to profess our receiving Christ, and the graces of his Spirit, and the benefits of his redemption, on his own terms and offer, and giving up the all of our souls to him, on his call, covenant and engagement." And in the next preceding page but one, in a place forecited, he speaks of these acts " as mockery, hypocrisy, falsehood and lies, if they are not the expressions of faith and hope, and spiritual acts of obedience." So that I had no manner of need to come to Mr. Williams as a beggar for these things, which he had so plentifully given me, and all the world that would accept them, years before.

SECTION VIII.

Shewing how Mr. Williams often begs the Question himself.

THE question is certainly begged in that argument, which Mr. Williams espouses and defends, viz. " That the Lord's supper has a proper tendency to promote men's conversion." In the prosecution of the argument Mr. Williams implicitly yields, that it is not the apparent natural tendency alone, that is of any force to prove the point ; but the apparent tendency

under this circumstance, that *There is no express prohibition*. And thus it is allowed, that in the case of express prohibition with respect to the scandalous and morally insincere, no seeming tendency in the nature of the thing proves the ordinance to be intended for the conviction and conversion of such. So that it is a thing *supposed* in this argument, that all morally insincere persons are expressly forbidden, but unsanctified persons not so. Now when it is supposed, that morally insincere persons are expressly forbidden, the thing meant cannot be, that they are forbidden in those very words; for no such prohibition is to be found; nor are men that live in sodomy, bestiality and witchcraft, any where expressly forbidden in this sense. But the thing intended must be, that they are very evidently forbidden, by plain implication or consequence. But then the whole weight of the argument lies in this *supposition*, that unsanctified persons are not also plainly and evidently forbidden; which is the very point in question. And therefore, to make this the ground of an argument to prove this point, is a manifest *begging the question*. And what Mr. Williams says to the contrary, p. 127, that Mr. Stoddard had proved this point before, avails nothing: For let it be never so much proved before, yet after all, to take this very point and make use of it *as a further argument* to prove itself, is certainly *begging the question*. The notion of bringing a new argument is bringing additional proof: But to take a certain point, supposed to be already proved, to prove itself with over again, certainly does not add any thing to the evidence.

Mr. Williams says my supposing *unconverted* persons, as such, to be as evidently forbidden, as *scandalous* persons, is as much *begging the question*. I answer, so it would be, if I made that point an argument to prove itself with, after Mr. Williams's manner. But this is far from being the case in fact.

And the question is again most certainly begged, in that other thing said to support this argument, viz. "That though the Lord's supper may seem to have a tendency to convert scandalous sinners, yet there is another ordinance appointed for that. Here the meaning must be, that there is another

ordinance *exclusive* of the Lord's supper ; otherwise it is nothing to the purpose. For they do not deny but that there are other ordinances for the conversion of sinners, who are morally sincere, as well as of those who are scandalous. But the question is, Whether other ordinances are appointed for their conversion *exclusive* of the Lord's supper ; or, Whether the Lord's supper be one ordinance appointed for their conversion ? This is the grand point *in question*. And to take this point as the foundation of an argument, to prove this same point, is plainly begging the question. And it is also giving up the argument from the tendency, and resting the whole argument on another thing.

Mr. Williams again plainly begs the question in his Reply, p. 127, that God's prohibition is an argument, that God saw there was no such tendency for their conversion. His so saying supposes again, that there is no evident prohibition of unsanctified persons. In which he again flies to the very point in question, and rests the weight of his reasoning upon it.

Just in the same manner Mr. Williams begs the question in espousing and making use of that argument, " That all in external covenant, and neither ignorant nor scandalous, are commanded to perform all external covenant duties." Here it is supposed, that scandalous persons (which, according to Mr. Williams's scheme, must include all that have not moral sincerity) though in the external covenant, are expressly, that is, *evidently excepted and forbidden* : And that unsanctified men are not also *evidently forbidden* ; which is the point in question. For if unsanctified men, though in external covenant, are as evidently forbidden and excepted, as scandalous men that are in external covenant, then the argument touches not one any more than the other. So that the argument is entirely a castle in the air, resting on nothing. The grand thing to be proved, first taken for granted, and then made an argument to prove itself.

In explaining the nature of *begging the question*, I observed, that it is begging the question, or equivalent to it, whether the point that is taken for granted, and made an argument of,

be the main point in controversy, or some particular, known disputed point between the controverting parties. I will now illustrate this by an example. It is a known disputed point in this controversy, whether in the parable concerning the *man without the wedding garment*, the king condemned the man for coming into the church without *grace*. Now supposing that I, because I look on the matter very clear, should, besides using it as one distinct argument, also make it the basis of other arguments ; and should use it in opposition to the strongest arguments of my opposers, as if it were sufficient to stop their mouths, without offering any proper solution of those arguments : As, in case I were pressed with the argument from the passover, if I should fly to the *man without the wedding garment* ; and should say, it is certain, this argument from the passover can be of no force against the express word of God in the 22d of Matth. For there *it is plain as any fact that ever the sun shone upon*, that the king condemns the man for coming into the church *without a wedding garment* ; and it is plain as the sun at noon day, that the wedding garment is *grace*. And if when the argument from Judas's partaking of the Lord's supper is alleged, I should again fly to the *man without a wedding garment*, and say, whatever reasons Christ might have for admitting Judas, yet it is plainly revealed in Matth. xxii. 12, that God does not approve of men's coming into the church without a *wedding garment*. This would be an impertinent way of disputing, thus to answer one argument by throwing another in the way, which is contested, and the validity of which is denied. It is fair that I should have liberty to use the argument concerning the *wedding garment*, in its place, and make the most of it ; but to use it as the support of other arguments, is to produce no additional proof. And thus from time to time, to produce the disputed hypothesis of one argument, for answer to the arguments of my antagonist, instead of solving those arguments, is flying and hiding from arguments, instead of answering them : Instead of defending the fortress which is attacked, it is dodging and flying from one refuge to another.

Mr. Williams acts this part from time to time in the use he makes of his great argument from the Old Testament church and its ordinances. Thus, in p. 8, he takes this method to answer my argument from the nature of visibility and profession, insisting that the Israelites, avouching and covenanting was a thing compatible with *ungodliness* ; which he knows is a disputed point in this controversy, and what I deny. Again he makes use of the same thing in answer to my argument from the nature of covenanting with God, p. 23, 24. And again he brings it in, p. 25, 26, answering what I say, by confidently asserting that concerning the church of Israel, which he knows is disputed, and I deny ; viz. That the covenanting of Israel did not imply a profession that they did already believe and repent : As in these words, “ This was never intended nor understood, in the profession which the Israelites made ; but that they *would* immediately, and from thenceforth comply with the terms of the covenant ; and by the help of God, offered in it, *would* fulfil it. I am sure, this was what they professed ; and I am sure, God declared he took them into covenant with him.” And the same thing is brought in again to answer the same argument p. 31. The same thing is thrown in, once and again, as an answer to what I say of the unreasonableness of accepting such professions as leave room to judge the greater part of the professors to be enemies of God, p. 34. The same thing is cast in as a sufficient block in the way of my arguing from the unreasonableness of accepting such professions, as amount to nothing more than *lukewarmness*, p. 36. The same is brought in and greatly insisted on, to stop my mouth, in arguing from the epistles, p. 56, 57. The same is brought in again to enervate my argument concerning *brotherly love*, p. 69. And this is made use of as the support of other arguments ; as that from the name *disciples*, and about the church’s being the *school of Christ* ; and to confute what I say, in answer to that argument, p. 84. The same is brought in as a support of the eleventh objection, and a confutation of my answer to that, p. 125. And again, in reply to what I say in answer to the nineteenth objection, p. 137.

Another thing, near akin to begging the question, is resting the weight of arguments on things asserted without proof; which, though they do not properly make a part of the controversy, yet are things not allowed by those on the other side. Thus does Mr. Williams in his arguing from the success of the Lord's supper in the conversion of sinners, p. 137, 138, supposing, not only that the Lord's supper, has been the *occasion* of the conversion of many, but that their communicating was the *means* of it. This he offers nothing to prove, and it is not allowed by those on the other side.* And it is what would be very hard to prove: If many were converted at the Lord's table (which yet is not evident) it would not prove, that their *partaking* was the means of their conversion; it might be only what they saw and heard there, which others may see and hear, that do not partake.



SECTION IX.

Mr. Williams's Inconsistence with himself, in what he says in Answer to my third and fourth Arguments, and in his Reply to my Arguments from the Acts, and the Epistles.

THE *last* thing observed in Mr. Williams's way of disputing, is his alleging and insisting on things wherein he is inconsistent with himself. His inconsistencies are of many

* Thus that very eminent divine, and successful minister of Christ, the late Dr. Doddridge, in his *Sermons on regeneration*, speaking of the means of regeneration, p. 251, 252, says, "I do not mention the administration of sacraments, upon this occasion; because, though they have so noble and effectual a tendency to improve men's minds in piety, and to promote Christian edification; yet I do not remember to have heard of any instance, in which they have been the *means* of men's conversion; which is not to be wondered at, as they are appointed for a very different end."

sorts : Sometimes he alleges those things that are inconsistent with the doctrine of those whose principles he pretends to maintain : He abundantly urges those things against my scheme, which are in like manner against his own : He often argues against those things which he allows, and strenuously insists on : He denies what he affirms, and affirms what he utterly denies ; laying down and urging those things which are contrary to what he says in other books ; and sometimes contrary to what he says in the same book : Yielding up the thing wherein the argument lies, yet strenuously maintaining the argument ; allowing both premises and consequence, yet finding fault, and opposing : Sometimes urging things which are contrary to what he says under *different* arguments ; and sometimes contrary to what he says under the *same* argument : Sometimes contradicting himself in the plain sense and meaning of what he says ; at other times even in plain terms : Sometimes in effect contradicting himself in the same breath, and in the same sentence.

These various kinds of inconsistencies have many of them been already observed : And will further appear by a particular consideration of what he says on several heads in what remains.

In my third argument, I insisted, that it could not be much to God's honor, for men to profess the assent of their judgment to the true religion, without pretending to any real friendship or love to God in their hearts. Mr. Williams, in opposition, p. 34, speaks of it as an honor to God, that secret hypocrites openly declare their conviction of the truth of God's word, &c. as in the multitude of subjects is the king's honor. And yet he himself represents the matter quite otherwise in his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness* ; there, in p. 87, he has these words, "to promote the kingdom of Christ, is not to do that which may prevail with men to make pretences that they are Christians, or that they own Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to call him Lord, Lord, when really he is not so."

In answer to my fourth argument, p. 35, Mr. Williams says, I make "a great misrepresentation of the matter, in in-

insinuating that according to Mr. Stoddard's scheme, [which scheme he declares himself to be of] they who are admitted make a pretence of NO MORE than moral sincerity, and common grace." And yet he insists, that when Philip required a profession of the Eunuch's faith, his question designed NO MORE than an *assent of the understanding*, p. 51, which he there distinguishes from saving faith : And says, that it is morally certain that his enquiry *amounted to NO MORE*. And yet in his discourse on the same head, p. 49, he inveigh's against me for supposing it a consequence of the opinion of my opposers, that the Eunuch, in order to come to sacraments, had no manner of need to look at any such qualification in himself as saving faith. Certainly the Eunuch, in making answer to Philip's enquiry, had no need to look at *any more* than Philip enquired after. In p. 50. he says, " It does not seem at all probable, that Philip enquired *any thing* about the regeneration or sanctification of the Eunuch." And yet in the next preceding sentence, he refers me over to another judgment, for representing as though my opposers supposed, that it was *no matter whether a person coming to gospel ordinances had any grace or not, and had no manner of need to enquire any thing about his sincerity*.

And though he highly blames me for insinuating, as above, that my opposers *require a pretence of NO MORE than common grace and moral sincerity* ; yet in opposition to my insisting on a profession of saving faith, speaking of the profession which the apostles required, he says, p. 58. " It is certain, that a profession in these words, which was wont to be required, does sometimes import NO MORE than a conviction of the understanding on moral evidence." So he says concerning those whose admission into the Christian church we have an account of in Acts ii. (p. 45.) " There is not one word said about ANY OTHER FAITH, but believing that Jesus was the Messiah." And if so, then certainly NO MORE was professed.

In p. 35, he allows, that all visible saints who are not truly pious, are *hypocrites* ; and yet maintains, that the profession they make is no more than what they may make and speak

HONESTLY and TRULY, p. 105 and 47. How then are they all hypocrites, if they are *honestly and truly* what they profess to be?

In supporting the argument from John's baptism, he insists, that the profession the people made, did not imply, that they *had savingly repented* : And that John openly supposed, that their profession did *not* imply it, in what he said to them, p. 97. And in p. 98, he says, " we read not a word of John's enquiring whether these people made a credible profession of true piety." And he there manifestly suggests, that John knew they were not pious, as *he knew they were a generation of vipers*. Yet how often elsewhere does Mr. Williams insist, that men, in order to come to sacraments, *must* make a credible profession of true piety and gospel holiness, and that they must in a judgment of charity be supposed to have real godliness?

In answer to my argument from the instance of the converts in Acts ii. Mr. Williams, speaking of their convictions, and being *pricked in their heart*, p. 45, says, " They were convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah and Saviour, whom God had promised to Israel, whereupon convinced of their sin, they cry out, *what shall we do?* To which the apostle replies, *repent and be baptized....in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.* There is not one word said about any other faith, but *believing that Jesus was the Messiah.*" And in the two next pages Mr. Williams insists, that their *gladly receiving the word* can by no necessity from the text imply more, than that they now *believed that Jesus was the Messiah*, and that it was matter of joy to them that the *Messiah* was come. So that we have this *inconsistent* account of the matter from Mr. Williams. That these people are first *convinced that Jesus is the Messiah*, and this is cause of *distress* to them : And they ask, *what they shall do?* Hereupon the apostle directs them *to believe that Jesus is the Messiah* ; which they believed *already*, before they asked the question : But however, when they heard this, *they believed that Jesus was the Messiah* ; they now found it out, as a *new* thing they did not know of before, and are *glad* at the joyful discovery ;

though just before they believed the same thing, and the discovery filled them with distress.

In p. 47, whereas it is said concerning these new converts, "that such were added to the church, as were *the saved*." Mr. Williams says, "the like appellation is given to the whole church of Israel." And in this, and the foregoing page, he insists, that these converts were before *in* the church of Israel, and were not now *admitted*, but only continued as some of God's people. But if these things were so, they were *the saved* before their conversion to Christianity, as much as after; and others that were in the Jewish church, that were not yet converted to Christianity, were as much *the saved* as they. And then why is their being *saved* spoken of as what was now brought to pass, and as a thing that distinguished the believing Jews from others?

In the same page Mr. Williams says, "we do not dispute but that the apostles *supposed* and *believed* in charity, so far as they had any thing to do to suppose or believe any thing about it, that God had given these persons saving repentance, and an heart purifying faith." And yet in p. 61. He speaks of the apostles as supposing the contrary of many of those that had been admitted into the primitive church; in that they speak of them as such *temples* of God as might be *destroyed*: "Which (says Mr. Williams) cannot be true of sanctified persons, unless they can fall from grace."

In his answer to the argument from Philip and the Eunuch, he supposes, that *believing with all the heart* is only such a belief of the doctrine of Christianity as *unsanctified* men may have. And yet in that forementioned place *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 144, he says, a man before he is "renewed by the Holy Ghost, has a view of the truth as a doubtful, uncertain thing." And in the book now especially attended to, he in effect owns the thing, which he earnestly disputes against in reply to this argument. He greatly insists, that the phrase, *with all the heart*, does not signify gracious sincerity; and yet he owns it does. P. 51 and 52, he owns, that according to the usual way of speaking *among mankind*, both in our days, and also in times when the scriptures were written, "God

requires men to give him their hearts, “intending by it such a sincerity as God will own and accept ; which besure (says he) is nothing else than a gracious sincerity ; which never can be, unless the whole soul and all its faculties be engaged for God.” Then afterwards adds, “ But how will this any ways prove, that when *men* use the same expressions, it must necessarily be understood in the same sense ?” And yet in the same breath, he had observed that God in thus using the phrase, uses it according to the usual manner of speaking AMONG MANKIND. He gives this reason why the phrase need not be understood in the same sense when used by men, that men are not searchers of hearts. But the argument is about the phrase as Philip put it to the Eunuch’s own conscience, which was or ought to be a searcher of his heart.

And by the way I must observe, that Mr. Williams would have done well, if he was able, to have reconciled these repugnant things, taken notice of in my book ; “ That with the heart man believeth to righteousness, and that if men believe with the heart that God raised Christ from the dead, they shall be saved ;” agreeable to Rom. x. 9, 10. And yet that men may “ believe this with their heart, yea, and with all their heart, and still not believe to righteousness, nor ever be saved.” So likewise, “ That whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God ;” as in 1 John iv. 15. And that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God,” 1 John v. 1. And yet that man may believe this very thing with all his heart, and confess it with his mouth ; and this in the language of the same apostles and primitive ministers ; and still not *be born of God*, nor have a spark of grace in him.

It may also be worthy to be considered, whether it be reasonable to suppose, that the faith which a man must profess, in order to being in the visible kingdom of Christ, and not in the visible kingdom of the devil, must not be some *other* sort of faith than that which the devil has : That seeing the very design of a public profession of religion is to declare on which side we are, whether on Christ’s or the devil’s, no other faith is required to be professed, than such as Satan himself has,

and such as is not at all inconsistent with being a “willing, cursed servant and slave of the devil, and enemy to Christ;” as Mr. Williams says, all unsanctified men are.

Mr. Williams, in his reply to my argument from the epistles, p. 55, speaks of it as an unaccountable thing, that I should represent as if, according to the principles of my opposers, the primitive Christians were not admitted “under any such notion of their being **REALLY** godly persons, or with any respect to such a character :” * and yet in his discourse on the same head, he abundantly insists, that it was not **REAL** holiness, but only **FEDERAL** holiness, which was the qualification, which the apostles had reference to in admitting them; expressly from time to time, distinguishing *federal* holiness from *real*. In p. 56, and 57, “It makes it evident (says he) that this manner of treating churches and bodies of men, and such expressions used to them and of them, are to be understood in *no other sense*, than to signify **FEDERAL** holiness.” So in p. 60, he affirms the same thing once and again, distinguishing *federal* holiness from *real*. He says, “They formed no positive judgment of their **REAL** piety. And knew nothing at all about them, but only that they were **FEDERALLY** holy.” And again, “They did not make a positive judgment, that these persons were **REALLY** godly; and the high characters they gave them, and the hopes they expressed concerning them, could be understood in *no other sense* than as holding forth a **FEDERAL** holiness.” So that by this they expressed no **HOPES** concerning any thing more than their *federal* holiness, as distinguished from *real*. And he argues earnestly through the two next pages, that they could not be looked upon, many of them, as having *real* holiness. How does this consist with their being treated as *visible saints*; *under the notion of their having real holiness, and from respect to such a character appearing on them?* Or with none’s being visible saints, but such as have a credible visibility of gospel holiness?

* So in p. 132, he exclaims against me thus; “After all this, to repeat it again and again, that these persons have no visibility to reason of **REAL** saintship, &c. I think, gives better ground to retort Mr. Edwards’s words,”

So in p. 63, he speaks of the gross scandals of many of those the apostles wrote to, as an absolute proof, that they considered them only as *federally* holy ; which he in the same place distinguishes from *real* holiness. Then how were they treated (as he insists) as those that “ had the character of REAL PIETY appearing on them, and as making a credible profession of gospel holiness, and real Christianity ?” Which he abundantly allows, all must make in order to being visible saints. See also p. 64.

In p. 58, Mr. Williams insists, that it does not appear, that those who are admitted into the primitive church, “ made a declaration that they had saving faith, but ONLY that they engaged to that faith.” But how does this consist with what he abundantly says elsewhere, That they must *pretend* to real piety, *make a profession* of gospel holiness, exhibit *moral evidence*, that they have such holiness, &c ? These things are something else besides *engaging to* saving faith and gospel holiness *for the future*.



SECTION X.

The Unreasonableness and Inconsistence of Mr. Williams's Answer to my Argument from the Man without a Wedding Garment, and concerning Brotherly Love, and from 1 Cor. xi. 28, and of what he says in support of the fifteenth Objection.

MR. WILLIAMS, in answering my argument from Matth. xxii. 11, allows that the *king's house*, into which the guests came, is the visible church, p. 43, 44. So that the man's *coming in hither*, is his coming into the visible church. Nor does he at all dispute but that by the *wedding garment* is meant saving grace ; (for truly the thing is too evident to be

disputed :) And yet he says, p. 43, “ We read nothing of Christ’s condemning the man for coming into the church without saving grace.” So that Mr. Williams’s answer amounts plainly to this ; *The king, when he comes to judgment, will say, I do not at all condemn thee for coming in hither without a wedding garment : But, friend, how camest thou in hither without a wedding garment ?* And no wonder ; the case is too plain to allow of any other than such a lamentable refuge as this is. If the *wedding garment* be saving grace, which is not denied ; and if coming into the *king’s house* be coming into the visible church, as Mr. Williams owns : Then if the king condemns the man for coming into the house without a wedding garment, he condemns him for coming into the visible church without saving grace.

It is plain, the thing the man is blamed for, is something else than simply *a being without grace*, or without a wedding garment. The king’s words have respect to this as it stands in connexion with *coming into the king’s house*. If Christ has commanded men who are *not converted*, to come into the church, that they may *be converted*, he will never say to them, upon their obeying this command, “ Friend, how camest thou in hither before thou wast converted ?” Which would be another thing than blaming him simply for not being converted. If a man, at his own cost sets up a school, in order to teach ignorant children to read ; and accordingly ignorant children should go thither in order to learn to read, would he come into the school, and say in anger to an ignorant child that he found there ; “ How camest thou in hither before thou hadst learnt to read ?” Did the Apostle Paul ever rebuke the heathen, who came to hear him preach the gospel, saying, “ how came you hither to hear me preach, not having grace ?” This would have been unreasonable, because preaching is an ordinance appointed to that end, that men might obtain grace. And so in Mr. Williams’s scheme is the *Lord’s supper*. Can we suppose that Christ will say to men in indignation, at the day of judgment, “ How came you to presume to use the means I appointed for your conversion, before you were converted ?”

It is true the servants were to invite all, *both bad and good* to come to the feast, and to *compel them to come in* ; but this does not prove, that bad men, *remaining* in their badness, have a lawful right to come. The servants were to invite the vicious as well as the moral ; they were to invite the *heathen*, who were especially meant by them that were *in the high ways and hedges* : Yet it will not follow that the heathen, while remaining heathen, have a lawful right to come to Christian sacraments. But heathen men must turn from their heathenism, and come ; so likewise wicked men must turn from their wickedness, and come.

I endeavored to prove, that *that brotherly love*, which is required towards the members of the *Christian church* in general, is such a love as is required to those *only* whom we have reason to look upon as true saints. Mr. Williams disputes, through two pages (p. 66, 67) against the force of my reasoning to prove this point ; and yet when he has done, he allows the point. He allows it, p. 68, as an undisputed thing, that “it is the image of God and Christ appearing or supposed to be in others, that is the ground and reason of this love.” And so again p. 71, he grants, that “there must be some apprehension, and judgment of the mind, of the saintship of persons,” in order to this brotherly love. Indeed he pretends to differ from me in this, that he denies the need of any *positive judgment* : But doubtless the judgment or apprehension of the mind must be as positive as the love founded on that apprehension and judgment of the mind.

In p. 78, 79, he seems to insist that what the apostle calls *unworthy communicating*, is eating in a greedy, disorderly and irreverent manner : As though men might communicate without grace, and yet not communicate *unworthily*, in the apostle’s sense. But if so, the apostle differed much in his sense of things from Mr. Williams. The latter says, in his sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 77, 78, “These outward acts of worship, when not performed from faith in Christ, and love to God, are *mocking* God ; in their own nature a *lie* ; the *wildest wickedness* ; instead of being that religion, which Christ requires, it is *infinitely* contrary to it. The most *flagrant* and

abominable impiety, and threatened with the severest damnation."

Is not this a communicating *unworthily* enough of all reason !

In p. 132, 133, Mr. Williams strenuously opposes me in my supposition, that the way of freely allowing all that have only *moral sincerity* to come into the church, tends to the reproach and ruin of the church. On the contrary he seems to suppose it tends to the establishing and building up of the church. But I desire that what Mr. Stoddard says, in his sermon on the *Danger of speedy Degeneracy*, may be considered under this head. He there largely insists, that the prevailing of unconverted men, and unholy professors among a people is the principal thing that brings them into danger of *speedy degeneracy* and corruption. He says, that "where this is the case, there will be many bad examples, that will corrupt others ; and that unconverted men will indulge their children in evil, will be negligent in their education ; and that by this means their children will be very corrupt and ungoverned ;* that by this means the godly themselves that are among them, will be tainted, as sweet liquor put into a corrupt vessel will be tainted ; that thus a people will grow blind, will not much regard the warnings of the word, or the judgments of God ; and that they will grow weary of religious duties after a while ; and that many of their leading men will be carnal ; and that this will expose a people to have carnal ministers and other leading men in the town and church."

And I desire also that here may be considered what Mr. Williams himself says, in that passage forecited, p. 86, 87, of his sermons on *Christ a King and Witness* ; where, in explaining what it is to promote the kingdom of Christ, he says negatively, that "it is not to do that which may prevail on men to make pretences that they are Christians, and that

* If we have reason to expect it will be thus with ungodly parents, with respect to their children, then certainly such cannot reasonably expect ministers and churches should admit their children to baptism, in a dependance that they do *give them up to God*, and *will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, if they make no profession that implies more than moral sincerity ; and none but what wicked men may as well make as the godly, and speak true.

they own Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to *call him Lord, Lord*, when *really* he is not so." Which he supposes is the case with all unsanctified professors ; for in the same book, he abundantly declares, that they who make such pretences and have not true faith and love, make *false* and *lying* pretences ; as has been several times already observed.



SECTION XI.

The Impertinence of Arguments, that are in like manner against the schemes of both the controverting parties : And this exemplified in what Mr. Williams says concerning the notion of Israel's being the People of God, and his manner of arguing concerning the Members of the primitive Christian Church.

INASMUCH as in each of the remaining instances of Mr. Williams's arguing, that I shall take notice of, he insists upon and urges arguments, which are in like manner against his own scheme, as against mine, I desire that such a way of arguing may be a little particularly considered.

And here I would lay down this as a maxim of undoubted verity.....That an argument, brought to support one scheme against another, can avail nothing to the purpose it is brought for, if it is at the same time against the scheme it would *support*, in like manner as against that which it would *destroy*.

It is an old and approved maxim, " That argument which proves too much, proves nothing," i. e. If it proves too much for him that brings it, proves against himself in like manner as against his opponent, then it is nothing to help his cause. The reason of it is plain : The business of a dispute is to make one cause good against another, to make one scale

heavier than the other. But when a man uses an argument which takes alike out of both scales, this does not at all serve to make his side preponderate, but leaves the balance just as it was.

Arguments brought by any man in a dispute, if they are not altogether impertinent, are against the difference between him and his opponent, or against his opponent's differing from him : For wherein there is no difference, there is no dispute. But that can be no argument against his opponent's differing from him, which is only an argument against what is common to both, and taken from some difficulty that both sides equally share in. If I charge supposed absurdities or difficulties against him that differs from me, as an argument to show the unreasonableness of his differing ; and yet the difficulty is not owing to his differing from me, inasmuch as the same would lie against him, if he agreed with me, my conduct herein, is both very impertinent and injurious.

If one in a dispute insists on an argument, that lies equally against his own scheme as the other, and yet will stand to it that his argument is good, he in effect stands to it that his own scheme is not good ; he supplants himself, and gives up his own cause, in opposing his adversary ; in holding fast his argument, he holds fast what is his own overthrow ; and in insisting that his *argument* is solid and strong, he in effect insists that his own *scheme* is weak and vain. If my antagonist will insist upon it that his argument is good, that he brings against *me*, which is in like manner against *himself* ; then I may take the same argument, in my turn, and use it against him, and he can have nothing to answer ; but has stopped his own mouth, having owned the argument to be conclusive.

Now such sort of arguments as these, Mr. Williams abundantly makes use of.

For instance, the argument taken from the whole nation of Israel's being called *God's people*, and every thing that Mr. Williams alleges, pertaining to this matter, is in like manner against his own scheme as against mine : And that, let the question be what it will ; whether it be about the qualifications which make it lawful for the church to *admit*, or about the law-

fulness for persons' *coming* to sacraments ; whether it be about the *profession they should make before men*, or the *internal qualification they must have in the sight of God*. And what Mr. Williams says to the contrary, does not relieve the argument from this embarrassment and absurdity. After all he has said, in turning and twisting it, to save the force of it, the argument, if any thing related to the controversy, is plainly this, " That because the whole nation of Israel were God's *visible people* [which is the same as *visible saints*] therefore the scripture notion of *visible saintship* is of larger extent than mine ; and the scripture supposes those to be visible saints, which my scheme does not suppose to be so.

But if this be Mr. Williams's argument, then let us see whether it agrees any better with his own scheme. Mr. Blake (Mr. Williams's great author) in his book on the *Covenant*, p. 190, insists that " Israel, at the very *worst* is owned as God's covenant people, and were called God's people ;" and p. 149, that " all the congregation of Israel, and every one of them, are called holy, and God's own people, even Corah and his company." And p. 253, 254, he urges, that every one who is descended from Jacob, even the *WORST* of Israel, in their *LOWEST* state and condition, were God's people in covenant, called by the name of God's people." And Mr. Williams herein follows Mr. Blake and urges the same thing ; that this nation was God's covenant people, and were called God's people, at the time that they were carried captive into Babylon, p. 24, when they were undoubtedly *at their worst*, more corrupt than at any other time we read of in the Old Testament ; being represented by the prophets, as overrun with abominable idolatries, and other kinds of the most gross, heaven daring impieties, most obstinate, abandoned, pertinacious and irreclaimable in their rebellion against God, and against his word by his prophets. But yet these, it is urged, are called the *people of God* ; not agreeable to *my* notion of visible saintship, but agreeable to Mr. Williams's. What his notion of *visible saints* is, he tells us in p. 139. He there says expressly that he " does not suppose persons to be visible saints, unless they exhibit a credible profession and visibility of gospel ho-

liness." Now do those things said about those vile wretches in Israel agree with this? Did they exhibit moral evidence of *gospel holiness*? But if we bring the matter lower still, and say, the true notion of visible saintship is a credible appearance and moral evidence of *moral sincerity*; does this flagrant, open, abandoned, obstinate impiety, consist with moral evidence of such sincerity as that? It is as apparent therefore, in Mr. Williams's scheme as mine, that when these are called God's people, it is in some other sense than that wherein the members of the Christian church are called *visible saints*. And indeed the body of the nation of Israel, in those corrupt times, were so far from being God's church of visibly pious persons, visibly endowed with *gospel holiness*, that *that* people, as to the body of them, were visibly and openly declared by God, to be a *whore* and a *witch*, and her children *bastards*, or *children of adultery*. Isa. lvii. 3. "Draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore." We have the like in other places. And so the body of the same people in Christ's time (which Mr. Williams supposes even then to be branches of the *true olive*, in the same manner as the members of the Christian church were in the apostles' times) are visibly declared not to be God's children, or children of the true church, but bastards or an adulterous brood. Matth. xii. 39. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. V. 45, Even so shall it be with this wicked generation." And certainly the people were then, visibly and in the eyes of men, such as Christ had visibly and openly and in the sight of men declared them to be.

If the question be not concerning the *visibility* which makes it *lawful for others to admit persons*, but concerning the *qualifications which render it lawful for them to come*, still the objection is no more against *my* scheme, than against Mr. Williams's. He, in page 84, 85 and 86, says, that "such openly scandalous persons ought not to be admitted into the church;" insinuating, that these scandalous people among the Jews were otherwise when they were admitted at first: But that being taken in, and not cast out again, *it was lawful for them to be there*, and they had a lawful right to the privi-

leges of the church. But this supposition, that all that are lawfully admitted by others, may lawfully come into the church, and lawfully continue to partake of its privileges *till cast out*, is utterly inconsistent with Mr. Williams's own scheme. For according to his scheme, it is not lawful for men that are not *morally sincere*, to partake of the privileges of the church ; but yet such may, in some cases, be lawfully admitted by others ; for he maintains, that in admitting them, they are not to act as *searchers of hearts*, even with regard to their moral sincerity ; and so argues, p. 106, That Christ might give Judas the sacrament, when not morally sincere. If Christ, as head of the visible church might admit Judas to his table, when he knew he was not morally sincere, and when it was not lawful for Judas himself to come ; then it is lawful for men to admit some, for whom it is not lawful to be there ; contrary to Mr. Williams's assertion in p. 86.

It is true, that persons may become grossly scandalous, after having been regularly admitted on Mr. Williams's principles, on a profession in words of indiscriminate signification. And so they may, after being regularly admitted, according to my principles, on a credible profession of gospel holiness in words of a determinate meaning : And therefore, the gross wickedness of such apostates as we read of in scripture, is no more an objection against my principles, than his.

Just in the same manner is Mr. Williams's arguing, p. 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, concerning the members of churches mentioned in the epistles, equally against his own scheme and mine. He largely insists upon it, that the apostle speaks of many of them as grossly scandalous, notoriously wicked persons, idolaters, hereticks, fornicators, adulterers, adulteresses, &c. &c. In his arguing from these things, he is inconsistent with his own principles, two ways. (1.) Such a character is as plainly inconsistent with the character he insists on as necessary to render it lawful for persons to come to sacraments, as mine. And (2.) it is utterly inconsistent with what he often declares to be his notion of visible saintship, necessary to a being admitted by others ; so no more an argument against my opinion of visible saintship, than his own.

SECTION XII.

*The great Argument from the Jewish Sacraments,
of the Passover and Circumcision, considered.*

AS has been observed concerning the argument from the Jewish nation, so the argument from the Jewish ordinances, if it be against my scheme, is as plainly, in every respect, against Mr. Williams's.

This grand argument, as plainly expressed, or implied in Mr. Stoddard's words (which Mr. Williams insists I should attend to) is this :

God did expressly command all the nation of Israel to be *circumcised* ; and he also expressly commanded the whole nation to come to the *passover* ; excepting such as were ceremonially unclean, or in a journey. Therefore it was lawful for unsanctified men to come. (See Mr. Stoddard's sermon on the *Controv.* p. 8, and *Appeal*, p. 51.) The want of sanctification never was alleged by any man as a reason for forbearing the passover. *Appeal*, p. 51. Unsanctified persons' attending this ordinance is never charged on them as a sin in scripture. *Ibid.* Jesus Christ himself partook of the passover with Judas ; which proves it to be lawful for unsanctified men to come to the passover. But such as might lawfully come to the passover, may lawfully come to the Lord's supper.

Now let us consider what are the qualifications, which are necessary, according to Mr. Williams's scheme, to a lawful coming to Christian sacraments ; and then see whether this objection, in every part of it, and every thing that belongs to it, be not as plainly and directly against his own scheme, as mine.

According to Mr. Williams, it is not lawful for a man to come, unless he is *morally sincere*. *Pref.* p. 2, 3, 21, 25, 30, 35, 36, 111, 115. And, according as he has explained that moral sincerity, which is necessary in order to come to sacra-

ments, it implies "a real conviction of the judgment and conscience of the truth of the great things of religion....a deep conviction of a man's undone state without Christ, and an earnest concern to obtain salvation by him....a fervent desire of Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace, with an earnest purpose and resolution to seek salvation on the terms of it ; a man's being willing to do the utmost that he can, by the utmost improvement of his natural and moral power, in the most earnest and diligent use of the ordinances of salvation ; being resolved for Christ, coming to a point, being engaged for heaven ; having a settled determination of the the judgment and affections for God ; giving up all his heart and life to Christ, &c. &c."* Such moral sincerity as this is necessary, according to Mr. Williams, to be found in professing Christians, in order to their lawful coming to Christian sacraments. And he says they are received into the church, "on like terms, by entering into covenant in like manner, as the Jews ; and that their holiness, both real and federal, is the same with theirs. P. 56, 57, 61, 65. So that according to this scheme, none but those that had such qualifications as these, such a sincerity and engagedness in religion as this, might lawfully come to the passover. But now do the things alleged agree any better with this his scheme, than with mine ? If the case be so, to what purpose is it alleged, that God, in Numb. chap. ix. expressly commanded all of that perverse, rebellious and obstinate generation in the wilderness, and the whole nation of Israel, in all generations, to keep the *passover*, excepting such as were ceremonially unclean or in a journey, without the exception of any other ? Was every one else of such a character as is above described ? Was every one under deep convictions, and persons of such earnest engagedness in religion, of such settled, strong resolution to give up their utmost strength and all their heart and life to God, &c. ? Mr. Williams suggests, that "those who had not moral sincerity are expressly excepted from the command," p. 93. But I wish he had mentioned the place of

* P. 10, 11, 30, 31, 35, 36, 53, 83, 125, and many other places.

scripture. He cites Mr. Stoddard, who says, "God appointed sacrifice to be offered for scandal, with confession." But where did God appoint sacrifice for the *want* of such sincerity, for the *want* of such deep conviction, earnest desire, and fixed resolution, as Mr. Williams speaks of? And where are such as are without these things *expressly excepted* from the command to keep the passover? And besides there were many scandalous sins, for which *no sacrifice* was appointed: As David's murder and adultery, and the sin of idolatry, (which the nation in general often fell into) and many other gross sins. Nor was there any precept for *deferring* the keeping of the passover, in case of scandalous wickedness, or moral uncleanness, until there should be opportunity for cleansing by *sacrifice*, &c. as was in the case of ceremonial uncleanness.

Mr. Stoddard says, "The want of sanctification was never alleged by any man as a reason for forbearing the passover. So, where do we read in any part of the Bible, that ever the *want* of such deep conviction, &c. as Mr. Williams speaks of, or indeed any scandalous moral uncleanness, was ever alleged by any man as a reason for forbearing to eat the passover? Mr. Stoddard urges that unsanctified persons attending the passover was never charged on them as a *sin*. And where do we read of persons' coming without such *moral sincerity* being any more charged on them as a *sin*, than the other? We have reason to think, it was a common thing for parents that had no such moral sincerity, yea, that were grossly and openly wicked, to have their children *circumcised*; for the body of the people were often so: But where is this charged as a *sin*? Mr. Stoddard says, (Serm. p. 7.) Ishmael was circumcised, but yet a carnal person. And there is as much reason to say, he was *not* of the character Mr. Williams insists on, "under deep convictions, having earnest desires of grace, a full and fixed determination, with all his heart, to the utmost of his power, to give his whole life to God, &c." Mr. Stoddard says, (Serm. p. 8) Hezekiah sent to invite the people of Ephraim and Manasseh, and other tribes, to celebrate the passover, though they had lived in idolatry for some

ages." But if so, this was as much of an evidence, that they were not of such a character as Mr. Williams insists on, as that they were without sanctifying grace. Mr. Williams says, p. 91, "The Israelites had carefully attended the seal of circumcision, from the time of its institution, till the departure out of Egypt." But surely most of them at the same time were without Mr. Williams's moral sincerity ; for it is abundantly manifest, that the body of the people fell away to Idolatry in Egypt. See Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8, and xxiii. 5, 8, 27. And there is not the least appearance of any more *exception*, either in the precepts or history of the Old Testament, of the case of *moral insincerity*, in such as attended these ordinances, than of ungodliness, or an unsanctified state.

Mr. Stoddard urges that "Jesus Christ himself partook of the passover, with Judas ;" and thence he would argue that it was lawful for an *unregenerate* person to partake of the Lord's supper. But there can be no argument, in any sort, drawn from this to prove that it is lawful for men to partake of the Lord's supper without *sanctifying grace*, any more than that it is lawful for them to partake without *moral sincerity* : For it is every whit as evident, that Judas was at that time without moral sincerity, as that he was unregenerate. We have no greater evidence, in all the scripture history, of the moral insincerity of any one man than of Judas, at the time when he partook of the passover with Christ ; he having just then been and bargained with the high priest, to *betray* him, and being then in prosecution of the horrid design of the murder of the Son of God.

If any thing contrary to my principles could be argued from all Israel's being required, throughout their generations, to come to the *passover* and *circumcision*, it would be this ; that all persons, of all sorts, throughout all Christendom, might lawfully come to *baptism* and the *Lord's supper* ; godly and ungodly, the knowing and the ignorant, the moral and the vicious, orthodox and heretical, Protestants and Papists alike. But this does not agree with Mr. Williams's principles, any better than with mine.

SECTION XIII.

Concerning Judas's partaking of the Lord's Supper.

I THINK, we have a remarkable instance of tergiversation, in what Mr. Williams says in support of the argument from Judas's partaking of the Lord's supper. By those on his side of the question, it is insisted upon, as a clear evidence of its being lawful for unsanctified men to come to the Lord's table, that Christ gave the Lord's supper to Judas, when he knew he was unsanctified. In answer to which, I shewed, that this is just as much against their own principles, as mine; because Christ knew as perfectly that he was not *morally sincere*, as that he was not *graciously sincere*; and they themselves hold, that it is not lawful for such as are not *morally sincere*, to partake. Mr. Williams ridicules this, as very *impertinent and strange*; because "Christ did not know this as head of the visible church, but only as omniscient God and searcher of hearts." And what does this argue? Only, that although Judas was really not fit to come, yet, inasmuch as Christ, acting as king of the visible church, did not know it, *he might admit him*: But not that it was *lawful for Judas himself to come*, who knew his own heart in this matter, and knew his own perfidiousness and treachery; for Mr Williams denies, that it is lawful for such to come, as have no moral sincerity. So that here the question is changed, from "Who may lawfully come," to "Who may lawfully be admitted?" Mr. Williams does abundantly, in his book, insist that the question is not, "who shall be admitted; but who may lawfully come?" Not, whether it be lawful to admit those who have not a visibility of saintship, or do not appear to be true saints? But whether those who are not true saints, may lawfully partake? And this he insists upon in his discourse on this very argument, p. 104. And to prove this latter point, viz. that "those who are not real saints, may lawfully come," the instance of Judas's coming to the Lord's sup-

per is produced as an undeniable evidence. But when it is answered, that the argument does not prove this, any more than that the morally insincere may lawfully come ; because Judas was morally insincere : Then Mr. Williams, p. 106, to shelter himself, dodges, and evidently changes the question, at once, to that which he had so much exclaimed against as *not the question*. Now, to serve his turn, the question is not whether *Judas might lawfully come ?* But, whether *Christ might lawfully admit him*, acting on a public visibility ? And he makes an occasion to cry out of me, as talking *strangely*, and soon forgetting that I had said, Christ, in this matter, did not act as searcher of hearts. Whereas, let the question be what it will, the argument from Judas's partaking (should the fact be supposed) if it proves any thing relating to the matter, is perfectly and in every respect, against the one, just as it is against the other. If the question be about *profession* and *visibility* to others, and whom others may *lawfully admit*, then Judas's being admitted (if he was admitted) no more proves that men may be admitted without a visibility and profession of godliness, than without a visibility of moral sincerity. For it no more appears, that he was without a profession and visibility of the former, than of the latter. But if the question is not about *visibility to others*, or who others may *admit*, but who may *lawfully come*, then Judas's coming no more proves, that a man may come without grace, than without moral sincerity ; because he was in like manner without both : And Christ *knew* as perfectly, that he was without the one, as the other ; and was not ignorant of the one case, as king of the visible church any more than of the other. So that there is no way to support this argument, or to make any thing at all of it ; but the only way left is, to hide the question, by shifting and changing it ; to have one question in the premises, and to slip in another into the conclusion. Which is according to the course Mr. Williams takes. In the premises, p. 104, 105, he expressly mentions Mr. Stoddard's question, as now in view ; and agreeably must here have this for his question, " whether it was lawful for a man so qualified to come to the Lord's supper ? " Who, according to Mr. Williams's own doctrine,

p. 111, ought to act as a discerner of his own heart. But in his conclusion, p. 106. he has this for his question, "Whether Christ might lawfully ADMIT a man so qualified," therein not acting as the searcher of hearts ?.....What shuffling is this ?



SECTION XIV.

Concerning that great Argument, which Mr. Williams urges in various parts of his Book, of those being born in the Church, who are Children of Parents that are in Covenant.

IT is hard to understand distinctly what Mr. Williams would be at, concerning this matter, or what his argument is. He often speaks of parents that are in covenant, as *born in covenant*, and so *born in the church*. (For to be in covenant, is the same, with him as to be members of the visible church. See p. 98, 88, 89, 59, 60, 136.) And speaks of them as admitted into the church in their *ancestors*, and by the *profession* of their ancestors, p. 135, 136. Yea, for ought I can see, he holds that they were *born members in COMPLETE STANDING in the visible church*, p. 3.

And yet he abundantly speaks of their being ADMITTED into the church, and MADE members, after they are born, viz. by their baptism. And his words (unless we will suppose him to speak nonsense) are such as will not allow us to understand him, merely, that baptism is a *sign and public acknowledgment* of their having been admitted in their ancestors, in preceding generations. For he speaks of baptism as "the ONLY rite (or way) of admission into the visible church," applying it to the baptism of children ; and as that which "MAKES them members of the body of Christ," p. 99. And he grants, that "it was ordained for the ADMISSION of the party baptized into the visible church," p. 99, 100. That "bap-

tism is an admission ; and that they were thus before admitted," p. 100, still speaking of the baptism of infants, and of admission of members into churches. But surely these things do not harmonize with the doctrine of their first receiving being in the church (as a branch receives being in the tree, and grows in it and from it) or their being *born in the covenant, born in the house of God*. And yet these repugnant things are uttered as it were in the same breath by Mr. Williams, p. 99. And he joins them together in the same line, p. 46, in these words : " Baptism instituted by him, as a rite of ADMIS-
SION into his church, and being CONTINUED in covenant with God." Certainly a being then *admitted* into the church, and a being *continued* in covenant (or in the church) into which they were admitted *before*, are not the same thing, nor consistent one with another. If infants are born members in *complete standing*, as it seems Mr. Williams holds, then their baptism does nothing towards *making* them members ; nor is there any need of it to make the matter more *complete*.

Again in p. 3, (the same page where he speaks of infants as members having a complete standing in the church) he maintains, that nothing else is requisite in order to " com-
munion and privileges of members in complete standing, but only that they should be capable hereof, and should desire the same, and should not be under censure, or scandalously ignorant or immoral." See also p. 100, to the same purpose. Mr. Williams says this in opposition to my insisting on something further, viz. making a profession of godliness. And yet he himself insists on something further, as much as I ; which has been observed before. For he abundantly insists on a *personal, explicit profession and open declaration* of believing that the gospel is indeed the revelation of God, and of a hearty consent to the terms of the covenant of grace, &c. And speaks of the whole controversy as turning upon that single point, of the degree of evidence to be given, and the kind of profession to be made, whether in words of indiscriminate meaning ? See p. 5, 6. And consequently not, whether they must make any profession at all, having been completely admitted before, in the profession of their ancestors ?

Therefore, if it be so, that the infants of visible believers are born in the church, and are already members in complete standing, and do not drop out of the church, and fall from a complete standing, when they grow up ; and therefore if they are not ignorant nor immoral, and desire full communion, *nothing else* can be required of them : And it will hence follow, contrary to *my* principles, that they cannot be required to make a profession in words of *discriminate* meaning : But then, it also equally follows, contrary to *his* principles, that neither can they be required to make a profession in words of *indiscriminate* meaning. If nothing else besides those fore-mentioned things is necessary, then *no profession* is necessary, in any words at all, neither of determinate nor indeterminate signification. So that Mr. Williams, in supposing some personal profession to be necessary, gives up and destroys this his grand argument.

But if he did not give it up by this means, it would not be tenable on other principles belonging to *his* scheme ; such as its being necessary in order to a being admitted to sacraments, that persons should have a visibility that recommends them to the reasonable judgment and apprehension of the minds of others, as true Christians, really pious persons, and that there should be such a profession as exhibits moral evidence of this. For who will say, that the individual profession of an ancestor, a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, is a credible exhibition and moral evidence of the real piety of his present posterity, without any personal, explicit profession of any thing about religion, in any one of the succeeding generations ? And if Mr. Williams had not said, there must be a credible exhibition of *gospel holiness*, but only some common faith or virtue ; yet no such thing is made visible to a rational judgment and apprehension of mind, by this means. How, for instance, does it make *orthodoxy* visible ? What reasonable ground is there in it, at such a day as this in England, to believe concerning any man, that he believes the doctrine of the Trinity, and all other fundamental doctrines, with full conviction, and with all his heart, because he descended from an ancestor that made a good profession, when the an-

cient Britons or Saxons were converted from heathenism, and because withal he is free from open, scandalous immorality, and appears willing to attend duties of public worship ! If an attendance on these public duties was in its own nature a profession of orthodoxy, or even piety ; yet the reason of mankind teaches them the need of joining *words and actions* together in public manifestations of the mind, in cases of importance : *Speech* being the great and peculiar talent, which God has given to mankind, as the special means and instrument of the manifestation of their minds one to another. Thus treaties of peace among men are not concluded and finished with actions only, without words. Feasting together was used of old, as a testimony of peace and covenant friendship ; as between Isaac and Abimelech, Laban and Jacob, but not without a verbal profession. Giving the hand, delivering the ring, &c. are to express a marriage agreement and union ; but still a profession in words is annexed. So we allow it to be needful, after persons have fallen into scandal, that in manifesting repentance there should be a verbal profession, besides attending duties of worship. Earthly princes will not trust a profession of allegiance, in actions only, such as bowing, kneeling, keeping the king's birth day, &c. but they require also a profession in words, and an oath of allegiance is demanded. Yea, it is thought to be reasonably demanded, in order to men's coming to the actual possession and enjoyment of those privileges, they are *born heirs to*. Thus, the eldest sons of noblemen in Great Britain, are born heirs to the honors and estate of their fathers ; yet this no way hinders but they may be obliged when they come to ripeness of age, in order to a being invested in the actual possession, to take the oath of allegiance : Though in order to their lawfully doing it, it may be necessary they should believe in their hearts, that king George is the lawful prince, and that they should not be enemies to him, and friends to the pretender, in their hearts.

But moreover, if this objection of Mr. Williams about infants being born in the church be well considered, it will appear to be all *beside the question*, and so nothing to the pur-

pose. It is not to the purpose of either of the questions, Mr. Williams's or mine. The question as I have stated it, is concerning them that may be *admitted* members in complete standing; not about them that have a complete standing in the church *already*, and so are no candidates for admission; which he says is the case of these infants. And the question as *he* often states it, is concerning them that may *lawfully come*: And this objection, from infants' being *born in the church*, as it must be understood from Mr. Williams, does not touch this question. For when Mr. Williams objects, that some persons are born in the church, and therefore may lawfully come to sacraments, he cannot be understood to mean, that their being *born* in the church *alone* is sufficient; but that, besides this, persons must have some virtue or religion, of one sort or other in order to their lawful coming. For he is full in it, that it is not lawful for men to come without moral virtue and sincerity. Therefore the question comes to this in the result: Seeing persons, besides their being born in covenant, must have some sort of virtue and religion in order to a lawful coming to the Lord's Supper, *What sort* of virtue and religion *that is*, whether *common* or *saving*? Now this question is not touched by the present objection. Merely persons' being *born* in covenant, is no more evidence of their having moral sincerity, than saving grace. Yea, there is more reason to suppose the latter, than the former without it, in the infant children of believing parents. For the scripture gives us ground to think, that some infants have the habit of saving grace, and that they have a new nature given them; but no reason at all to think, that ever God works any mere moral change in them, or infuses any habits of moral virtue without saving grace: And we know, they cannot come by moral habits in infancy, any other way than by immediate infusion: They cannot obtain them by human instruction, nor contract them by use and custom. And especially there is no reason to think, that the children of such as are visible saints, according to Mr. Williams's scheme, have any goodness infused into them by God, of any kind. For in his scheme, all that are morally sincere may lawfully receive the privileges

of visible saints : But we have no scripture grounds to suppose, that God will bless the children of such parents as have nothing more than moral sincerity, with either common or saving grace. There are no promises of the covenant of grace made to such parents, either concerning themselves or their children. The covenant of grace is a conditional covenant ; as both sides in this controversy suppose : And therefore, by the supposition, men have no title to the promises without the condition. And as saving faith is the condition, the promises are all made to *that*, both those which respect persons themselves, and those that respect their seed. As it is with many covenants or bargains among men ; by these, men are often entitled to possessions for themselves and their heirs : Yet they are entitled to no benefits of the bargain, neither for themselves, nor their children, but by complying with the terms of the bargain. So with respect to the covenant of grace, the apostle says, Acts ii. 39. “ The promise is to you and to your children.” So the apostle says to the jailer, Acts xvi. 31. “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” And we find many promises, all over the Bible, made to the righteous that God will bless their seed for their sakes. Thus, Psal. cxii. 2. “ The generation of the upright shall be blessed.” Psal. lxxix. 35, 36. “ For God will save Zion : The seed also of his servants shall inherit it ; and they that love his name shall dwell therein.” See also Prov. xiv. 26. Psal. ciii. 17, 18. cii. 28. Exod. xx. 5, 6. Deut. vii. 9. Supposing these to be what are called indefinite promises ; yet do they extend to any but the *seed of the righteous* ? Where are any such promises made to the children of unsanctified men, the enemies of God, and slaves to the devil (as Mr. Williams owns all unsanctified men are) whatever moral sincerity, and common religion they may have ?

The baptism of infants is the seal of these promises made to the seed of the righteous : And on these principles, some rational account may be given of infant baptism ; but no account can be given of it on Mr. Williams’s scheme, no warrant can be found for it in scripture ; for they are *promises* that are the warrant for *privileges* : But there are no promis-

es of God's word to the seed of morally sincere men, and only half Christians.

Thus this argument of Mr. Williams's, let us take it which way we will, has nothing but what is as much, yea, much more, against his scheme, than against mine.

However, if this were not the case, but all the shew or pretence of strength there is in the argument, lay directly and only against *me*, yet the strength of it, if tried, will avail to prove nothing. The pretended argument, so far as I can find out what it is, is this : *The children of visible saints are born in covenant ; and being already in covenant, they must have a right to the privileges of the covenant, without any more ado : Such therefore have a right to come to the Lord's supper, whether they are truly godly, or not.*

But the shew of argument there is here, depends on the ambiguity of the phrase, *being in covenant* : Which signifies two distinct things : Either (1.) *Being under the obligations and bonds of the covenant ;* or (2.) *A being conformed to the covenant, and complying with the terms of it.* A being the subject of the obligations and engagements of the covenant, is a thing quite distinct from a being conformed to these obligations, and so being the subject of the condition of the covenant.

Now it is not a being in covenant in the former, but the latter sense, that gives a right to the privileges of the covenant. The reason is plain, because it is compliance and conformity to the terms of a covenant, that is the thing which gives right to all the benefits ; and not merely a being under ties to that compliance and conformity. Privileges are not annexed merely to obligations, but to compliance with obligations.

Many that do not so much as visibly comply with the conditions of the covenant, are some of God's covenant people in *that* sense, that they are under the bonds and engagements of the covenant ; so were Corah and his company ; so were many gross Idolaters in Israel, that lived openly in that sin ; and so may heretics, deists, and atheists be God's covenant people ; they may still be held under the bonds of their covenant engagements to God ; for their great wickedness and apostasy

sy do not free them from the obligation of the solemn promises and engagements they formerly entered into. But yet a being in covenant, merely in this sense, gives them no right to any privileges of the covenant. In order to that, they must be in covenant in another sense ; they must cordially consent to the covenant : Which indeed Mr. Williams himself owns, when he acknowledges, that in order to come to sacraments, men must profess a cordial consent to, and compliance with the conditions of the covenant of grace.* And if Mr. Williams inquires, why those children that were born in the covenant are not *cast out*, when in adult age they make no such profession ; certainly it as much concerns *him* to answer, as me ; for it is as much his doctrine, as mine, that they must profess such consent. But I am willing to answer nevertheless. They are not cast out because it is a matter held in suspense, whether they do cordially consent to the covenant, or not ; or whether their making no such profession does not arise from some other cause. And none are to be excommunicated, without some positive evidence against them. And therefore they are left in the state they were in, in infancy, not admitted actually to partake of the Lord's supper (which actual participation is a new positive privilege) for want of a profession, or some evidence, beyond what is merely negative, to make it visible that they do consent to the covenant. For it is reasonable to expect some appearance more than what is negative, of a proper qualification, in order to being admitted to a privilege beyond what they have hitherto actually received. A negative charity may be sufficient for a negative privilege, such as freedom from censure and punishment ; but something more than a negative charity, is needful to actual admission to a new positive privilege.

* If it be said here, those who have been born of baptized ancestors, though they do not comply with the terms of the covenant, are in covenant, in this sense, that they have a right to the promises of the covenant *conditionally*, in case they will hereafter comply : I answer, so are all mankind in covenant. God may be said to have bound himself conditionally to them all ; and many have these promises declared to them, that still remain Jews, Mahometans, or Heathens.

SECTION XV.

A particular Examination of Mr. Williams's Defence of the 9th Objection, or that boasted Argument, that if it be not lawful for unconverted Men to come to the Lord's Supper, then none may come but they that know themselves to be converted.

THIS argument has been greatly gloried in, as altogether invincible. Mr. Williams seems to have been alarmed, and his spirits raised to no small degree of warmth at the pretence of an answer to it : And he uses many big words, and strong expressions in his reply ; such as, “ It is absolutely certain.... It is beyond my power to comprehend, and I believe beyond the power of any man to tell me....This I assert and stand toAs plain as the sun....A contradiction of the Bible, of the light of nature, and of the common sense of mankind,” &c. &c. But let us get away from the noise of a torrent, and bring this matter to the test of calm reasoning, and examine it to the very bottom.

Here let it be considered, wherein precisely the argument consists.....If it has any strength in it, it consists in this proposition, viz. *That it is not lawful for men to come to sacraments, without a known right.* This is the proposition Mr. Stoddard himself reduces the argument to, in his *Appeal*, p. 62, 63. And it is very evident, that the whole strength of the argument rests on the supposed truth of this proposition.

And here let it be noted, what sort of *knowledge* of a right Mr. Stoddard, and so Mr. Williams, means in this argument. It is *knowledge* as distinguished from such an *opinion*, or *hope*, as is *founded in probability*. Thus Mr. Stoddard expressly insists, that a man must not only *think* he has a right, but he must *know* it. *Appeal*, p. 62. And again, p. 63, he says, *probable hopes will not warrant him to come.*

Mr. Williams uses many peremptory, strong expressions, p. 109, to set forth the certainty of that which never was denied; viz. *That a man cannot know he has a right, unless he knows he has the qualification which gives him a right.* But this is not the thing in question: The point is, *whether a man may not have a lawful right, or may not lawfully come, and yet not know his right, with such a knowledge and evidence as is beyond probability?* This is the thing asserted, and herein lies the argument. And the negative of this cannot be stood to and maintained, in order to maintain Mr. Williams's scheme, without the grossest absurdity; it being a position, which, according to scripture, reason, and Mr. Stoddard's doctrine, and Mr. Williams's own, effectually destroys his scheme.

To this purpose, I observed, If this proposition be true, that no man may come, save he which not only thinks, but *knows* he has a right, then it will follow, that no unconverted person may come, unless he *knows* that doctrine to be true, *that unconverted men may have a right.* Because an unconverted man cannot know that one in particular (viz. he himself) who is an unconverted man, has a right, unless he knows that doctrine which Mr. Stoddard maintained, to be true, viz. that men may have a right, though they are unconverted. And consequently no one unconverted man may lawfully come to the Lord's supper, unless he is so knowing in this point of controversy, as not only to think, and have probable evidence, that this opinion is right, but *knows* it to be so. Mr. Williams endeavors to help the matter by a distinction of different kinds of knowledge: And by the help of this distinction would make it out, that common people in general, and even boys and girls of sixteen years old, may with ease know, that his doctrine about unsanctified men's lawfully coming to the Lord's supper, is true. And we must understand him (as he is defending Mr. Stoddard's argument) that they may know it with that evidence that is distinguished from probability; and this, according to Mr. Williams himself, is *certainty*; which he speaks of as above *a thousand probabilities.* See p. 118. But how miserable is this? To pretend that his doctrine about qualifications for sacraments, is so far from a disputable point,

that it is of such plain and obvious evidence, to common people and even children, that without being studied in divinity, they may not only *think* it to be *exceeding probable*, but *know* it to be *true* ! When it is an undeniable fact, that multitudes of the greatest ability and piety, that have spent their lives in the study of the holy scriptures, have never so much as *thought so*.

Again, I observed that according to Mr. Stoddard's doctrine, *not one*, unconverted man in the world can *know* that he has *warrant* to come to the Lord's supper ; because, if he has any warrant, God has given him warrant in the *scriptures* : And therefore if any unconverted man, not only *thinks*, but *knows*, that he has warrant from God, he must of consequence not only *think*, but *know* the scriptures to be the word of God. Whereas it was the constant doctrine of Mr. Stoddard, that no unconverted man *knows* the scriptures to be the word of God.* But Mr. Williams would make it out, that Mr. Stoddard did hold, unconverted men might *know* the scriptures to be the word of God ; but only not know it with " a gracious knowledge, such as effectually bowed men's hearts, and influenced them to a gracious obedience," p. 113. But let us see whether it was so, or not. Mr. Stoddard in his *Nature of saving Conversion*, p. 73, says, " The carnal man is *ignorant* of the divine authority of the word of God ;....his wound is, that he *does not know certainly* the divine authority of these institutions ; he *does not know* but they are the inventions of men." Again, *Ibid.* p. 74, he says, " The carnal man is *uncertain* of those things that are the foundation of his reasonings. He thinks there is a *great probability* of the truth of these things ; but he has *no assurance*. His principles are grounded on an *uncertain* proposition." And he observes,

* I did not say, that it was also a doctrine according to scripture ; for there was no occasion for this, among those with whom I had chiefly to do in this controversy ; with whom I knew it was a point as much settled and uncontroverted, as any doctrine of Mr. Stoddard whatever. And I knew it to be the current doctrine of orthodox divines ; who ever allow this doctrine to be implied in such texts as those, John xvii. 7. 1 John iv. 15, 16. Chap. v. 2, 10, and many other places.

p. 20, "Men when converted, do not look on it as *probable*, that the word is his word, *as they did before* ; but they *have assurance of the truth of it*."...So elsewhere, (*Guide to Christ*, p. 26.) "They that have not grace, *do not properly believe* the word of God." And in another book, (*Safety of Aft.* p. 6) "The gospel always works effectually where it is *believed, and received as the truth of God*." In another book (*Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 149) "Common illumination *does not convince men of the truth of the gospel*." In his discourse on the *Virtue of Christ's Blood*, p. 27, speaking of such as have no interest in the blood of Christ, he says, "They are *strangers* to the divine authority of the word of God." Again, (*Ibid.* p. 16.) "Before, [i. e. before saving faith] they were *at a loss* whether the word was the word of God." To the like purpose are many other passages in his writings. (See *Nat. of Sav. Conv.* p. 72, *Safety of Aft.* p. 6, 7, 99, 107, 186, 187, 229.....*Benef. of the Gosp.* p. 89.)

So that here, if it be true, that some unconverted men have a divine warrant to come to the Lord's supper ; and if the thing which is the foundation of this argument, be also true, viz. that in order to men's warrantably coming to the Lord's supper, they must not only *think*, but *know* they have a right ; then it must be true likewise, that they not only *think*, but *know*, that the scripture, wherein this warrant is supposed to be delivered, is the word of God. And then we have the following propositions to make hang together : That unconverted men are *ignorant of the scripture's being the word of God, are uncertain of it, have no assurance of it, are not convinced of it, do not properly believe it, are at a loss whether it be the word of God or not* ; and yet they not only *think*, but *know*, that the scriptures are the word of God, and that the Gospel, which is the charter of all Christian privileges, is *divine* ; they have a *knowledge of it which is above all probable hope or thought, and attended with evidence above a thousand probabilities*.

And now let it be considered, whether this agrees better with Mr. Williams's own doctrine, concerning men's knowing the truth and divine authority of the gospel, in what has been before cited from his sermons on *Christ a King and Wi-*

ness. Where he expressly says, "That man since the fall, is ignorant of divine truth, and full of prejudices against it ; has a view of the truth contained in the Bible, as a doubtful, uncertain thing ; receives it as what is probably true ; sees it as a probable scheme, and something likely to answer the end proposed : But that *after conversion* it appears divinely true and real. See p. 114, 115 and 144. Then unconverted men only looked on the truth of the word of God, as *probable, something likely*, yet as a *doubtful, uncertain thing* ; but now they not only think, but know it to be true.

No distinction about the different kinds of knowledge, or the various ways of knowing, will ever help these absurdities, or reconcile such inconsistencies. If there be any such sort of *knowing*, as is contradistinguished to probable *thinking*, and to such opinion as is built on a *thousand probabilities*, which is yet consistent with being *ignorant, not believing, being uncertain, not assured, not convinced, only looking on a thing probable, looking on it doubtful and uncertain*, it must certainly be a new and very strange sort of knowledge.

But this argument, that is so clear and invincible, must have such supports as these, or must quite sink to the earth. It is indeed a remarkable kind of argument. It is not only as much against the scheme it is brought to support, as against that which it would confute ; but abundantly more so. For if it were the case in truth, that none might come to the Lord's supper, but they that *know* they have a right, yet it would be no direct and proper proof, that *unconverted* men might come. It would indeed prove, that many *godly* men might *not* come : Which, it is true, would bring some difficulty on the scheme *opposed* ; yet it would be no proof against it. But it is direct and perfect demonstration against the scheme it would *support* : It demonstrates according to the scripture, and according to the doctrine of those that urge the argument, that not one unconverted man in the world may lawfully come to the Lord's supper ; as no one of them certainly *knows* the gospel to be divine, and so no one *knows* the charter to be authentic, in which alone the right of any to Christian privileges is conveyed ; hence no one unsanctified

man is *sure* of his right ; and therefore (as they draw the consequence, no one unsanctified man may come to the Lord's supper. And so it follows, that the more strongly Mr. Williams stands to this argument, the more peremptory and confident his expressions are concerning it, the more violently and effectually does he supplant himself.

And this position, *that a man must not take any privilege, till he not only thinks, but knows he has a right*, is not only unreasonable, as used by Mr. Williams against me, when indeed it is ten times as much against himself ; but it is unreasonable in itself, as it is an argument, which if allowed and pursued, will prove that a man may do nothing at all, never move hand or foot, for his own advantage, unless he first, not only *thinks*, but *knows*, it is his duty. Mr. Williams himself owns, p. 116. that all the duties, which God requires of us in his instituted worship, are *privileges*, as well as the Lord's supper : And so is every other duty, which we are to do for our own benefit. But all human actions are, upon the whole, either *good* or *evil* : Every thing that we do as rational creatures, is either a duty, or a sin ; and the neglect of every thing that is our duty, is forbidden. So that we must never so much as take a step, or move a finger, upon only a probable judgment and hope ; but must first *know* it to be our duty, before we do it : Nay, we must neither move, nor voluntarily forbear to move, without a *certainty* of our duty in the case, one way or other !

As to its being *alike difficult* for men to know or be assured of their moral sincerity, as of their real sanctification, I shall speak to that under the next head ; whereby it will appear again, another way, that this argument is vastly more against Mr. Williams's scheme, than mine.

SECTION XVI.

A Consideration of Mr. Williams's Defence of the Tenth Objection, against the Doctrine of the unlawfulness of unsanctified Men's coming to the Lord's Supper, that it tends to the great Perplexity and Torment of many godly Men in their Attendance on this Ordinance.

MY *first* reply to this objection was, that it is for want of like tenderness of conscience, that the other doctrine which insists on *moral sincerity*, does not naturally bring such as are received on those principles, into as great *perplexities*.....Mr. Williams in his animadversion upon it says, " This is an assertion which I take to be contrary to common sense, and the experience of mankind ; and the allowing of it to be true, must overthrow the law of nature, and cast infinite reproach upon the Author of it."

These are strong expressions ; but let us bring the matter to the test of reason. The necessary qualification, on Mr. Williams's principles, is moral sincerity, and a *certain degree* of moral sincerity. For there is scarcely any man, that lives under the light of the gospel, and is not an atheist or deist, but what has *some degree* of moral sincerity, in some things pertaining to Christianity and his duty ; some degree of common faith, some degree of conviction of the need of Christ, some desire of him, and moral willingness, though from selfish considerations, to be good ; and some purpose to endeavor a conformity to the covenant of Grace, and to seek salvation on the terms of it. But how shall a man know what is a *sufficient degree* of these things ? Mr. Williams has determined the matter thus : That his belief of the doctrine of the gospel, and moral willingness to be conformed to the covenant of grace, must be *with his whole heart*, p. 49, 5, 36. And that his conviction of his undone state without Christ

must be *deep* ; and his desire of Christ and his benefits *fervent*, and his purpose *earnest*, p. 75, 11, so as to induce him to enter into covenant *with ALL the earnestness he can*, and engage him to use endeavors *with ALL the strength and power that he has*, p. 83, 32, 36.

Now how exceedingly difficult must it be for unsanctified men to determine, with any assurance, whether they have moral sincerity to *such a degree* ? How difficult for them to know, whether their convictions are thus *deep* ? Every one that is used to deal with souls under conviction, knows, that when they are indeed under deep convictions, they are especially apt to complain of the hardness of their hearts, and to think their convictions are *not* deep. How difficult to determine, with any assurance, whether their assent rises so high, that they can truly be said to *believe with all their hearts* ? Whether their moral willingness to be conformed to the covenant of grace, be *with their whole heart* ? And whether they are really engaged *with all the solicitude they can*, and are willing to do *all that they can* ? These things, I am pretty sure, are of vastly more difficult determination, than whether a man has any true holiness, or not. For in the former case, the determination is concerning the degree of things, that are capable of an infinite variety of degrees ; some of which are nearer to, and others are farther from, the lowest *sufficient* degree : And consequently some of the degrees that are not sufficient, may yet be very near ; which renders the matter of very difficult determination ; unspeakably more so, than when what is to be distinguished, is the *nature* of things, which in *all degrees* is widely diverse, and even contrary to that which it is to be distinguished from : As is the case between saving and common grace ; which Mr. Williams himself acknowledges.* It is more easy to distinguish light from darkness, though there may be innumerable degrees of light, than to determine the precise *degree* of light : And so it is more

* See his sermon on *Christ a King and Witness*, p. 84, where he says, "Notwithstanding the visible likeness of nominal and real Christians, there is a wide difference, as there is between the subjects of Christ, and the slaves of the devil."

easy to determine, whether a man be alive, or dead, than whether there be exactly such a certain degree of vigor and liveliness.

This *moral sincerity* which Mr. Williams insists on, is a most indeterminate, uncertain thing ; a phrase without any certain, precise meaning ; and must forever remain so. It being not determined *how much* men must be morally sincere ; *how much* they must believe with a moral sincerity ; whether the deeply awakened and convinced sinner must believe, that God is absolutely sovereign *with respect to his salvation*, and that Christ is perfectly sufficient to *save him in particular* ; and to what *degree* of moral assent and consent, he must believe and embrace these things, and comply with the terms of the covenant of grace ; whether he must be willing to obey all God's commands, the most difficult, as well as the most easy, and this in all circumstances, even the most difficult that can arise in providence ; or whether only in some circumstances ; and what, and how many. The scripture gives us many infallible rules, by which to distinguish saving grace, and common : But I know of no rules given in the Bible, by which men may certainly determine this *precise degree* of moral sincerity. So that if *grace* is not the thing which gives a right to sacraments in the sight of God, we have no certain rule in the Bible, commensurate to the understanding of mankind, by which to determine when we have a right, and when not. Now let the impartial reader judge, which scheme lays the greatest foundation for perplexity to communicants, of tender consciences, concerning their qualifications for the Lord's supper ; and whether this argument drawn from such a supposed tendency to such perplexity (if there be any force in it) is not vastly more against Mr. Williams's scheme, than mine.

And, here by the way, let it be noted, that by these things it is again demonstrated, that the *ninth objection*, the great argument considered in the preceding section, concerning the necessity of a *known right*, in order to a lawful partaking, is exceedingly more against Mr. Williams's principles, than mine ; inasmuch as, on his principles, it is so much more

difficult for men to know whether they have a right, or have the prescribed qualification, or not.

I answered this argument in the *second* place, by alleging that this doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to a right to the Lord's supper, is not properly the *cause* of the perplexities of doubting saints, in their attendance on this ordinance ; though it may be the occasion : But that their own negligence and sin is the true cause ; and that this doctrine is no more the cause of these perplexities, than the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to salvation, is the cause of the perplexity of doubting saints when they come to *die*. Upon which Mr. Williams says, " There is no shadow of resemblance of these cases, because death is no ordinance, &c. But if death is no ordinance, yet it is the required duty of the saints to *yield themselves to the Lord*, and *resign* to the will of God, in their death. And in this respect the cases are exactly parallel, that *perplexities* are just so much the *consequence* of the respective doctrines, in one case as in the other ; that is, the perplexities of a doubting saint on a *death bed*, the difficulty and trouble he meets with in resigning himself to the will of God in dying, is just in the same manner the consequence of the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to eternal salvation, as the perplexities of a doubting saint at the *Lord's table* are the consequence of the doctrine of the necessity of saving grace in order to a right to the Lord's supper. And this is sufficient for my purpose.

Mr. Williams himself says, in his answer to Mr. Croswell, p. 122, " Although there are comparatively few that obtain assurance ; yet it is through their own sloth and negligence, that they do not. We fully agree with Mr. Perkins that a man in this life may ordinarily be infallibly certain of his salvation." So Mr. Stoddard, in his sermon on *One good Sign*, says, " There is no necessity that the people of God should lie under darkness and temptation ; they may obtain assurance." Now, if this be the case, then certainly there is no justice in laying the temptation and uneasiness, which is the effect of sloth and negligence, to the doctrine I maintain, in

those that embrace it. It is a wise dispensation of God, that he has so ordered things, that comfort in ordinances, and in all duties, and under all providences, should be to be obtained in a way of diligence ; and that slothfulness should be the way to perplexity and uneasiness, and should be a way *hedged up with thorns*, agreeable to Prov. xv. 19. That it is so ordered, is for the good of the saints, as it tends to turn them out of this thorny path, into the way of diligence. And so this doctrine, as it has this tendency, has a tendency in the end to that solid peace and comfort, which is the happy fruit of their holy diligence. And that, and not the saints' perplexity, is properly the effect of this doctrine.



SECTION XVII.

Containing some further Observations on what is said by Mr. Williams in support of the Thirteenth Objection, concerning God's commanding all the Members of the visible Church, that are not ignorant nor scandalous, to attend all external Covenant Duties.

IT has been already demonstrated (Sect. 8th of this third part) that in this argument the question is begged, notwithstanding what Mr. Williams has said to the contrary ; which sufficiently overthrows the whole argument. Nevertheless, that I may pass by nothing, which such as are on Mr. Williams's side, may be likely to think material ; I will here make some further observations on this objection, as represented and supported by Mr. Williams.

The chief thing that has the plausible appearance of argument in what Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Williams say on this head, is this ; that " for God to require all who are in covenant to come to the Lord's supper, and yet to forbid them to

come unconverted, is to suppose, that he both commands them, and forbids them at the same time." And this is thought to be the more manifest, inasmuch as *conversion is not in men's power*. Though it is not denied, but that God justly requires men to be converted, or to be truly holy. See p. 129, 130.

To this I would say,

(1.) If when they speak of commanding and forbidding at the same time, they mean God's commanding and forbidding *the same thing*, at the same time, no such consequence follows from my principles. For *that* thing, and that only, which I suppose God requires of any, is to come to the Lord's supper with a sanctified heart ; and that this God requires at *all times*, and never forbids at *any time* ; and that to come without this qualification, is what he *always* forbids and requires at *no time*. So that *what* he requires, at the same time he forbids something, is not the same thing that he forbids ; but a very different and contrary one : And it is no absurdity, to suppose, that God requires one thing, and forbids a contrary thing at the same time.

To illustrate this by an example : It was the duty of the Jews at Jerusalem, openly to *confess* CHRIST, to own him as the *Messiah*, at that hour when he was led away to be crucified, and openly to testify their adoring respect to him on that extraordinary occasion. But yet they did not believe him to be the *Messiah* and could not believe it (many of them at least) since they looked on his present, abject circumstances as a demonstration, that he was not the *Messiah*. It was beyond their power, at least at once, in that instant to give their assent, with all their hearts to such a supposition. Nor was it in their power, to exercise an adoring respect to him : For, besides their strong prejudices, most of them were judicially hardened, and given up to a spirit of unbelief and obstinate rejection of him ; as appears by that account, John xii. 39, 40. " Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes," &c. See also Luke xix. 41, 42, and Matth. xiii. 14, 15. And yet it would

have been unlawful for them to have made a lying profession ; to profess, that they believed him to be the *Messiah*, and that they received and loved him as such, when at the same time they hated him, and did not believe he was the *Messiah*. But here is no requiring and forbidding the same thing at the same time : For the only thing required of them was, to have faith and love, and to testify it ; which was not at all forbidden.

(2.) None of the difficulties which Mr. Stoddard or Mr. Williams objects, either God's supposed requiring impossibilities, or his requiring and forbidding at the same time, do follow, any more on *my* principles, than on Mr. Williams's. Mr. Williams maintains, that God calls men *this moment* to enter into covenant with him, and commands them to do it, p. 28. One thing implied in this, according to his own frequent explanation of visibly entering into covenant, is professing a belief of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Now therefore we will suppose a man to be a candidate for baptism, who has been brought up in Arianism ; and is strongly persuaded, that the doctrine of the TRINITY is not true : Yet he is this moment required to profess that doctrine ; but has no ability in a moment to believe the doctrine, because he does not at present see the evidence of it. For as Mr. Williams himself says, in sermon on *Christ a King and Witness* p. 91, 92. " The understanding cannot be brought to yield its assent to any truth, which it does not see the truth or apprehend the evidence of. If you would hire him with cartloads, or shiploads of gold and silver ; if you would imprison him, whip him, burn him ; you cannot make him believe a thing to be true, which he apprehends to be incredible, or which he sees no sufficient reason to believe." Now therefore, what shall the man do, on Mr. Williams's principles ? He is commanded to profess the doctrine of the Trinity, which must be professed in order to be lawfully baptized in the name of the Trinity ; and, on Mr. Williams's principles, he is commanded to do it *this moment* : Yet also on his principles, if the man professes it, and is not morally sincere, or knows he does not believe it, he is guilty of *horrible falsehood and prevarica-*

tion ; which God doubtless forbids. Therefore here is certainly as much of an appearance of commanding and forbidding the same thing at the same time, as in the other case.

Every husbandman in Israel, that lived even in Christ's time, was required to offer a basket of the first fruits ; and was commanded, when he offered it, solemnly to make that profession, concerning the principal facts relating to the redemption out of Egypt, which is prescribed in Deut. xxvi. 510. " A Syrian ready to perish was my father," &c. Now supposing there had been an Israelite, who did not believe the truth of all these facts, which came to pass so many ages before (as there are now many in Christendom, who do not believe the facts concerning Jesus Christ) and continued in his unbelief, until the very moment of his offering ; God peremptorily requires him to make this profession ; yet none will say, that he may lawfully profess these things, at the same time when he does not believe them to be true. However, here is no commanding and forbidding the same thing at the same time : Because, though God required the Jews to make this profession, yet the thing required was to *believe it* and *profess it*. Though some might not believe it, nor be able for the present to believe it ; yet this inability arose from depravity and wickedness of heart, which did not at all excuse their unbelief, for *one moment*.* Mr. Williams himself owns,

* This instance may shew us, that God's requiring all Israel to enter into covenant with him, and seal their covenant in the passover, will not prove, that it was lawful for any to avouch the Lord to be their God, and promise and swear they would perform universal and persevering obedience, when at the same moment they had no love to God, and even then, while speaking the words, continued in an habitual, wilful disobedience to God's commands, and were willing slaves to the devil. Nor will it follow, from these commands given to the Israelites, concerning their covenanting with God, and sealing their covenant, that God ever did, since the foundation of the world, appoint or command any other covenanting with him, than as giving up themselves wholly and without reserve, both soul and body, both heart and life ; or that ever he appointed or commanded any covenanting, wherein men give a part, and keep back a part, give him the outside, and keep back the noblest and best part, the heart, will and affections, for sin and Satan ; or that there is any such covenant of God in being ; or that such covenanting has not al-

p. 129, that God may require those things which are out of men's natural power.

Now this may be laid down as a truth, of easy and plain evidence : *If God may require what wicked men, while such, are unable to perform, then he may also require those things which are connected with it, and depend on it, and which, if the other be done, they would be able to do, and might do, and without which they may not do it.* So, if God may require an unsanctified man to love him, then he may require him to testify and profess his love, as I suppose Christians do in the act of partaking of the Lord's supper ; and yet it not be lawful for him to testify and profess love, when he has it not.

ways been as much without foundation in any institution of God, as any of the spurious sacraments of the church of Rome ; or that it has not always been strictly forbidden of God ; or that it is not absolutely and in itself sinful and unlawful, truly as the act of Ananias and Sapphira.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.