

Vindiciæ Legis et Fœderis :

OR, A

R E P L Y

TO

MR. PHILIP CARY'S SOLEMN CALL ;

Wherein he pretends to answer all the Arguments of

MR. ALLEN,
MR. BAXTER,
MR. SYDENHAM,MR. SEDGWICK,
MR. ROBERTS, AND
DR. BURTHOGGE,For the Right of *Believers Infants* to BAPTISM.

By proving the law at Sinai, and the Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham, were the very same with Adam's Covenant of Works, and that because the Gospel-covenant is absolute.

A friendly PREFACE to the AUTHOR of the *Solemn Call*, and the more discreet and charitable of the Party concerned with him in this Controversy.

Christian Friends,

WHEN we open our Bibles, and read that text, 1 Cor. i. 10. we have cause to deal with it as Origen once did by another scripture, even close the book and weep over it, in consideration of the weak and feeble influences such melting words, delivered with such a pathos, have upon the hearts of professors this day. “Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.”

I beseech you] He dips the nail in oil, that it may drive the easier. *I beseech you, brethren*] A compellation breathing sweetness and affection, and should drop from our lips into each others ears with the same effect that word once did upon the ears of Benhadad's servants, *My brother Benhadad. Sirs,* (said Moses to the striving Israelites) *ye are brethren.* O when shall the church become a true Philadelphia?

I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ] or as you love Jesus Christ, *ut quantum ipsum amant tantum studeant con-*

cordiæ, saith Calvin; Be as studious of concord as you are free in professing love to Christ.

That there be no divisions] or rents among you; a *Σχισμα*, schism, or rent in the church, is much the same, and altogether as dangerous as a *Στασις*, or sedition in the commonwealth, and harder to be cured. For as the Lord Verulan truly observes, Differences amongst persecuting enemies and the church, are like the strivings of the Egyptian with the Israelite, which Moses quickly ended by knocking down the Egyptian; but dissensions in the church are like the striving of one Israelite with another; and all that Moses can do to quiet and part these, is only by fair and gentle words, and reminding them that they are brethren.

Great is the mischief of divisions among Christians; and the less the grounds and causes are, the greater always is the sin and mischief of them. In the *primitive church* contentions grew fervent about meats lawful and unlawful, *which did not profit*, the meaning is, it greatly damnified them that were occupied therein, Heb. xiii. 9. Practical religion among them grew cold, as disputations about these trifles grew fervent.

The readiest way to cool such heats is, by discovering the trivial nature of the matter contended about; as Demosthenes appeased the tumult among the people raised by a small occasion, by relating to them the story of a man that hired an *ass* to carry him a journey, but the sun shining fervent, he was forced to quit her back, and betake himself to her shadow; the owner withstood him, alleging, that he had hired the body of the ass, but her shadow was not in the bargain; and so the contention between them grew as hot as the sun. Many such trifles have raised great contentions in the world, witness the great contention betwixt the *Eastern* and *Western church* about keeping of Easter.

Other points there are of greater moment, about which good men contend, and yet these oftentimes are magnified much above their true intrinsical value. So I am sure it is in the controversy before us. Mr. Cary tells us, that these things will be found at length to be of highest concernment unto us, and must therefore be our most serious practice, p. 243. If so, then the proper subject of baptism must be one of those that is of greatest weight, and the profession thereof the very Schibboleth to distinguish one person from another in matters of religion. No wonder therefore the fires of contention are blown up to such a vehement heat, even in such an improper season; much like the contentions among the English *fugitives* at Frankfort, when their brethren were frying in the flames at Smithfield. Just so we must be scuffling, whilst thousands of our brethren are bleeding in Ireland. Had we a true sense of the quality of the subjects, or the unseasonableness of the time, it should certainly allay those heats among us. Did we see who stand by, and look with pleasure upon our follies, it would quickly allay our hearts. Tertullian tells the Christians of his

time, that they were like the Funambulones, or men that walk upon hopes, the least tread awry might be their ruin, so narrowly did their enemies watch them.

Sirs, the peace, safety, and honour, of the dissenting interest are things of too great value to be hazarded amongst the hands of our common enemies. You may fancy they will neglect the advantage you give them; but if they do, the devil will call them fools for it. Hr. Herle tells us of a king's fool, who wrote down the king himself in his table among his brother-fools, because he had trusted an African stranger with four thousand pounds to buy Barbary horses. The king asked him how he would make him amends, if the stranger should come again? Why then (said he) I'll blot your name out of my table of fools, and write down the African in your stead. Think not our enemies are such fools to neglect the advantage we cast into their hands. It is a weighty note of Livy, *Consilia non dant homines rebus, sed res hominibus*; Men do not counsel things, but time and things counsel men. Methinks the postures of times and affairs give us better counsels than we seem to be governed by in such work as this. Divisions of forty years standing and more, about infants baptism, have eaten up the time, wasted the spirits, and alienated the hearts of English professors, divided them both in society and love; by reason whereof God's pleasant plant in this resembles the bramble, which taking root at both ends, by reason of the rencounters of the sap, commonly withers in the middle. Your brethren, in their Narrative from their General-Assembly, make a sad and sensible complaint of withering in the power of godliness. And truly we as well as they may complain with the church, *We do all fade as a leaf*: The Lord help us to discern the true cause, whether it be not the misplacing of our zeal, our being cold where we should be fervent, and fervent hot where it should be cold; and whether the eating up of so much time and study about baptizing of infants, have not kept us these forty years in the infancy of our graces?

I well remember that blessed time, when *ours* and *yours* were terms almost unknown amongst professors in England. When their affections and prayers melted and mingled together sweetly in days of humiliation, and other duties of edifying and heavenly communion; and then churches began to flourish, and the graces of Christians every where flourished, and became fruitful: but no sooner did the saints divide in society and affection, but these pleasant blossoms were nipt by it, as by a frosty morning, the church formed itself as it were, into two armies set in *battalia* against each other. It was now with us much like as it is said of the *amphisbena*, that hath an head at either end, of which neither can well move without the consent of both; but, if each move a contrary way, the body tears in the middle. I doubt not but many that differed from us belonged to Christ, the same head with us; and yet it is past doubt, that many who seemed to be of us were headed by Satan; and quickly discovered themselves to

be so, by running farther than we first, or you next, imagined, even into Quakerism, Socinianism, Ranterism, and the foulest puddle and sink of complicated errors; of which an imperial stranger, under the name of Honorius Reggius, αναγγραμματος, Georgius Hornius having heard the report in his own country, came over on purpose into England for his particular and perfect information, and hath given the foreign churches a full and sad account thereof in a Latin narrative, which I have by me; whereby I find, that, if the Lord in mercy to us had not let in a third party with the common calamity upon us all, we ourselves must in all probability have mutually ruined each other. But God saw other hands fitter for such dirty work than ours; and now it was time to reflect upon former follies, and renew our ancient acquaintance in the common goals. And, through the goodness of God, this did somewhat allay the heats of good men, and gave us fresh hopes of an hearty and lasting redintegration. We hoped the furnace might have purged our dross, and melted our hearts into unity, both by discovering the evils for which the Lord afflicted us, and the sincerity of the sufferers hearts under those trials. ‘Christians, (saith Mr. Jenkins) if we must die, let us die like men, by an unanimous holy contention against the common enemy; not like fools, by giving him our sword, and destroying one another by schisms in our own bowels.’

But alas! alas! no sooner is the rod of our backs, and a respite from sufferings given us, but we are presently sounding an alarm to the battle again, and, to my sorrow, myself unavoidably engaged therein.

Friends, I have a witness in many of your bosoms, how peaceably and respectfully I have always carried it towards you, even to such a degree as began to bring me under the suspicion of some of your party, that I was inclining to their opinion, though I did not openly profess it. But the true reasons of my moderation in this point were, (1.) That I ever did, and still do look upon many of you as Christians, sound in the other great doctrines of the gospel. (2.) That there are difficulties in this controversy which may puzzle the minds of well-meaning Christians. (3.) I highly value the peace of the church, and durst do nothing that tended to keep open the breaches upon a controversy of this nature, you being for purity in doctrine and worship in most other controverted points, as well as we. (4.) I observed how rare a thing it is for engaged parties to give ground.

Qui velit ingenio cedere, rarus erit.

‘Mad disputants to reason seldom yield.’

(5.) My head, heart, and hands have been filled with better employments, from which I am extremely loth to be diverted. If Bellarmine turned with loathing from school-divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety, much more may I turn from such perverse disputes as these: Sure I may find as fair expositions of scripture, and

and as accurate and legitimate distinctions among the *school-men*, as in Mr. Tombes' Examen and Apology; or (which for the most part is but a transcript of both) in Mr. Cary's Solemn Call. But I see I must not be my own chuser; I cannot now be both silent and innocent; for in this Solemn Call I find the great doctrines of God's covenants abused by my neighbour; the books dispersed into many families related to me in this place, one of them delivered to me by the Author's own hands, with a pressing desire to give my judgment upon it: Several objections which I privately and seasonably sent him to prevent the sin and folly of his attempt, pretended to be answered from p. 164. *ad* p. 183. Thus I am necessarily brought into the field of controversy: whither I come not a *volunteer*, but a *pressed man*; not out of choice, but necessity. And now I am here, I resolve to be only *Adversarius litis, non personæ*, an adversary in the controversy, not to the person, especially of my friendly neighbour. Neither would I have appeared thus publicly against him, if differences could have been accommodated, and the evil prevented, in a more private way; in order thereunto, I have punctually observed and kept the rules and measures of friendship.

It is possible some may judge my stile against him to be too sharp; but if they please to read the conclusion of his *Call*, and my *Answer*, I presume they will find enough to make atonement for that fault, if it be a fault. It is from the nature of the matter before me, not from defect of charity to the person or party, that I am forced to be so plain and pungent as I am.

To conclude, I suspect this very preface may be also censured for its plainness and tediousness. I confess, when times are busy we should be brief; and I am persuaded a sufficient preface may be contracted into four words, *ανευ προσημιων και παθων*, *without preface or passions*. However, I have a little eased my own heart, by discharging my duty to my differing brethren, and pleased myself, if not them.

The God of peace create peace in all the borders of Sion, beat our *swords* into *plow-shares*, and our *spears* into *pruning-hooks*; I mean, our *polemicals* into *practicals*; that Jerusalem may once more be a city compact, and no more terrible to herself, but only to her enemies, as an army with banners. This, brethren, is the prayer, and shall ever be the endeavour of,

Your Friend and Servant in Christ,

JOHN FLAVEL.

PROLEGOMENA.

BEFORE we enter into the main controversy, it will be necessary to acquaint the reader, why I begin with the middle of the book; and it is because I there find these three principles or positions, on which the other parts of his discourse are superstructed; and these being destroyed, his other discourses are but *arena, sine calce*. I properly therefore begin with the foundation.

Next I shall shew how far we are agreed in the matters here controverted, and where it is in each of these that the controversy indeed lies betwixt us. And as to

I. *Position, viz.*

That the Sinai law is the same with Adam's covenant of works, made in paradise.

The difference betwixt us here is not (1.) Whether both these be called covenants in Scripture? Nor (2.) Whether there was no grace at all in both, or either of them; for we are agreed, it is grace in God to enter into covenant with man, whatever that covenant be. Nor (3.) Whether the Sinai law be not a covenant of works to some men, by their own fault and occasion? Nor (4.) Whether the scriptures do not many times speak of it in that very sense and notion wherein *carnal justiciaries* apprehend and take it; and by rejecting Christ, make it so to themselves? Nor (5.) Whether the very matter of the *law of nature* be not revived and represented in the *Sinai law*? These are not the points we contend about. But the question is, Whether the Sinai law do in its own nature, and according to God's purpose and design in the promulgation of it, revive the law of nature, to the same ends and uses it served to in Adam's covenant; and so be properly and truly a covenant of works? Or whether God had not gracious and evangelical ends and purposes, viz. By such a dreadful representation of the severe and impracticable terms of the first covenant, instead of obliging them to the personal and punctual observance of them for righteousness and life, he did not rather design to convince them of the impossibility of legal righteousness, humble proud nature, and shew them the necessity of betaking themselves to Christ, now exhibited in the new covenant, as the only refuge to fallen sinners. The latter I defend according to the Scriptures, the former Mr. Cary seems to assert and vehemently argue for.

2dly, In this controversy about the Sinai law, I do not find Mr. Cary distinguish (as he ought) betwixt the law considered more largely and complexly, as containing both the *moral* and *ceremonial law*, for both which it is often taken in Scripture, and more strictly for the *moral law* only, as it is sometimes used in Scripture. These two he

makes one and the same *covenant of works*; though there be some that doubt whether the mere *moral law*, may not be a *covenant of works*; yet I never met with any man before, that durst affirm the *ceremonial law*, which is so full of Christ, to be so; and to this law it is that *circumcision* appertains.

3dly, The moral law, strictly taken for the ten commandments, is not by him distinguished (as it ought to be, and as the scripture frequently doth) according to God's intention and design in the promulgation of it, which was to add it as an appendix to the promise, Gal. iii. 19. and not to set it up as an opposite covenant, Gal. iii. 21. as the carnal Jews, *mistaking and perverting the use and end of the law*, and making it to themselves a covenant of works, by making it the very rule and reason of their justification before God, Rom. ix. 32, 33. Rom. x. 3. These things ought carefully to have been distinguished, forasmuch as the whole controversy depends on this double sense and intention of the law; yea, the very *denomination* of that law depends hereon: for I affirm, it ought not to be denominated from the abused and mistaken end of it amongst carnal men, but from the true scope, design and end for which God published it after the fall: and though we find such expressions as these in Scripture, "The man that doth them shall live in them;" and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," &c. yet these respecting the law, not according to God's intention, but man's corruption and abuse of it, the law is not thereby to be denominated a covenant of works. God's end was not to justify them, but to try them by that terrible dispensation, Exod. xx. 20. whether they would still hanker after that natural way of self-righteousness; for this end God propounded the terms of the first covenant to them on Sinai, not to open the way of self-justification to them, but to convince them, and shut them up to Christ; just as our Saviour, Matth. xix. 17. puts the young man upon keeping the commandments not to drive him from, but necessitate him to himself in the way of faith.

The law in both these senses is excellently described, Gal. iv. in that allegory of Hagar and Sarah, the figures of the two covenants. Hagar, in her first and proper station was but a serviceable *handmaid* to Sarah, as the law is a *schoolmaster* to Christ; but when Hagar the handmaid is taken in Sarah's bed, and brings forth children that aspire to the inheritance, then saith the Scripture, "Cast out the bond-woman with her son." So it is here; take the law in its primary use, as God designed it, as a *schoolmaster* or *handmaid* to Christ and the *promise*, so it is consistent with them, and excellently subservient to them; but if we marry this handmaid, and espouse it as a *covenant of works*, then are we bound to it for life, Rom. vii. and must have nothing to do with Christ. The believers of the Old Testament had true apprehensions of the right end and use of the law, which directed them to Christ, and so they became children of the *free-woman*. The carnal Jews trusted to the works of the law for righteousness,

and so became the children of the *bond-woman*; but neither could be children of both at once, no more than the same man can naturally be born of two mothers. This is the difference betwixt us about the first position. And as to the

II. Position.

That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. is an Adam's covenant of works also, because circumcision was annexed to it, which obliged men to keep the whole law.

The controversy betwixt us in this point, is not whether *circumcision* were an ordinance of God, annexed by him to his *covenant* with Abraham? Nor (2.) Whether Abraham's ordinary and extraordinary seed ought to be, and actually were signed by it? Nor, (3.) Whether it were a seal of the righteousness of faith to any individual person, for he allows it to be so to Abraham? Nor (4.) Whether it pertained to the *cercmonial law*, and so must cease at the death of Christ? But the difference betwixt us is, Whether (1.) It was a seal of the covenant to none but Abraham? And (2.) Whether in the very nature of the act, or only from the intention of the agent, it did oblige men to keep the whole law, as Adam was obliged to keep it in innocency? (3.) Whether it were utterly abolished at the death of Christ, as a condition of the *covenant of works*? or being a sign of the same *covenant of grace* we are now under, it be not succeeded by the new gospel-sign, which is baptism? Mr. Cary affirms, that it was in itself a condition of the *covenant of works*, and being annexed to God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. it made that a true Adam's *covenant of works* also. This I utterly deny, and say, Abraham's covenant was a true covenant of grace. (2.) That circumcision was a seal of righteousness of faith, and therefore could not possibly belong to the *covenant of works*. (3.) That as it was applied both to the ordinary and extraordinary infant-seed of Abraham, during that administration of the covenant, so it is the will of Christ that baptism should take its place under the gospel, and be applied now to the infant-seed of all Abraham's spiritual children. These are the things wherein we differ about the second *position*. And lastly, as to the

III. Position.

That neither Moses' law, Exod. xx. nor God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. can be any other than an Adam's covenant of works, because they have each of them conditions in them on man's part; but the gospel-covenant hath none at all, but is altogether free and absolute.

The controversy here betwixt us is not (1.) Whether the gospel-covenant requires no duties at all of them that are under it? Nor (2.) Whether it requires any such conditions as were in Adam's covenant, namely, perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, under the severest penalty of a curse, and admitting no place of repentance? Nor, (3.) Whether any condition required by it on *our* part, have any thing in its own nature meritorious of the benefits promised? Nor (4.) Whether we be able in our own strength, and by the power of

our free-will, without the *preventing* as well as the *assisting* grace of God, to perform any such work or duty as we call a *condition*? In these things we have no controversy; but the only question betwixt us is,

Whether in the new covenant some act of ours (though it have no merit in it, nor can be done in our own single strength) be not required to be performed by us, antecedently to a blessing or privilege consequent by virtue of a promise? And whether such an act of duty, being of a suspending nature to the blessing promised, it have not the true and proper nature of a *gospel-condition*? This I affirm, and he positively denies.

These three *positions* being confuted, and the contrary well confirmed, viz. that the law at Sinai was not set up by God as an Adam's covenant, to open the old way of righteousness and life by works; but was added to the promise, as subservient to Christ in its design and use, and consequently can never be a pure Adam's covenant of works. And, *secondly*,

That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. is the very same covenant of grace we are now under; and, (*2dly*,) That circumcision in the nature of the act did not oblige all men to keep the whole law for righteousness. And (*3dly*,)

That the *new covenant* is not absolutely and wholly unconditional, though notwithstanding a most free and gracious covenant; the pillars on which Mr. Cary sets his new structure sink under it, and the building falls into ruins.

I have not here taken Mr. Cary's two Syllogisms, proving Abraham's *covenant* to be a *covenant of works*, because I find myself therein prevented by that ingenious and learned man, Mr. Whiston, in his late answer to Mr. Grantham. Neither have I particularly spoken to his twenty-three arguments to prove the Sinai law to be a pure Adam's covenant, because *frustra fit per plura, quod fieri, potest per pauciora*: I have overthrown them all together at one blow, by evincing every argument to have four terms in it, and so proves nothing. But I have spoken to all those scriptures which concern our four *positions*, and fully vindicated them from the injurious senses to which Mr. Cary (following Mr. Tombes) had wrested them.

These things premised, I shall only further add, that if Mr. Cary shall attempt a reply to my answer, and free his own *theses* from the gross absurdities with which I have loaded them, he must plainly and substantially prove against me,

(1.) That the Sinai law, according to its true scope and end, was promulgated by God for man's justification and happiness in the way of personal obedience; and that the Jews, that did accordingly endeavour after righteousness by the works of the law, did not mistake its true end and meaning; or if they did, and thereby made it what God never intended it to be, a *covenant of works* to themselves, that the Sinai law ought rather to be denominated from their mistake

and abuse of it, than from its primary and proper use, and God's design in its promulgation.

(2.) He must prove against me, with the like evidence of truth, that circumcision discovered no more of man's native corruption, nor any more of his remedy by Christ; nor sealed to any person whatsoever the righteousness of faith, than Adam's covenant in paradise did; and that it did in its own nature oblige all upon whom it passed, to the same terms of obedience that Adam's covenant obliged him. And,

(3.) That there is not to be found in the *new covenant* any such act or duty of ours, as hath been described and limited above; which is of a suspending nature to the benefits therein granted. And,

(4.) That the respective expositions he gives of the several texts to be explained and vindicated, are more congruous to the scope and grammar than mine are, and more agreeable to the current sense of *orthodox expositors*; and then he shall be sure to receive an answerable return from me, else it is but labour lost to write again.

A

REPLY

TO

MR. PHILIP CARY'S SOLEMN CALL, &c.

THE book I have undertaken to animadvert briefly upon, bears the title of a *solemn call*; but I am not so much concerned with the *solemnity*, as I am with the *authority* of this call. Not *how* it is, but *whose* it is. If it be the call of God, it must be obeyed though it be to part not only with the *privileges*, but *lives* of our dearest children; but then we had need to be very well assured it is the call of God, else we are guilty at once of the highest folly, and basest treachery, to part with so rich an inheritance, conveyed by God's covenant with Abraham, to us believing Gentiles, and our seed, at Mr. Cary's call.

You direct your *Solemn Call* to all that would be owned as Christ's faithful witnesses.

Here you are too obscure and general: do you mean, all that would be owned by you, or by Christ? If you mean, that we must not expect to be owned by you till we renounce infants baptism, you tell us no news, for you have long since turned your back upon our ministry and assemblies: yet, methinks it is strange, that we who were lately owned as Christ's faithful witnesses, under our late sufferings, must now be disowned by you, when we have liberty to amplify and con-

firm our testimony in the peaceful improvement of our common liberty.

But if your meaning be, (as I strongly suspect it is) that we must not expect to be owned by Christ, except we give up infants baptism; then, I say, it is the most uncharitable, as well as unwarrantable, and dangerous censure that ever dropt from the pen of a sober Christian. It is certainly your great evil to lay *salvation* itself on such a point as the proper subject of baptism, and to make it *articulus stantis vel cadentis religionis*, the very *basis* on which the whole Christian religion, and its professors salvation must stand. I hope the rest of your brethren are more charitable than yourself; but however it be, I do openly profess, that I ever have, and still do own you, and many more of your persuasion, for my brethren in Christ, and am persuaded Christ will own you too, notwithstanding your many errors and mistakes about the lesser and lower matters of religion. Nor need your censure much to affect us, as long as we are satisfied you have neither a faculty nor commission thus solemnly to pronounce it upon us.

But what is the condition upon which this dreadful sentence depends? why, it is our attendance or non-attendance to the primitive purity of the gospel-doctrine.

Sir, I hope we do attend it, and, in some respects, better than some great pretenders to primitive purity, who have cast off not only the initiating sign of God's covenant, (this did not Abraham) but also that most comfortable and ancient ordinance of *singing Psalms*: and what other primitive ordinance of God may be cashiered next, who can tell?

We have a witness in our bosom, that the defence of *Christ's pure worship and institution* hath cost us something; and as for me, were I convinced by all that you have here said, or any of your friends, that in baptizing the infants of believers, we did really depart from the primitive purity, I would renounce it, and turn Anabaptist the same day.

But really, sir, this discourse of yours hath very much convinced me of the weakness and sickliness of your cause, which is forced to seek a new foundation, and is here laid by you upon such a foundation as must inevitably ruin it, if your party, as well as yourself, have but *resolution* enough to venture it thereupon.

And it appears to me very probable, that they intend to fight us upon the new ground you have here chosen and marked out for them, by the high *encomiums* they give your *book* in their epistles to it, wherein they tell us, *your notions are of so rare a nature, that you are not beholden to any other for them*; and it is a wonder if you should, for I think it never entered into any sober Christian's head before you, that Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. was the very same with Adam's covenant made in *paradise*; or that Moses, Abraham, and all the elect of God in those days were absolutely under the very rigour and tyranny of the *covenant of works*, and at the same time under the *covenant of grace*, and all the blessings and privileges thereof; with

many other such rare *notions*, of which it is pity but you should have the sole propriety.

I am particularly concerned to detect your dangerous mistakes, both in love to *your own soul*, and care of *my people's*, amongst whom you have dispersed them; though I foresee by M. E's epistle to *your book*, what measure I am like to have for my plain and faithful dealing with you: for if that gentleman, upon a mere surmise and presumption that one or other would *oppose your book*, dare adventure to call your unknown answer, before he ever put pen to paper, a *man-pleaser*, a *quarreller at reformation*, and rank him with the Papists, which opposed the faithful for their non-conformity to their inventions; what must I expect from such rash censurers, for my sober, plain, and rational confutation of your errors?

As to the *controversy betwixt us*, you truly say, in your title page, and many parts of your *book*, and your brethren comprobate it in their epistles, that the main arguments made use of by the Pædo-baptists, for the support of their practice, are taken from the covenant of God with Abraham, Gen. xvii. You call this the very hinge of the *controversy*; and therefore if you can but prove this to be the very same *covenant of works* with that made with Adam in *paradise*, we shall then see what improvements you will quickly make of it.

Ay, sir, you are sensible of the advantage, no less than a complete victory you shall obtain by it: and therefore being a more hardy and adventurous man than others, put desperately upon it, (which never any before you durst attempt) to prove Abraham's covenant, which stands so much in the way of your cause, to be a mere *covenant of works*, and therefore now abolished.

My proper province is to discover here, that part of the *foundation* (I mean Abraham's *covenant*) whence our divines with great strength and evidence, deduce the right of believers infants to baptism now. Next, to evince the absurdity of your assertions, and arguments you bring to destroy it: And, lastly, to reflect, briefly upon the answers you give in the beginning of your *book*, to those several texts of scripture pleaded by the learned and judicious divines you oppose, for the justification of *infants baptism*.

(1.) Those that plead God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. as a scripture-foundation for baptizing believers infants under the gospel, proceed generally upon these four grounds or principles.

(1.) That God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. was the same covenant for substance we Gentile believers are now under; and they substantially prove it from Luke i. from the 54th to the 74th verse; which place evidently shews the sameness of the covenant of grace they were, and we are now under; and from Matth. xxi. 41, 43. the same vineyard and kingdom the Jews then had, is now let out to us Gentiles; and from Rom. xi. that the Gentile Christians are grafted into the same olive-tree, from which the Jews were broken off for

their unbelief; and that the blessing of Abraham cometh now upon the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 8, 14, 16. And in a word, that the partition-wall betwixt them and us is now pulled down; and that we, through faith, are let into the self-same covenant, and all the privileges they then enjoyed, Eph. ii. 13.

(2.) They assert and prove, that in Abraham's *covenant* the infant-seed were taken in with their parents, and that in token thereof, they were to have the sign of the covenant applied to them, Gen. xvii. 9.

(3.) They affirm and prove, That the promise of God to Abraham and his seed, with the privileges thereof to his children, do, for the substance of them, descend to believers now, and their seed, Acts ii. 38, 39. and though the external sign, viz. *circumcision*, be changed, yet baptism takes its place under the gospel, Col. ii. 11, 12.

(4.) They constantly affirm, that none of those grants or privileges made to the infant-seed of Abraham's family, were ever repealed or revoked by Christ or his apostles; and therefore believers children are now in the rightful possession of them; and that therefore there needed no new command or promise: In Abraham's covenant we find our duty to sign our children with the sign of the covenant; and in Abraham's promise we find God's gracious grant to our children, as well as his, especially since the apostle directs us, in this very respect, to the covenant of God with Abraham, Acts ii. 38, 39.

These, sir, are the principles on which we lay (as you say) great stress, and which to this day you have never been able to shake down; here therefore you attempt a new method to do it, by proving this covenant is now abolished; and this is your method, in which you promise yourself great success: Three things you pretend to prove;

(1.) That the Sinai covenant, Exod. xx.

(2.) That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. are no gospel-covenants; and that because,

(3.) The gospel-covenant is absolute and unconditional.

How you come to hook in the Mosaic *covenant* into this controversy, is not very evident, unless you think it were easy for you to prove that to be a *covenant of works*; and then Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. being an Old Testament covenant, were the more easily proved to be of the same nature. I am obliged to examine your three positions above noted, and if I evidence to the world the falsity of them, the cause you manage is so far lost, and the right of believers infants to baptism stands firm upon its old and sure foundation. I begin therefore with your

I. Position.

That the covenant made with Israel, on mount Sinai, is the very same covenant of works made with Adam in innocency, p. 122. and divers other places of your book, the very same.

Now, if you prove that this assertion of yours doth naturally and regularly draw many false and absurd consequents upon you, which you are, and must be forced to own, then this your *position* cannot be true; for from true premises, nothing but truth can naturally and regularly follow; but I shall make it plain to you, that this your position regularly draws many false conclusions, and gross absurdities, upon you; some of which you own expressly, and others you as good as own, being able to return nothing rational or satisfactory in your own defence against them.

(1.) From this assertion, that the Sinai *covenant* was a pure *covenant of works*, the very same with Adam's *covenant*, it regularly and necessarily follows, that either Moses and all Israel were damned, there being no salvation possible to be attained by that first covenant; or else, that there was a covenant of grace at the same time running parallel with that covenant of works; and so the elect people of God were at one and the same time under the first, as a covenant of death and condemnation; and under the second, as a covenant of grace and justification.

This *dilemma* pinches you. To assert, that Moses, and all the elect of God, under that dispensation, were damned, you dare not; and if you had, you must have expunged the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, and a great part of the New Testament, together with all your hopes of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. The latter, therefore, (seeing you cannot avoid) you are forced upon, and in plain words yield it, p. 174, 175. 'That Moses and the whole body of the children of Israel, without exception of any, were under, yea, absolutely under the severest penalties of a dreadful curse; that the covenant they were under, could be no other than a covenant of works, a ministration of death and condemnation; when yet it is also evident from the same holy scriptures of truth, that at the same time both Moses and all the elect among that people were under a pure covenant of gospel-grace; and that these two covenants were just the opposite the one to the other; but to this you have nothing to say, but with the apostle in another case, O the depth!'

Here, sir, you father a pure and perfect contradiction upon the holy scriptures, that it speaks things just opposite and contradictory one to the other, and of necessity one part or member of a contradiction must be false: this all the rational world knows; but so it is, say you, and fly to the infinite wisdom to reconcile them; for you say, You know not what to say to it. Just so the *papists* serve us in the *controversy* about *transubstantiation*, when they cannot reconcile one thing with another, they fly to the omnipotent power to do it.

But, sir, I wonder how you hold and hug a principle that runs naturally into such gross absurdities: Do you see what follows from hence by unavoidable consequences? You must, according to this principle, hold, That Moses, and all God's peculiar elect people in Israel,

most, during their life, hang mid-way between justification and condemnation; and, after death, between heaven and hell.

(1.) During life, they must hang mid-way between justification and condemnation; justified they could not be, for justification is the soul's passing from death to life, 1 John iii. 14. John v. 24. This they could not possibly do, for the ministration of *death* and *condemnation* hindered. He that is under *condemnation* by the law, cannot, during that state, pass into life. And yet to be under *condemnation* is as impossible on the other side; for he that is justified, cannot at the same time be under *condemnation*, Rom. viii. 2. John v. 24. What remains then, but that during life they must stick mid-way betwixt both, neither justified nor condemned; and yet both so and so. Justification is our life, and condemnation our death, in law: Betwixt these two, which are *privately opposed*, there can be no *medium* of participation, and yet such a *medium* you here fancy.

(2.) And then after death they must necessarily hang betwixt heaven and hell; to heaven none can go that are under the very rigour and tyranny of the law, a pure *covenant of works*, as you say they were.

To hell they could not go, being under the pure *covenant of grace*: What remains then, but some third state must be assigned them? and so at last we have found the *limbus paturim*, and your position leads us right to *purgatory*: a conclusion which, I believe, you yourself abhor as much as I.

(2dly.) This hypothesis pinches you with another *dilemma*, viz. Either there was pardon or repentance in Moses' *covenant*, and the Sinai *dispensation of the law*, or there was none; if you say none, you directly contradict Lev. xxvi. 40, 46. if there were, then it cannot be Adam's *covenant of works*.

You answer, p. 179. 'That God promiseth pardon for the breach of Moses' covenant, and of Adam's covenant too, but neither Adam's covenant, nor the Jewish legal covenant, promised any pardon upon repentance, but rather threatens and inflicts the contrary.'

Reply. Either this is a direct answer to my argument, to prove the law at Sinai cannot be a pure Adam's *covenant*, because it had a promise of pardon annexed to it, Lev. xxvi. 40. but Adam's *covenant* had none. If your answer be direct, then it is a plain contradiction in saying it had, and it had not a promise of pardon belonging to it. Or else it is a mere evasion, and an eluding of the argument; and your only meaning is, that the relief I speak of is not to be found in any promise belonging to the Sinai dispensation, but in some other gospel covenant or promise. But, sir, this will not serve your turn; you see I cite the very promise of grace made to the Israelites on mount Sinai by the hand of Moses, wherein God promiseth upon their humiliation to remember his covenant for their good. Now, sir, you had as good have stood to your first answer, which is less contradictory, as to this which is no less so; as will evidently appear, by a nearer and more particular view of the place, and gathering up your own concessions

about it. That this text, Lev. xxvi. 40. hath the nature of a gracious promise in it, no man will deny, except he that will deny that God's remembering of his *covenant*, for the relief of poor broken-hearted sinners, is no gospel promise pertaining to the covenant of grace: That it was made to the penitent Israelites upon *mount Sinai*, and there delivered them by the hand of Moses for their relief, is as visible and plain as the words and syllables of the 46th verse are to him that reads them. Let the promise then be considered both ways. (1.) In your sense, as a *plain direction to the covenant of grace made with Abraham for their relief*; for you say it was, p. 180. or let it be considered absolutely, as that which contained relief in itself for the penitent Israelites that should live towards the end of the world, after they should be gathered from all their dispersions and captivities, as you there speak, and more fully explicate in your accommodation of a parallel promise, p. 111, 112, 113. First, let us view it in your sense, as a *relative promise to the covenant of grace made with Abraham*, Gen. xii. to which, say you, it plainly directs them; and then this legal *dispensation* can never be the same with Adam's *covenant*, for to that *covenant* no such promise was ever annexed, which should guide and plainly direct them to Christ and pardon, as that star which appeared to the wise men directed their way to Christ. If there be any such relative promise belonging to Adam's *covenant in paradise*, as this which I plainly shew you was made on *mount Sinai*, be pleased to produce it, and you end the *controversy*; but if you cannot, (as you know you cannot) then never say the legal dispensation at Sinai, and the covenant of works with Adam in *paradise*, are the very same covenant. *Secondly*, Let us consider this promise absolutely in itself, and then I demand, was there mercy, relief and pardon contained in it for any penitent sinner present or to come? Yes, say you, it extends relief to penitents, after God shall gather them from all their captivities at the end of the world; very good. Then it is a very vigorous promise of grace, which not only reaches 430 years backward, as far as the first promise to Abraham, but also extends its reliefs and comforts many thousand years forwards, even to the purest times of the gospel, just before Christ's coming to judgment: And can such a promise as this be denied to be in itself a gospel-promise? Sure it can neither be denied to be such, nor yet to be made upon *mount Sinai* by the hand of Moses. This *dilemma* is as pinching as the former.

Perhaps you will say, This promise did not belong to the *moral law* given at Sinai, but to the *ceremonial law*: If so, then I should reasonably conclude, that you take the *ceremonial law* (of which you seem to make this a branch, p. 181.) to be a covenant of grace, seeing one of its branches bears such a gracious promise upon it. No, that must not be so neither; for say you, p. 151. the *ceremonial covenant* is of the same nature with the *covenant of works*, or law written in tables of stone: Whither then shall we send this promise?

To the covenant of grace we must not send it, unless only as an *index* or finger to point to it, because it was made upon *mount Sinai*, and delivered to Israel by the hand of Moses: To the gospel-covenant we must not therefore annex it; and to the legal dispensation at Sinai you are as loth to annex it, because it contains so much relief and grace in it for poor penitents; and that will prove, that neither the *moral* nor *ceremonial law* (place it in which you please) can be a pure *covenant of works* as Adam's was.

Moreover, in making this the promise which must relieve and comfort the distressed Israelites in the purest gospel-times, towards the end of the world, you as palpably contradict yourself in another respect; for we shall find you by and by stoutly denying, that the gospel promises have any conditions or qualifications annexed to them; but so hath this, which you say relates to them that shall live at the end of the world, "If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and if they accept the punishment of their iniquities, then will I remember my covenant," &c. But be this promise conditional or absolute, two things are undeniably clear: (1) That it is a promise full of grace, for the relief of law-transgressors, ver. 40. (2.) That it was a *mount Sinai promise*, ver. 46. And such a promise as you can never shew in Adam's covenant.

Besides, it is to me an unaccountable thing, that a promise which hath a double comfortable aspect 430 years back, and some thousands of years forward, should not cast one comfortable glance upon the penitents of the present age, when it was made, nor upon any till near the end of the world. What think you, sir, of the 3000 Jews pricked at the heart, Acts ii. had they no relief from it, because their lot fell not late enough in time? Were the penitent Jews in Moses and Peter's days all born out of due time for this promise to relieve? O what shifting and shuffling is here? Who can think a man that twists and winds every way, to avoid the dint of an argument, can possibly have a moral assurance of the truth of his own opinion?

(3.) You say, *page 134*. 'That through Christ's satisfaction there is no repugnancy, or hostile contrariety, betwixt the law and promise, but an agreement betwixt them, and that they differ only in respect of strength and weakness; the gospel is able to go through-stitch with it, which the law cannot do.'

Reply. Well then, the law considered as a covenant of works, whose terms or condition is, "Do this and live;" and the promise or gospel, whose condition is, "Believe and thou shalt be saved;" are not specifically different, but only gradually, in point of strength and weakness: and the reason you give is as strange, that *this comes to pass through the satisfaction of Christ*. Good sir, enlighten us in this rare notion. Did Christ die to purchase a reconciliation betwixt the covenant of works as such and the covenant of grace, as if both were now by the death of Christ agreed, and to be justified by works and by faith, should after Christ's death, make no odds or difference between

them? If it be so, why have you kept such a coil to prove Moses' and Adam's covenant, yea, Abraham's too, being a *covenant of works*, can never consist or mingle with the *gospel-covenant*? And then I say, you contradict the *apostle*, who so directly opposes the *covenant of works* as such, to the *covenant of grace*, Gal. iii. 18. and tells us they are utterly inconsistent and exclusive of each other; and this he spake after Christ's death and actual satisfaction. But,

(4.) That which more amazes me, is the strange answer you give to Mr. Sedgwick, p. 132, 133. In your return to his argument, 'That if the law and the promise can consist, then the law cannot be set up as a covenant of works. You answer, 'That the law and the promise having divers ends, it doth not thence follow, that there is an inconsistency betwixt them, and that the law, even as it is a covenant of works, instead of being against the promise, tends to the establishment of it. And p. 133. that by convincing men of the impossibility of obtaining rest and peace in themselves, and the necessity of betaking themselves to the promise, &c. the law is not against the promise, having so *blessed a subserviency* towards the establishment thereof.' Here you own a *subserviency*, yea, a *blessed subserviency* of the law to the promise, which is that Mr. Sedgwick and myself have urged to prove it cannot be so, as it is a pure Adam's covenant, but that thereof it must come under another consideration; only here we differ; you say it hath a *blessed subserviency* to the promise, as it is the same with Adam's covenant; we say it can never be so as such, but as it is either a covenant of grace, though more obscure, as he speaks; or though the matter of it should be the same with Adam's covenant, yet it is subserviently a covenant of grace, as others speak; and under no other consideration can it be reconciled to the promise.

But will you stand to this, that the law hath no hostile contradiction to the promise, but a *blessed subserviency* to it, as you speak, p. 173. where you say, 'That if we preach up the law as a covenant of life, or a covenant of faith and grace (which are equipollent terms) let us distinguish as we please between a covenant of grace *absolutely* and *subserviently* such; then we make an ill use of the law, by perverting it to such a service as God never intended it for, and are guilty of mingling law and gospel, life and death together.'

Reply. Here, sir, my understanding is perfectly posed, and I know not how to make any tolerable orthodox sense out of this position: Is the law preached up as a pure *covenant of works*, (that is, pressing men to the personal and punctual obedience of it, in order to their justification by works) no way repugnant to the promise, but altogether so, when preached in subserviency to Christ and faith? This is new divinity with me, and I believe must be so to every intelligent reader. Do not I oppose the promise when I preach up the law as a pure covenant of works, which therefore as such must be exclusive of Christ and the promise? And do I oppose either, when I tell sinners the terrors of the law serve only to drive them to Christ, their only remedy, who is

“the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth,” Rom. x. 4. Are works and grace more consistent than grace with grace? Explain your meaning in this *paradoxical expression*, and leave not yourself and others in such a maze. I read, Gal. iii. 19. for what end God published the law 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham, and find *it was added because of transgression*, *πρὸς ἁμαρτίαν*, it was put to, not set up by itself alone as a distinct covenant, but added as an *appendix* to the *covenant of grace*; whence it is plain, that God added the Sinai law to the *promise*, with *evangelical ends and purposes*. If then I preach the law to the very same evangelical uses and purposes for which God added it to the promise, do I therein make an ill use of the law, and mingle life and death together? But preaching it, as a pure *covenant of works*, as it holds forth justification to sinners by obedience to its precepts, do I then make it blessedly subservient (as you speak) to the *promise or covenant of grace*? The law was added because of transgression, that is, to restrain sin in the world, and to convince sinners under guilt, of the necessity of another righteousness than their own, even that of Christ, and for the same ends God added it to the promise. I always did, and still shall preach it, and I am persuaded, without the least danger of mingling law and gospel, life and death together, in your sense.

It is plain to me, that in the publication of the law on Sinai, God did not in the least intend to give them so much as a *direction* how to obtain justification by their most punctual obedience to its precepts, that being to fallen man utterly impossible; and beside, had he promulged the law to that end and purpose, he had not added it, but directly opposed it to the promise; which it is manifested he did not; Gal. iii. 21. “Is the law then against the promise of God? God forbid.” And verse 18. makes it appear, that had it been set up to that end and purpose, it had utterly disannulled the promise; for *if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more by promise*. What then can be clearer, than that the law at Sinai was published with gracious gospel-ends and purposes, to lead men to Christ, which Adam’s covenant had no respect or reference to? And therefore it can never be a pure Adam’s *covenant*, as you falsely call it, neither is it capable of becoming a pure *covenant of works* to any man, but by his own fault, in rejecting the righteousness of Christ, and seeking justification by the works of the law, as the mistaken carnal Jews did, Rom. x. 3. and other legal justiciaries now do. And upon this account only it is that Paul, who so highly praises the law in its subserviency to Christ, thunders so dreadfully against it, as it is thus set by ignorant mistaken souls in direct opposition to Christ.

(5thly,) And further, to clear this point, the apostle tells us, Rom. x. 4. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Whence I argue, That if Adam’s *covenant* had an end, namely, the justification of men by their own personal obedience; and the law at Sinai had a quite contrary end, namely, to

bring *sinner*s to Christ by faith for their righteousness; the one to keep him within himself, the other to take him quite out of himself, and bring him for his justification to the righteousness of another, even that of Christ; then that Sinai *law* cannot possibly be the same thing with Adam's *covenant of works*. But the antecedent is true and plain in the forecited text, therefore so is the consequent.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Take the law here either more strictly, for the *moral law*, or more largely, as it comprehends the *ceremonial law*, still *Christ is the end of the law*. The moral law shuts up every man to Christ for righteousness, by convincing him (according to God's design in the publication of it) of the impossibility of obtaining justification in the way of works.

And the *ceremonial law* many ways prefigured Christ, his death and satisfaction, by blood, in our room, and so led men to Christ their true propitiation; and all its types were fulfilled and ended in Christ. Was there any such thing in Adam's *covenant*? You must prove there was, else you will never be able to make them one and the same *covenant*.

(6thly,) It seems exceeding probable from Acts vii. 27, 38. that the Sinai *covenant* was delivered to Moses by Jesus Christ, there called the *angel*. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Now, if Christ himself were the Angel, and the precepts of the law delivered by him to Moses were the *lively oracles of God*, as they are expressly affirmed to be; then the law delivered on mount Sinai cannot be a pure Adam's *covenant of works*: for it is never to be imagined that Jesus Christ himself should deliver to Moses such a covenant, directly opposite to all the ends of his future incarnation; and that those precepts (which, if they were of the same nature, and revived to the same end, at which Adam's covenant directly aimed) should be called the *lively oracles of God*; when contrariwise, upon your supposition, they could be no other than a ministration of condemnation and death: but that they were *lively oracles*, viz. in their design and intention, is plain in the text; and that they were delivered to Moses by Jesus Christ, the *angel of the covenant*, seems more than probable, by comparing it with the former verses.

(7thly,) Neither is it easy to imagine how such a *covenant*, which by the fall of Adam had utterly lost all its promises, privileges and blessings, and could retain nothing but the curses and punishments annexed to it, in case of the least failure, could possibly be numbered among the chief privileges in which God's Israel gloried; as it apparently was, Rom. ix. 4. "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."

These things considered, with many more (which the intended brevity of this discourse will not now admit) I am fully satisfied of the

falsity of your *position*, and so may you too, when you shall review the many gross and palpable absurdities with which I have clogged and loaded it, with many more, regularly and fairly deducible from it; which I could easily produce, did I not suspect these I have produced, have already prest your patience a little too far; but if ever I shall see (which I never expect) a fair and scriptural solution of these weighty objections, you may expect from me more arguments against your unsound *position*, which, at the present, I judge needless to add.

To conclude: These *premises* (as before I noted) can never be true, from whence such, and so many gross and notorious absurdities are regularly and unavoidably deducible. For *ex veris nil nisi verum*, from true premises nothing but truth can regularly follow.

Had you minded those things which I seasonably sent you, you had avoided all those bogs into which you are now sunk, and been able fairly to reconcile all those seeming contradictions in Paul's *epistles*, with respect to the law at Sinai: But, however, by what hath been said, your first position, *That the Sinai covenant is the same covenant of works with Adam's in paradise*, vanishes before the evidence of scripture, truth, and sound reason.

But yet, though what I have said destroys your false position, I am not willing to leave you, or the reader ignorant, wherein the truth lies in this controverted point betwixt us; and that will appear, by a due consideration of the following particulars.

(1.) It is plain and uncontroverted, that Adam's covenant in *paradise*, contained in a perfect law and rule of natural righteousness, founded both in God's nature and in man's; which, in its perfect state of *innocency*, was every way enabled perfectly to comply therewith: For the scripture tells us, Eccl. vii. 29. That *God made man upright*; and his punctual complying therewith, was the righteousness by which he stood.

(2.) This *covenant of works* being once broken, can never more be available to the justification and salvation of any fallen man. There was not now a law found that could give righteousness: The broken *covenant of works* lost immediately all the blessings and privileges which before it contained, and retained only the *curse* and *punishment*; in token whereof, *cherubims*, with flaming swords, turning every way, were set to keep the way of the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24.

(3.) Soon after the violation of the *covenant of works*, God was graciously pleased to publish for the relief of mankind, now miserable and hopeless, the *second covenant*, which we call the *covenant of grace*, Gen. iii. 15. which is the first opening of the grace of God in Christ to fallen man. And though this first promise of Christ was but short and obscure, yet it was in every age to be opened clearer and clearer, until the promised seed should come. After the first opening of this new covenant, in the first promise of Christ, the first covenant is shut up for ever, as a covenant of life and salvation; and all the world are shut up to the only way of salvation by Christ, Gal. iii. 23. It being con-

trary to the will of God, that two ways of salvation should stand open to man at once, and they so opposite one to another, as the way of works, and the way of faith are, Acts iv. 12. John xiv. 6. Gal. ii. 21.

(4.) It is evident, however, that after the first opening of the promise of Christ, Gen. iii. 15. God foreseeing the pride of fallen man, who naturally inclines to a righteousness of his own in the way of doing, was pleased to revive the law of nature, as to its matter, in the Sinai dispensation; which was 430 years after the first promise had been renewed, and further opened unto Abraham, of whose seed Christ should come: And this he did, not in opposition to the promise, but in subserviency thereto, Gal. iii. 21. And though the matter and substance of the law of nature be found in the Sinai covenant, strictly taken for the *ten commandments*; yet the ends and intentions of God in that terrible Sinai dispensation were twofold; (1.) To convince fallen man of the *sinfulness* and *impotency* of his nature, and the impossibility of obtaining righteousness by the law, and so by a blessed necessity, to shut him up to Christ, his only remedy. And, (2.) To be a standing rule of duty, both towards God and man, to the end of the world. But if we take the Sinai *covenant* more largely, as inclusive of the *ceremonial* with the *moral law* (as it is often taken, and is so by you, in the New Testament;) then it did not only serve for a *conviction* of impotency, and a *rule* of duty; but exhibited and taught much of Christ, and the mysteries of the new covenant in those its ceremonies, wherein he was prefigured to them.

(5.) Whence it evidently appears, that the Sinai *covenant* was neither repugnant to the *new covenant* in its scope and aim; "The law is not against the promise," Gal. iii. 21. nor yet set up as co-ordinate with it, with a design to open two different ways of salvation to fallen man; but was added to the promise in respect of its *evangelical* purposes and designs; On which account it is called by some a covenant of faith, or grace, in respect of its subserviency unto Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness, Rom. x. 4. and by others a subservient covenant, according to Gal. iii. 23, 24. And accordingly we find both tables of the law put into the ark, Heb. ix. 4. which shews their consistency and subordination with, and to the method of salvation by Christ in the *new-covenant*.

(6.) This design and intention of God was fatally mistaken by the Jews, ever since God promulgated that law at Sinai, and was by them notoriously perverted to a quite contrary end to that which God promulged it for, even to give righteousness and life, in the way of personal and perfect obedience; Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Hence Christ came to be slighted by them, and his righteousness rejected: For they rested in the law, Rom. ii. 17. were married to the law, as an husband, Rom. vii. 2, 3. and so might have no conjugal communion with Christ. However, Moses, Abra-

elect, discerned Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, and were led to him thereby.

(7.) This fatal mistake of the use and intent of the law, is the ground of those seeming contradictions, in Paul's epistles. Sometimes he magnifies the law, when he speaks of it according to God's end and purpose in its promulgation, Rom. vii. 12, 14, 16. But as it was fatally mistaken by the Jews, and set in opposition to Christ; so he thunders against it, calls it a *ministration of death and condemnation*: and all its appendant ceremonies *weak and beggarly elements*. And by this distinction, whatsoever seems repugnant in Paul's epistles, may be sweetly reconciled; and it is a distinction of his own making, 1 Tim. i. 8. "We know that the law is good if we use it lawfully." There is a good and an evil use of the law. Had you attended to these things, you had not so confidently and inconsiderately pronounced it a pure *covenant of works*.

II. *Position.*

Secondly, You affirm with like confidence, *That the covenant of circumcision is also the same; viz. the covenant of works made with Adam in paradise.*

This I utterly deny; and will try whether you have any better success in the proof of your second, than you had in your first *position*. And to convince you of your mistake, let us consider what the general nature of this ordinance of *circumcision* was; what its ends were; and then prove, That it cannot be what you affirm it to be, the very same *covenant* God made with Adam before the fall, but must needs be a *covenant of grace*.

(1.) *Circumcision*, in its general nature, was, (1.) An ordinance of God's own institution, in the 99th year of Abraham's age; at which time of its institution, God renewed the *covenant* with him, Gen. xvii. 9, 10. (2.) That it consisted (as all sacraments do) of an external sign, and a spiritual mystery signified thereby. The external part of it (which we call the sign) was the cutting off the foreskin of the genital part of the Hebrew males, on the eighth day from their birth. The spiritual mystery thereby signified and represented, was the cutting off the filth and guilt of sin from their souls, by regeneration and justification, called "the circumcision of the heart," Deut. x. 16. And though this was laid upon them by the command, as their duty, yet a gracious promise of power from God to perform that duty, was added to the command; Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart to love him," &c. just as promises of grace in the New Testament are added to commands of duty. (3.) Betwixt this visible outward sign, and spiritual mystery, there was a *sacramental relation*; from which revelation it is called the "token of the covenant," Gen. xvii. 12. "The sign and seal of the covenant," Rom. iv. 11. Yea, "the covenant itself," Acts vii. 8.

(2.) Next, let us consider the ends for which *circumcision* was instituted and ordained of God: Of which these were the principal.

(1.) It was instituted to be a *convictive sign* of their natural corruption, propagated by the way of natural generation: For which reason, this natural corruption goes in scripture under the name of the *uncircumcision of the heart*, Jer. ix. 26.

(2.) It also signified the putting off of this body of sin, in the virtue of Christ's death, Col. ii. 11.

(3.) It was appointed to be the initiating sign of the covenant, or a token of their *matriculation*, and admission into the church and covenant of God, Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 11.

(4.) It was ordained to be a discriminating mark betwixt God's covenanted people, and the Pagan world, who were strangers to the covenant, and without God in the world. And accordingly both parties were, from this ordinance, denominated the *circumcision* and the *uncircumcision*, Col. iii. 11.

(5.) It was also an obliging sign to Abraham and his seed, to walk with God in the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts, in the performance of all covenanted duties; in which duties, Abraham, and the faithful, walked *obediently*, with God, looking to Christ for righteousness: but the carnal Jews resting in, and trusting to those duties and ordinances for righteousness and justification, made it a covenant of works to themselves, and circumcision itself a *bond* of that *covenant*.

(6.) Now, forasmuch as *circumcision* prefigured Christ, who was to come of this holy circumcised seed of Abraham, and his death also was pointed at therein, Heb. ii. 16. Col. ii. 11. of necessity this ordinance must vanish at the death of Christ: and accordingly did so.

These things duly pondered, how irrational is it to imagine this *covenant of circumcision* to be the very same with the *paradisical covenant*? Did that *covenant* discover native corruption, and direct to its remedy in Christ, as this did? Surely it gave not the least glimpse of any such thing. Did that *covenant* separate and distinguish one person from another, as this did? No, no; it left all under equal and common misery, Eph. ii. 3.

Had Adam's covenant a seal of the righteousness of faith annexed to it, as this had? Rom. iv. 11. "He received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." The righteousness of faith is evangelical righteousness; and this *circumcision* sealed. Say not it was to Abraham only that it sealed it; for it is an injurious restriction put upon the seal of a *covenant*, which extended to the *fathers* as well as to Abraham, Luke i. 72. But you admit, however, that it sealed evangelical righteousness to Abraham: but I hope you will not say, that a seal of the *covenant of works* ever did, or could, seal evangelical righteousness to any individual person in the world. So then, turn which way you will, this truth still follows you, and will fasten upon you, that the *covenant of circumcision* was not a pure *covenant of works*, but a *gospel-covenant*. Which I thus prove:

Argument I.

If *circumcision* be a part of the *ceremonial law*, and the *ceremonial law* was dedicated by blood, and whatsoever is so dedicated, is by you confessed to be no part of the *covenant of works*; then *circumcision* is no part of the *covenant of works*, even by your own confession. But it is: *ergo*,

That it is a part of the *ceremonial law*, was never doubted, or denied by any man: that it was dedicated by blood, and therefore no part of the *moral law*, you yourself not only acknowledge, but vehemently plead for it, page 148, where you blame Mr. Sedgwick with some sharpness, and unbecoming reflection, for making no distinction betwixt the *ceremonial covenant*, which was dedicated by blood, and the law written in tables of stone; which was not so dedicated, and therefore could not be the same with the *moral law*, which you make the *covenant of works*; telling him, that this dedication by blood ought to distinguish it from the *moral law*, or *Sinai covenant* of works, as you say it doth, and ought to do; how then can *circumcision* be the same with, and yet quite another thing from the *Sinai covenant*? Was the ceremonial law dedicated by blood? Yes, the apostle plainly asserts it, (Heb. ix. 18, 19.) from Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. ‘Moses took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people; and took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning these things.’ But what kind of covenant then was this covenant that was sprinkled with blood? You tell us, p. 147, it could not possibly be the law written in stones, (which you make the *covenant of works*;) but was indeed another covenant, delivered at a distinct season, and in a distinct method. What covenant then must this be, seeing it could not possibly (as you say) be the *Sinai covenant* written in stones? It must either be the *covenant of grace*, or none. No, say you, that it was not, neither; for it was of the same nature with, and is no other than a *covenant of works*, p. 151. It was the same, and yet could not possibly be the same.

Mr. Sedgwick, that learned and grave divine, is checked, p. 148. for confounding the *ceremonial law* that was sprinkled with blood, with the *moral law* (which you call the *covenant of works*) that was not sprinkled with blood; and say you, p. 147. *It could not possibly be the same*. And then, p. 151, you say, *It is clear, these two, viz. the moral and ceremonial law, were both of the same nature; that is, no other than a covenant of works*. How doth this hang together? Pray reconcile it if you can. You say, *It is an ungrounded supposition of Mr. Sedgwick's, that that covenant which was so confirmed by blood, must of necessity be confirmed by the blood of Christ also*: p. 148. But, sir, the truth you oppose, viz. That the book of the *ceremonial law* was sprinkled by typical blood, and therefore confirmed by the blood of Christ, for the time it was to continue, shines like a bright sun-beam

in your own eyes, from Heb. ix. 14, 23. Was not the blood that sprinkled this law, the figure or type of Christ's own blood? Whose blood was it then, if not Christ's? How dare you call this an ungrounded supposition? Was not that blood typical blood? And what, I pray you, was the *antitype*, but Christ's blood? And did not the Holy Ghost signify the one by the other? Heb. ix. 8. I stand amazed at these things! You distinguish, and confound all again. You say, it could not possibly be the same with the law written in stone; and you say, it is clear both were of the same nature, no other than a *covenant of works*. At this rate you may say what you please; for I see *contradiction* is no crime in your book.

Argument II.

If *circumcision* was the seal of the righteousness of faith, it did not pertain to the *covenant of works*; for the righteousness of *faith* and *works* are opposites, and belong to the two contrary *covenants*.

But *circumcision* was the seal of the righteousness of faith; Rom. iv. 11. "He (i. e. Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." Therefore it pertains not to the *covenant of works*, but *grace*.

A man would think it impossible to evade so clear and scriptural an argument as this is. The *major proposition* is even self-evident and undeniable; the *minor*, the plain words of the *apostle*.

And what is your reply to this? Certainly as strange a one as ever I met with; p. 105. you say, *It is true, circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham; but it was so to him only in his extraordinary circumstances; but it was not so to any of his natural seed in its ordinary use.*

I cannot deny but I have met with such an assertion before in Mr. Tombes; and I can tell you too, that Bellarmine invented it before Mr. Tombes was born, and that Dr. Ames fully confuted it in his third tome, p. 27. proving, that there was no extraordinary cause on Abraham's account, why God should justify or seal him more than any other believer; and that Abraham had nothing to glory in before God. But to restrain as you do, the public seal of a covenant, that comprehended and equally concerned the whole *church* and *people* of God, to one single person; so that neither Isaac nor Jacob, who were by name enrolled in that great charter, should have any right to the seal of it, is such a conceit as amazes an intelligent reader. We know Abraham was the first that received it, but utterly deny that he received it only for himself; but he received it as the father of all them that believe, whither Jews or Gentiles, as the very next words tell us, "He received it, that he might be the father of all them that believe;" that is, for himself, and all his spiritual children. One half of this sacrament of *circumcision* you allow, p. 205. to the rest that were under it, viz. to be a *sign of the covenant*; but the other half you cut off, and say, it was only a *seal* to him. What good vouchers have you for this ex-

position of the text? Have you the concurrence of *orthodox expositors*? Or is it the rash and bold adventure of your own head? I am sure it no way agrees with the drift and scope of the apostle's argument, which evidently is to prove, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by faith, as Abraham was; and that the ground of justification and blessedness is common both to the uncircumcised Gentiles, and circumcised Jews; and that Abraham and all other believers, have but one way of justification, and salvation, and that how great soever Abraham was, in this case he hath found nothing whereof to glory, ver. 1, 2. And is not your exposition a notable one, to prove the community of the privilege of justification, because the seal of it was peculiar to Abraham alone? Rectify it, and better consider it.

Argument III.

In the covenant of circumcision, Gen. xvii. God makes over himself to Abraham and his seed to be their God, or give them a special interest in himself.

But in the *covenant of works*, God doth not, since the fall, make over himself to any, to be their God by way of special interest.

Therefore the *covenant of circumcision* cannot be the *covenant of works*.

This is so plain and clear, that none can doubt or deny it, that understands the nature of the two covenants. And now, sir, what course do you take to avoid this argument? Such a one sure as no man that ever I met with took before you, and that is this; you boldly cut Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. into two parts, and make the first to be the pure covenant of grace, which is the promissory part, to the *ninth verse*; and the *restipulation* (as you call it, p. 205.) to be as pure a covenant of works. What hard shift will some men make to maintain their opinion! You say truly, p. 205, that at the *seventh and eighth verses* was their restipulation: why then do you say, p. 224, that at *ver. 7th* he proceeds to speak of another *covenant* than what he had been speaking of before? Does the promise and the restipulation make two *covenants*; or are they just and necessary parts of one and the same *covenant*? You also tell us, that the *covenant*, Gen. xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4. was a plain transcript of several free promises of the gospel under the denomination of a *covenant*. But why then don't you take the restipulation, *ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.* to be a part of it? O no; there is something required on Abraham's and his posterity's part; they must be *circumcised*, and that spoils all. Why but, sir, if the requiring of *circumcision* alters the case so greatly, as to make it a quite contrary *covenant*; how comes it to pass, that in the *covenant* to Abraham, he himself was first required to be *circumcised*? Why, this is the reason; here is somewhat required on their part as a *condition*; and a *condition* quite alters the nature of the *covenant*. Very well; but tell me then why you say, p. 223, and in many other places, that the *covenant* made with Abraham, in Gen. xii. was a *gospel-covenant*; and yet there Abraham is

obliged to walk before God, and be perfect? Does not that also there alter the nature of the *covenant*, as well as here in the *seventeenth* chapter? You also grant, the *covenant* made with Abraham, Gen. xxii. was a pure *gospel-covenant*; or if you deny it, the apostle proves it, Heb. vi. 13. And yet there is more appearance of respect to Abraham's obedience in that *covenant*, than is in submitting to *circumcision*: see Gen. xxii. 16, 17. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, &c. That in blessing, I will bless thee; and in multiplying, I will multiply thee."

I will trouble you, on this head, but with one *query* more: if the four first verses of the xvii. of Genesis contain a pure *gospel-covenant*, as you say, and the restipulation in the following verses make a *covenant* of works, because it thereby becomes conditional; then tell me, if you please, whether what God graciously granted to Abraham in the former verses be not all nulled, and made void again by their restipulation? Does not this seem harsh? Here you have brought Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the believers of Abraham's race, just into the same case you brought Moses and all the Israelites before, under two opposite *covenants*, where one cuts off all that the other granted.

But there is a stronger reason urged than the *conditionality* of the *covenant*, to prove it a *covenant of works*; and that is, *circumcision* is made the *condition* of Abraham's *covenant*; and that is the worst of all *conditions*, for it obliges a man to keep the whole law, Gal. v. 3. it is the yoke of bondage, and to whatsoever *covenant* it be so annexed, it makes it become a *bondage legal covenant*. "If we be circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing." Thus it was in the *covenant*, Gen. xvii.

Great use is made of this in many parts of your discourse. But, sir, you are greatly mistaken in applying these texts to the purposes you do; for the apostle all along in that epistle to the Galatians, argues against the false teachers, who taught and pressed the necessity of *circumcision*, as a bond obliging them to the strict and perfect obedience of the law, in order to their justification thereby, or at least to join it with the righteousness of Christ, as a *con-cause of justification*; see Gal. ii. 4, 5. and iii. 1. Now against this abuse of *circumcision*, it is that the apostle argues thus, and tells them, that in submitting to it on that account, they made the death of Christ of no effect, and obliged themselves by it to the whole law; for *circumcision* did not simply and absolutely in the nature of the work or action, oblige men to the whole law in the way of justification by it, but it did so from the intention of the worker, and the supposition of such an opinion of it, and design in it; for in itself, and with respect to God's design in the institution of it, it was to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11. and so it was an excellent, useful, instructive ordinance to all believers, as long as the ceremonial law stood: and even when it was expiring, as the *gospel* began to open more and more clearly, there

was yet some kind of toleration of it to such as were born of Jewish parents: Thus Paul himself circumcised Timothy, his mother being a Jewess, Acts xvi. 1, 3. but Titus, being a Greek, was not circumcised, and that because of these false teachers, that would make an ill use of that their liberty, Gal. ii. 3, 4. This Paul could never have done, in case circumcision, in the nature of the act, had bound Timothy to keep the law for justification. By which it appears, that the action in its own nature did not oblige to the keeping of the whole law, but from the intention of the agent; and therefore, as the apostle rightly argues, if a man be circumcised with a design to be justified by it, he would thereby bind himself to the whole law, and frustrate the death of Christ to himself; but it was now to have its funeral with all other parts of the ceremonial law, which vanished, and were accomplished in the death of Christ; and it falling out that such a vile use was made of it at that time, the apostle thus thunders against it. Had this been observed, as also the like abuse of the *moral law*, you would have known how to have reconciled the apostle's *encomiums* of them both, with his sharp invectives against the one and the other. But being ignorant of these two great and necessary distinctions of the law, according to God's intention in the promulgation of it at Sinai, and the carnal Jews *sense* of it, as a pure *covenant of works*, against which the apostle so sharply inveighs in the places by you cited, all your 23 arguments from page 183, to page 187, fall to the ground at one stroke; your *medius terminus* having one sense in your *major proposition*, and another in your *minor*; and so every argument had four *terms* in it, as will easily be evinced by the particular consideration of the respective places from whence you draw them.

So in like manner, in your arguing here against *circumcision*, as a bond to keep the whole law, and as such vacating the death of Christ, is a stumble at the same stone, not distinguishing as you ought to have done, betwixt an obligation arising out of the nature of the work, and out of the end and intention of the workers; and this every learned and judicious eye will easily discern. But we proceed to

Argument IV.

That which in its direct and primary end teacheth man the corruption of his nature by sin, and the mortification of sin by the Spirit of Christ, cannot be a condition of the *covenant of works*; but so did circumcision in the very direct and primary end of it.

This ordinance supposeth the fall of man, points to the *means* and *instruments* of his sin and misery, and also to the remedy thereof by Christ: (1.) It singles out that *genital part* by which original sin was propagated, Gen. xvii. 11. Ps. li. 1. To this the sign of the covenant is applied in *circumcision*, for the remission of sins past, and the extirpation of sin for the future. (2.) Therefore it was instituted of God, that men might see both the necessity and true way of mortifying

their lusts, in the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, whereof baptism that succeeds it, is a sign now, as *circumcision* was then; as is plain from Col. ii. 11, 12. 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.' It is clear then that circumcision directed men to the death and resurrection of Christ, as the true and only means of mortifying their lusts; and if it did so, sure it was not the *covenant of works*, for that gives fallen man no hint of a remedy. (3.) It was also a *discriminating sign*, or *token*, betwixt the *church* and the *world*: God's people, and the heathens, who were accordingly denominated from it the *circumcision* and the *uncircumcision*, the *holy seed* and the Gentiles; and now under the New Testament, the children of Abraham by faith, and the children of the *flesh*: This also shews it cannot be the *covenant of works*; for in that covenant all are equally and alike concluded under sin and misery, Eph. ii. 3. and there is no difference made by that covenant betwixt person and person, state and state.

If this be not enough to evince, that the covenant of circumcision is a *covenant of grace*, I promise you many more arguments to prove it, as soon as I shall find these refuted, and your contrary assertion well discharged from the gross absurdities with which it is clogged and loaded. You see how genuine, natural, and congruous to scripture the notion of it as a covenant of grace is, and all the world may see how harsh, alien, and repugnant to scripture your notion of circumcision, as a *covenant of works*, is. You see into what bogs you are again driven in defence of your opinion: *Exemp. gra.*

That circumcision is a part of the *ceremonial law*, which was dedicated with blood, and therefore could be no part of the *moral law* or *ten commandments*, which was (say you) the *covenant of works*; and yet that it is of the same nature, and that it is clear it is no other than a *covenant of works*: do you not there distinguish and confound all again, blame and check Mr. Sedgwick without cause, and commit a greater absurdity presently than you charged him with? Do not you question whether that *covenant* was *typically* sealed by Christ's blood? Pray, sir, consider wherever God commands typical blood to be applied, it relates to Christ's blood spiritually applied; or to nothing.

Are not you forced, in defence of your erroneous *thesis*, to say with Bellarmine, That *circumcision* was extraordinary in its institution, and applied as a seal to none but Abraham himself? It excluded even Isaac, the type of Christ, and Jacob, a prince with God. O what will not men venture upon in defence of their darling opinions!

Are you not forced, for your security from the danger of the *third argument*, to cut one of the same covenants made with Abraham just in two, and of the pure promissory part to make a *covenant of grace*; and of the other part, which you yourself call a *restipulation*, to make

another quite opposite covenant? Do not you magnify the bounty and grace of God to Abraham in the first four verses, and then destroy it all, by putting him at once under a contrary covenant, and so cut off all capacity to enjoy one of those mercies?

Do not you make *circumcision*, in its own nature, without respect to the intention of the person, an obligation to the whole law, and that which frustrates the death of Christ, and yet must grant, that Paul himself took Timothy, and circumcised him, and yet thereby brought him under no such dangerous obligation to the law? In a word,

You reject all those covenants as legal, that have any conditions in them, or respect to any thing that is to be done by us, and allow Gen. xii. and Gen. xxii. to be pure *gospel covenants of grace*; and yet in the first, Abraham is bound to 'walk before God and be perfect;' and in the other God saith, 'For because thou hast done this thing, surely blessing I will bless thee.'

And so much for Abraham's *covenant*.

III. *Of the conditionality of the new covenant.*

Come we next to consider that opinion of yours, which led you into these other gross mistakes and absurdities, and that is this, that the *covenant of grace* is absolute; and whatever covenant is not so, but hath any condition upon our part, must needs for that reason be a *covenant of works*. See page 229. *It is observable (say you) that as the covenants mentioned Gen. ii. Exod. xx. &c. were all conditional, and therefore legal covenants, requiring strict and perfect obedience, as the condition propounded, in order to the enjoyment of the mercies contained in them, which are all therefore done away in Christ; so on the other hand we see, that the covenant God made with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. and Gen. xvii. 2, 3. and Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. was wholly free and absolute, and therefore purely evangelical, &c.* We will review these things anon, and see if you truly represent the matter; but in order to it, let me tell you,

First, What we mean by a gospel-condition.

Secondly, Prove that there are such in the gospel-covenant.

Thirdly, Shew you the absurdity of your opinion against it.

(1.) What we mean by a *condition* in the gospel-covenant. By a condition of the covenant, we do not mean in the strictest rigid sense of the word, such a restipulation to God from man of perfect obedience in his own person, at all times, so as the least failure therein forfeits all the mercies of the covenant; that is rather the condition of Adam's covenant of works, than of the evangelical covenant: nor do we assert any *meritorious condition*, that in the nature of an impulsive cause shall bring man into the covenant and its privileges, or continue him in when brought in. This we renounce as well as you: but our question is about such a condition as is neither in the nature of an act perfect in every degree, nor meritorious in the least of the benefit conferred, nor yet done in our own strength. But plainly and briefly, our question is, *Whether there be not something*

as an act required of us in point of duty, to a blessing consequent by virtue of a promise? Such a thing, whatever it be, hath the nature of a condition, inasmuch as it is antecedent to the benefit of the promise; and the mercy or benefit granted, is suspended until it be performed. The question is not, whether there be any intrinsical worth or value in the thing so required, to oblige the disposer to make or perform the grant or promise, but merely that it be antecedent to the enjoyment of the benefit; and that the disposer of the benefit do suspend the benefit until it be performed? Thus an act or duty of ours, which has nothing at all of merit in it, or answerable value to the benefit it relates to, may be in a proper sense a *condition* of the said benefit. “For what is a *condition* in the true notion of it, but * the suspension of a grant until something future be done?” “Or, † as others to the same purpose, ‘The adding of words to a grant, for the future, of a suspending quality, according to which the disposer will have the benefit he disposeth to be regulated?’” This properly is a *condition*, though there be nothing of equivalent value or merit in the thing required.

And such your brethren, in their narrative, page 14. do acknowledge faith to be, when they assert none can be actually reconciled, justified, or adopted, till they are really implanted into Jesus Christ by faith; and so, by virtue of this their union with him, have these fundamental benefits actually conveyed unto them; which contains the proper notion of the *condition* we contend for.

And such a *condition of salvation* we assert *faith* to be in the new covenant grant; that is to say, the grant of salvation by God in the gospel-covenant is suspended from all men, till they believe, and is due by promise, not merit, to them as soon as they do truly believe. The notes or signs of a condition given by *civilians*, or *moralists*, are such as these, *If, if not, unless, but if, except, only*, and the like. When these are added in the promise of a blessing or benefit for the future, they make that promise conditional; and your *grammar* (according to which you must speak, if you speak properly and strictly) will tell you, that *Si, sin, modo, dum, dummodo*, are all conditional particles; and it is evident, that these conditional particles are frequently inserted in the grants of the blessings and privileges of the New Testament. As for example; Mark ix. 23. εἰ δυνατοὶ πιστεῦσαι, “If thou canst believe.” Acts viii. 37. εἰ πῆς εὐεῖς ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, “If thou believest with thy whole heart thou mayest,” &c. Rom. x. 9. ὅτι εἶπεν, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart,” &c. thou shalt be saved.” Mat. xviii. 3. εἰ μὴ, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mark v. 36. μόνον, “Only believe.” Mark xi. 26. εἰ ἂν ἔρχῃ,

* *Conditio est suspensio alicujus dispositionis, tantisper dum aliquid futurum fiat.* Navarr. Enchirid. 482.

† *Est verborum adjectio in futurum suspendentium, secundum quam disponens vult dispositum regulari.*

“But if ye forgive not,” &c. with multitudes more, which are all conditional particles inserted in the grants of benefits.

(2.) Having shewn you what the nature of a *condition* is, I shall, I hope, make it plain to you, that *faith* is such a *condition* in the gospel-grant of our salvation; for we find the benefit suspended till this act of faith be performed; John iii. 36. “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” And most plainly, Rom. x. 9. having shewn before what the *condition* of legal righteousness was, he tells us there what the gospel-condition of salvation is; “The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” I ask you, sir, whether it be possible to put words into a frame more lively expressive of a *condition* than these are? Do but compare Mark xvi. 16. “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned:” Do but compare, I say, that scripture-phrase with the words of Jacob’s *sons*, which all allow to be conditional, Gen. xliii. 4, 5. “If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down;” and judge whether the one be not as conditional as the other: more particularly,

Argument I.

If we cannot be justified or saved till we believe, then faith is the *condition* on which those consequent benefits are suspended.

But we cannot be justified or saved till we believe; *Ergo*.

The sequel of the major is evident; for, as we said before, a *condition* is the suspension of a grant till something future be done. The minor is plain in scripture; Rom. iv. 24. “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that righteousness was imputed to him; but for our sakes also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe.” Οἱς μελλει λογιζεσθαι, *Quibus futurim est ut imputetur*, to whom it shall come to pass, that it shall be imputed, if we believe: And Acts x. 43. “Whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.” John iii. 36. “He that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;” with multitudes more. Now, sir, lay seriously before your eyes such scriptures as these, that promise salvation to believers, and threaten damnation to all unbelievers, as Mark xvi. 16. doth, and then give a plain and clear answer to this question; either the positive part of that text promises salvation absolutely to men, whether they believe or believe not, and consequently unbelievers shall be saved as well as believers; and the negative part threatens damnation absolutely to sinners, as sinners; and consequently all sinners shall be damned, whether they believe or not: or else, if you allow neither to be absolute, but that none can be saved till they believe, nor any damned when they do believe; is not that a conditional promise and threatening?

Argument II.

If God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. and that Gen. xvii. 2, 3. were (as you say) pure gospel-covenants of grace, and yet in both some things are required as duties on Abraham's part, to make him partaker of the benefits of the promises; then the covenant of grace is not absolute, but conditional.

But so it was in both these covenants; *Ergo*.

The minor only requires proof; for which let us have recourse to the places, and see whether it be so or not.

(1.) For the first you instance in as a pure gospel-covenant made with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. I must confess, as you dismember the text, p. 229. by chusing out the second and third verses, and leaving out the first, which was the trial of Abraham's obedience, in forsaking his native country, and his father's house; I say, give me but this liberty to separate and disjoin one part of a covenant from the other, and it is easy to make any conditional covenant in the world to become absolute; for take but the duty required, from the promise that is made, and that which was a conditional, presently becomes an absolute grant. Suppose, sir, that Abraham had refused to leave his dear native country, and dearest relations, as many do; think you that the promised mercies had been his? I must plainly tell you, you assume a strange liberty in this matter, and make a great deal bolder with the scriptures than you ought: and the very same usage the other scriptures hath.

(2.) For when you cite your *second covenant* with Abraham, you only cite Gen. xvii. 2, 3. and then call it an *absolute gospel-covenant*; when indeed you make it so, by leaving out the first verse, which contains the condition or duty required on Abraham's part; for thus run the three first verses; "And when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee," &c. Here an upright conversation before God is required of him, at God's entrance into this covenant with him; but that is, and must be omitted, and cut off, to make the covenant look absolute, I am really grieved to see the scriptures thus dealt with to deserve a design!

Argument III.

If all the promises of the gospel be absolute and unconditional, requiring no restipulation from man, then they cannot properly and truly belong to the new covenant.

But they do properly and truly belong to the *new covenant*; therefore they are not all absolute and unconditional.

The sequel of the major is only liable to doubt or denial, namely, That the absoluteness of all the promises of the New Testament cuts off their relation to a covenant; but that it doth so, no man can deny,

that understands the difference between a covenant and an absolute promise. A covenant is a mutual compact or agreement betwixt parties, in which they bind each other to the performance of what they respectively promise; so that there can be no other proper covenant where there is not a restipulation or re-obligation of one part, as well as a promise on the other; but an absolute promise binds only one party and leaves the other wholly free and unobliged to any thing in order to the enjoyment of the good promised. So then, if all the New Testament promises be unconditional and absolute, they are not part of a covenant, nor must that word be applied to them; they are absolute promises, binding no man to whom they are made to any duty, in order to the enjoyment of the mercies promised: But those persons that are under these absolute promises, must and shall enjoy the mercies of pardon and salvation, whether they repent or repent not, believe or believe not, obey or obey not. Now to what licentiousness this doctrine leads men, is obvious to every eye. Yet this absoluteness of the *covenant* (as you improperly call it) is by you asserted, p. 229, 230. There is (say you) no condition at all, it is wholly free and absolute, as the *covenant* with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. Gen. xvii. 2, 3. Thank you, sir, for making them so; for by cutting off the first verses, where the duty required on Abraham's part is contained, you make them what God never intended them to be. And the same foul play is in Deut. xxx. where you separate the plain condition contained in ver. 1, 2. from the promise, ver. 6. Or if the condition, ver. 1, 2. be not plain enough, but you will make it part of the promise, I hope that after, in ver. 10. is too plain to be denied. As to the other texts, more anon; mean time see how you destroy the nature of a *covenant*.

Object. But say you, pag. 233. To impose new conditions, though never so mild, is a new *covenant of works* with some mercy, but not a *covenant of grace*, properly so called.

Sol. It is true, if those works or acts of ours, which God requires, be understood of meritorious works in our own strength and power to perform, it destroys the free grace of the *covenant*; but this we utterly reject, and speak only of faith wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which receives all from God, and gives the entire glory to God; Eph. ii. 5, 8.

Object. But you will say, If faith be the *condition*, and that faith be not of ourselves, then both the *promise* and the *condition* are on God's part (if you will call faith a *condition*) and so still on our part the *covenant* is absolute.

Sol. This is a mistake, and the mistake in this leads you into all the rest; though faith (which we call the condition on our part) be the gift of God, and the power of believing be derived from God, yet the act of believing is properly our act, though the power by which we believe be of God? else it would follow, when we act any grace, as faith, repentance, or obedience, that God believes, repents, and obeys in us,

and it is not we, but God that doth all these. This, I hope, you will not dare to assert; they are truly our works, though wrought in God's strength? Isa. xxvi. 12. "Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us;" i. e. though they be our works, yet they are wrought in us by thy grace or strength.

As for Dr. Owen, it is plain from the place you cite in the doctrine of justification, p. 156, he only excludes conditions, as we do, in respect of the dignity of the act, as is more plain in his treatise of redemption, p. 103, 104. in which he allows conditions in both the *covenants*, and makes this the difference, That the Old required them, but the New effects them in all the *fœderates*.

I know no othodox divine in the world, that presumes to thrust in any work of man's into the *covenant of grace*, as a *condition*, which, in the Armenian sense, he may or may not perform, according to the power and pleasure of his own free will, without the preventing or determining grace of God; which preventing grace is contained in those promises, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, &c. Nor yet that there is any meritorious worth, either of *condignity* or *congruity* in the Popish sense, in the very justifying act of faith, for the which God justifies and saves us. But we say, That though God, in the way of preventing grace, works faith in us, and when it is so wrought, we need his assisting grace to act it, yet neither his assisting nor preventing grace makes the act of faith no more to be *our* act; it is we that believe still though in God's strength, and that upon our believing, or not believing, we have or have not the benefits of God's promises; which is the very proper notion of a *condition*.

Argument IV.

If all the promises of the new covenant be absolute and unconditional, having no respect nor relation to any grace wrought in us, nor duty done by us, then the trial of our interest in Christ, by *marks* and *signs* of grace, is not our duty, nor can we take comfort in sanctification, as an evidence of our justification.

But it is a Christian's duty to try his interest in Christ by *marks* and *signs*; and he may take comfort in sanctification, as an evidence of justification. *Ergo*.

The sequel of the *major* is undeniably clear: so that can never be a sign or evidence of an interest in Christ, which that interest may be without; yea, and as * Dr. Crispe asserts, according to his Antinomian principles, 'Christ is ours (saith he) before we have gracious qualifications; every true mark and sign must be inseparable from that it signifies.' Now, if the works of the Spirit in us be not so, but an interest in Christ may be where these are not, then they are no proper marks or signs; and if they are not, it cannot be our duty to

* Dr. Crispe, 2d Vol. of Christ exalted, Sermon 14.

make use of them as such, and consequently if we should, they can yield us no comfort.

The *minor* is plain in scripture; 1 John ii. 3. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The meaning is, we perceive and discern ourselves to be sincere believers, and consequently that Christ is our propitiation, when obedience to his commands is become habitual and easy to us; So 1 John iii. 19. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him;" *i. e.* by our sincere cordial love to Christ and his members, as ver. 18. this shall demonstrate to us, that we are the children of truth; and again, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we are passed from death to life; because we love the brethren:" With multitudes more to the same purpose, which plainly teach Christians to fetch the evidences of their justification out of their sanctification, and to prove their interest in Christ, by the works of his Spirit found in their own hearts.

And this is not only a Christian's liberty, but his commanded duty to bring his interest in Christ to this touchstone and test; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves, prove yourselves," &c. 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure?" *i. e.* your election by your calling. No man can make his election sure *a priori*, nor can any make it surer than it is *in se*; therefore it is only capable of being made sure to us *a posteriori*; arguing from the work of sanctification in us, to God's eternal choice of us.

And as the saints in all ages have taken this course, so they have taken great and lawful comfort in the use of these marks and signs of grace; 2 Kings xx. 3. 2 Cor. i. 12.

I am sensible how vehemently the Antinomian party, Dr. Crispe, Mr. Eyre, and some others, do oppugn this truth, representing it as legal and impracticable (for they are for the absolute and unconditional nature of the *new covenant*, as well as you); but by your espousing their principle, you have even run Anabaptism into Antinomianism; and must, by this principle of yours, renounce all marks and trials of an interest in Christ, by any work of the Spirit wrought in us. You must only stick to the immediate sealings of the Spirit; which, if such a thing be at all, it is but rare and extraordinary.

I will not deny but there may be an immediate testimony of the Spirit; but sure I am his mediate testimony by his graces in us, is his usual way of sealing believers. We do not affirm any of these his works to be meritorious causes of our justification; or that, considered abstractly from the Spirit, they can of themselves seal, or evidence our interest in Christ; Neither do we affirm, that any of them are complete and perfect works; but this we say, that they being true and sincere, though imperfect graces, they are our usual and standing evidences, to make out our interest in Christ by. And I hope you, and the whole Antinomian *party*, will find it hard, yea, and impossible, to remove the saints from that comfortable and scriptural way of

examining their interest in Christ, by the graces of his Spirit in them; as the saints, who are gone to heaven before them, have done in all generations.

Argument V.

If the *covenant of grace* be altogether absolute and unconditional, requiring nothing to be done on our part, to entitle us to its benefits; then it cannot be man's duty in entering covenant with God, to deliberate the terms, count the cost, or give his consent by word or writing, explicitly to the terms of this covenant.

But it is man's duty in entering covenant with God, to deliberate the terms, and count the cost; Luke xiv. 26, to 34. and explicitly to give his consent thereunto, either by word or writing: *Ergo*.

The sequel of the *major* is self-evident: For where there are no terms or conditions required on our part, there can be none to deliberate, or give our consent to; and so a man may be in a covenant without his own consent.

The *minor* is undeniable in the text cited: If you say, These are *duties*, but not *conditions*; I reply, they are such *duties*, without the performance of which we can have no benefit by Christ and the new covenant, Luke xiv. 33. And such *duties* have the true suspending nature of *conditions* in them. If you say they are only subsequent duties, but not antecedent or concomitant acts, the 28th verse directly opposes you: *Let him first sit down and count the cost*. And for those overt-acts, whereby we explicitly declare our consent to the terms of the *covenant*, at our first entering into the bond of it, I hope you will not say, that it is a *legal covenant* too; Isa. xlv. 3, 4. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine off-spring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses; One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," &c. A plain allusion to soldiers, when they list themselves under a captain, or general.

What remains now to reply to these arguments, but either that the places by me cited and argued upon, do not intend the *new covenant*, under which we are; or that this *new covenant* hath its *conditions*, and is not altogether absolute, as you have asserted it to be.

And thus, sir, you are fairly beaten off (if I mistake not) from the new ground you had chosen and marked out to raise your battery upon, to demolish that strong fort which secures the right of believers infants to *baptism*; and you must return again to the old answers of Mr. Tombes, and others, to our solid and substantial argument from Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. which have been baffled over and over by Baxter, Blake, Sydenham, and many other stout champions for *infants baptism*.

All that I am further concerned about, is to examine so many of those scriptures as you have spoken to, which are by us produced in defence of those four grounds or principles mentioned in the beginning of this discourse, whereon we establish the right of *infants baptism*; and to vindicate those scriptures from your strained and injurious interpretations of them: Which being done, they will each of them stand in those eminent places of service, where they have been so long useful to the cause we defend.

As for your pretended solutions of the incomparable Mr. Baxter's, and the learned and accurate Dr. Burthogg's arguments, I admire at your confidence therein; and let me tell you, without breach of charity, it is an high piece of confidence in you, to throw the gantlet, and bid defiance to two such worthies yet alive, and easily able to detect your folly, in the weakness and impertinency of your answers. Alas! my friend, you little know what it is to have such weak and inartificial discourses as yours brought under the strict *examen* of such acute and judicious eyes. But,

—————*Sic dama leonem*
Insequitur, auctque viro concurrere virgo.

Nor will I presume to anticipate either of their answers to your discourse (if they shall think it worthy of an answer); but rather briefly reflect upon what you return to the arguments of those eminent divines that are gone to glory in the faith of that truth you oppose, and are not capable of defending their solid and regular interpretations of scriptures, against the notions you force upon them, contrary both to the grammar and scope of several of them.

And here sir, in the beginning, let me mind you what a learned and judicious person saith, about all interpretations of scriptures: "Four things (*saith he*) commend an interpretation, and establish it as a king upon the throne, against whom there is no rising up."

First, If the letter and grammar of the text fairly bear it.

Secondly, If the scope and argument of the place will close directly with it.

Thirdly, If the interpretation set up against it, cannot stand before both, or either of the former.

Fourthly, If the judgment of learned, wise, and impartial men be found generally agreeable to it.

According to these rules (whereat you can have no just exception) I shall briefly, yet I hope clearly and sufficiently, answer some of the replies you make to the arguments of those deceased worthies: And,

(1.) In page 1. you produce Mr. William Allen's argument, *ad hominem*, against your practice: 'He tells you, your own principle condemns you; for you reject the baptizing of infants, because there is no example in the New Testament of it; and yet baptize persons at age, whose parents were Christians; which is as much without a gospel precedent, or example, as the former. *The sum of your reply is*, That though it should be granted, that there is no express ex-

ample for the baptizing such in scripture, yet there are examples enough concerning the baptism of believers.

Reply. Here you grant all that Mr. Allen objects; viz. 'That you are altogether without example or precedent for your practice; And object to him and us, what he nor we ever scrupled or denied; viz. The baptizing of some adult persons, upon the personal profession of their faith.' I have done it myself, and, in like circumstances, am ready to do it again. Once you clearly yield it, that you have no precedent nor example for your practice in the gospel: That is all that he seeks, and what he seeks, you plainly grant. As to the precept and examples of baptizing adult believers, whose parents were unbelievers, and themselves never baptized in infancy, that is not the point you are now to speak to; nor have we any controversy about it. Certainly you are none of the fittest persons in the world to clamour so loudly against us, for want of express precedents for *infants baptism*, whilst yourself confesses, you want even one precedent in the New Testament to legitimate your own practice; and in the mean time are found in the sinful neglect of a sweet and heavenly gospel-ordinance, viz. the singing of *psalms*, for which you have both precept and precedent in the gospel, Col. iii. 16. Jam. v. 13. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

(2.) It is objected against you, pag. 2. 'That if the commission, Mat. xxviii. excludes none from baptism, but such as are to be excluded by the order therein to be observed; and if baptizing and teaching are to precede, or follow one the other, as there named by Christ, then these two conclusions will follow. (1.) That infants are not there excluded from baptism. (2.) That a person may be baptized, before he be taught; for there we have, *First*, Μαθητευσατι παντα τα εθνη, disciple all nations; make them disciples, or Christians. *Secondly*, We have Βαπτιζοντες και διδασκοντες; which literally to translate, is baptizing and teaching. Now then discipling being a general word, that contains in it the two others that follow, viz. baptizing and teaching; and being the *imperative mood*, whereas the other two are *participles*; it is manifest, that the whole command or commission, is given in that, and the mode of execution in these. And if the mode of executing that general commission be expressed in these, where baptizing is first, and teaching comes after; what is become of the order of the *Antipædobaptists* that have been so long talked of?

The sum of your answer is, 'That if baptizing be first, and teaching comes after; then it will follow, that the apostles understood not their commission aright; for they first preached, and then baptized them that by their preaching believed, Acts viii. Acts x. Acts ii. with many other places you heap up to the same purpose. And therefore infants must be excluded by that commission, because incapable of being taught. And therefore let us criticise as we please upon *imperative moods*, and *participles*, the case is clear, teaching must go before baptizing.'

Reply. It had been more modest to suspect that you understood not the text aright, than that the apostles understood not their commission aright. The order of the words (as this well-fortified objection declares that you cannot deny) puts *teaching* after *baptizing*: And though we should allow you, that they disciplined adult persons by *teaching*, and taught others baptized in infancy, after their baptizing them; in both they followed their order and commission, in discipling the parents by preaching, and teaching their children baptized, by virtue of the promise to them, after their baptism. For he declares, Acts ii. 'the promise is to them, and to their children;' which gives a right to both unto baptism: And so *teaching*, according to the order of this *commission*, may be an antecedent duty to the parent, and a subsequent duty to him and his baptized children. For if Μαθηλευσατε includes teaching before baptizing, why should not Διδασκαλειε, which is put after baptizing, respect the subsequent duty of teaching both the one and the other?

(3.) Mr. Allen's next argument, mentioned by you, pag. 5. is taken from Matth. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Whence he argues against your objection, of the incapacity of *infants* for *baptism*; that if they are capable of interest, or membership in the kingdom of heaven, or church, they are equally capable of the sign or cognizance, which is *baptism*.

To this you reply three things: (1.) 'That it remains to be proved, that these little children were infants, and not grown boys or girls, capable of making an actual profession of their faith in Christ. (2.) It is doubtful, whether they were for the present in the kingdom of God, or were only elected, and so in time should be of his kingdom. And (3.) whatever they were, they were brought unto Christ, who himself baptized not; not to his disciples, who did baptize.'

Reply. Your first exception is vain and groundless: That they were very young, and little ones, appears not only by Christ's taking them in his arms, but from the very notation of the word Παιδια, a diminutive word, signifying a little child, or infant. So John was called, when new born, Luke i. 76. And Christ, when he lay in the manger; and Moses, when among the flags. And if this be not enough, St. Luke gives them another, Luke xvii. 15. Τα βρεφη, infants; a word given to a child in the womb, Luke i. 47. And for what you object out of Piscator, that the same word is used of Timothy, who knew the scriptures from a child; it is an evident mistake or shift; For the word is, απο βρεφους: he knew them, not being an *infant*, but from his *childhood*, or *infancy*; that is, when he had passed his *infant-state*, in which state these were that were brought unto Christ. And, (2.) Whereas you question their present right in the kingdom of God, or whether it were not future, by virtue of their election? The text will not allow your interpretation, Των γαρ τοιςτων εστιν, *Of such is not*: not, εσθαι, *shall be, the kingdom of God.* Their present church-membership, assert-

ed by Christ, is also a known rule, to regulate for the future the disciples carriage towards them; which was too severe, harsh, and therefore highly displeasing to Christ: But by telling them they were members of the church or kingdom of heaven, (they being very probably the *infants* of believing parents, as their bringing them unto Christ with such affection, through the frowns and repulses of the disciples, shews) he gives them a known and plain rule, how to distinguish *infants*, and regulate their carriage towards them; which God's election can never be, that being an unrevealed secret. And, (3.) Whereas you say Christ did not baptize them: I reply we never urged this scripture, to prove he did so; but only to prove their *church-membership*; which, methinks, Christ asserts as plainly as words can assert it, whence he saith, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. And though you use to quibble at the word *Τοιςτοις*, *of such*, as though it respected not the present infants, but grown persons, resembling them in humble innocent qualities; Mr. Sydenham hath sufficiently baffled that interpretation, by shewing its inconsistency with the scope and argument of that place, and how ridiculous this sense would be, when reduced to a formal argument.

(4.) The fourth argument you pretend to answer, p. 8. is drawn from 1 Cor. vii. 14. "Else were your children unclean, " but now are they holy." To this you answer two things: (1.) That the holiness here spoken of, is not a fœderal, but a matrimonial holiness, namely, *legitimacy*; and is as much as to say, Your children are no bastards, seeing one of you is a *believer*.

Reply. If this be the true and genuine sense of this text, then all the children in the world, not immediately descended from one, or both believing parents, must of necessity be all bastards; their parents, how solemnly soever married, must live in uncleanness: And what mad work (think you) will this assertion make in the world; and how many millions of persons will it nearly touch, both in point of honour and inheritance?

(2.) You say, though the holiness here spoken of, should be allowed to be a fœderal, or covenant holiness; yet for want of an express institution, it will not warrant our practice.

Reply. The holiness of the *children* being granted to be a covenant holiness, none can deny them to be within the *covenant*: how else come they to be holy by *covenant*; And if within the *covenant*, who can deny them the initiating sign, which is *baptism*? Or how shall they (ordinarily) be visibly admitted into the visible church without it? The connection betwixt their fœderal holiness, and right to baptism, will appear plain enough from Acts ii. 38, which you come next to speak to.

(5.) You attempt to answer Mr. Allen's argument from Acts ii. 38. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

On this text, you know, we lay a very great stress for the proof of *infants baptism*; and deserves a remark, that you wholly suppress our *arguments* drawn from that text, but however return an *answer* to them all, such as it is. You first tell us, 'The promise here spoken of, is not a promise of any external privileges, but the promise of the gospel, or the grace of God in Christ Jesus.'

Secondly, 'That the promise was not to their children, as believers seed, nor to them, or any other uncalled by the Lord; but only a promise of remission of sins, and receiving the Holy Ghost, upon their actual repentance; which infants cannot perform, and therefore cannot here be intended.' This is the true and whole sense of your *answer*.

Reply. Now, because you have wholly omitted our *argument* from this text (for which doubtless there was some reason) I think myself obliged to let the world know, how we expound it, and what we duly infer from that exposition of it; and then let the reader judge, whether by the fore-mentioned rules of a just interpretation, you or we are in the right.

(1.) We observe this famous text to contain the first *argument* used by the apostle, after Christ's ascension, to persuade the Jews to embrace *Christianity*, by repenting, and submitting themselves to *baptism*, the initiating sign of it; and therefore here we justly expect much light about this controverted point: Nor doth the apostle, in this text, deceive our expectation.

(2.) We take it for granted, that the direct and proper scope of this place, is to persuade the Jews (to whom St. Peter preached) to repent, and be baptized. This you allow, when you say, p. 10. 'He uses it as a motive, why they and theirs should actually repent, and be baptized.' In these two then there is no controversy.

(3.) We take it for certain, that the promise here referred to by Peter, is that gracious promise, Gen. xvii. 7. 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.' The adjoining of their *children* to them, saith Calvin, (and with him runs the general current of *expositors*) depends on the words of that promise, Gen. xvii. 6. If you be not satisfied with this, but rather will refer it to Joel ii. 28. you are then obliged to answer Mr. Sydenham's argument *a fortiori*, from that reference. But you make no exception at all to this accommodation of it: And then the sense must be this; the promise shall run as before, 'to you and to your children.'

(4.) We say, that except it had had relation to the *covenant* with Abraham, there had been no occasion, or reason at all, here to have mentioned *children* as well as *parents*: 'The promise is to you, and your children.' It had been enough, if he had only intended the believing parents, exclusive of their infant-seed, to have said, The promise is made to 'as many as the Lord our God shall call.' What reason, or occasion, was there to bring in their *children* at all?

(5.) We find here the *children* both of believing Jews and Gentiles, mentioned in the promise, accompanying the precept of *baptism*; and the precept to them built on the promise, as that which gave them their title to *baptism*; $\Upsilon\mu\iota\upsilon\gamma\alpha\rho\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma$, "For the promise is to you, and to your children." In the same line that he mentions baptism, he also mentions the promise upon which their right is founded; and in the same breath with which he mentions their children, he also mentions the promise: which he would never have done, had his design been to have excluded their children from both, or either of them; especially seeing their *children* had been so long in the possession of both. These things are obvious, natural, and every way agreeable, both to the grammar and scope of the text. Whence we argue:

Arg. If the *promise* be the same to *believers* under the gospel, that ever it was to Abraham and his natural seed; then the *children of believers*, by virtue thereof, have as good a title to *baptism*, as Abraham's *children* had to *circumcision*.

But the *promise* is the same: *Ergo*, &c.

Next let us consider your *answers*.

(1.) You say, *The promise, here spoken of, is not a promise of any external privilege, but the promise of the gospel.*

Reply. Your distinction is vain and groundless; for it opposeth promises, that contain external privileges, to gospel promises, contrary to 1 Tim. iv. 8. "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." *Secondly*, Circumcision then, and baptism now, which have both their foundation in that promise, contain privileges in them of both sorts. This no man can deny, but he that thinks it no privilege to be admitted into the visible church, by the external initiating sign, and to be thereby distinguished from the Pagan world. You have no warrant, therefore, to divide those things which God hath united.

(2.) You say, *The promise was not to them as believers seed, nor to any uncalled by the Lord.*

Reply. Your meaning is, that these words [*as many as the Lord shall call*] are a limitation of the promise to them only, whether parents or children, that are actually called. Let this your interpretation be compared with, and examined by the scope of the text, which you confessed before to be a motive to persuade them and theirs to repentance and baptism, and see if it can stand before it, as ours doth. For if this be the meaning, then the apostle's argument must run thus: I exhort you, convinced Jews, to repentance and Christian baptism: for whereas you, and your children, have hitherto been an holy seed, and the promise formerly was to them as well as you: but now the case is altered: if you yourselves repent, and be baptized, you shall have the benefit of the promise; but as for your children they shall be in the self-same case, and state, with the children of Pagans and infidels. Indeed if any of your children shall hereafter *believe*, they

shall have benefit by the promise, but no more than the children of Pagans and infidels, which upon repentance shall be equal with them. "Repent ye therefore, and be baptized: for the promise is unto you, and to your children." This, and no other, must the apostle's motive be, according to your interpretation and limitation of his words.

We make the motive or argument to run thus: 'God hath now remembered his *covenant* to Abraham, in sending that blessed seed, in whom he promised to be the God of him, and his seed; yea, and of all believing Gentiles, as well as Jews and their children: do not you therefore, by your unbelief, deprive both yourselves, and your dear children, of the mercies and privileges of so great a promise? "Repent, therefore, and be baptized; for the promise is unto you, and to your children," &c. Let the impartial reader judge both, and the acknowledged scope of the place determine the matter. And as it cannot stand with the scope of the place, so neither (as Mr. Sydenham* hath plainly evinced) with the grammar of the text, nor rules of logic, by which according to your *exposition*, the word [*children*] must be redundant and superfluous, as being neither comprehended under Jews or Gentiles, those that are near, or far off: into which two classes, or ranks, the text distributes the whole world; but must stand out of the text, as a party by themselves, though expressly mentioned in it, as those to whom the *promise* belongs. But enough of this.

(6.) Having vindicated Acts ii. 38, 39. which confirms our fourth assertion, viz. the identity of the *promise* the Jews were, and we are under; we proceed next to vindicate Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, whereby we prove the succession of *baptism* to *circumcision*, and vindicate it from that foreign sense you force upon it, to the great injury of the text, as well as of our *infants*, whom you exclude from any concernment therein.

Without any representation at all of the grounds on which we proceed, to prove the succession of this ordinance to that, you (as rashly as confidently) call it a groundless inference; which, whether it be or no, let the impartial judge, when they shall see the grounds on which we build that assertion.

(1.) It is out of controversy, that the scope of this place is to take off the Colossians from *circumcision*, and other Jewish rites and ceremonies, which the false teachers at that time earnestly endeavoured to reduce them to; as appears ver. 4. to be his plain design: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." And he saith it with great concernment of mind, as appears ver. 1.

(2.) It is as plain, that the argument by which he establishes them in the truth of the gospel, and secures them against the danger of returning to those Jewish rites, especially *circumcision*, is drawn from their completeness in Christ without it; ver. 9, and 10. And that whatsoever they had under *circumcision*, they now enjoy in as com-

* Infant Baptism, p. 44, 45.

plete and full a measure and manner, as ever Abraham and his seed did. "And ye are complete in him," i. e. in Christ.

(3.) To evince this, he instanceth in the very case then under debate, viz. circumcision, ver. 11, 12. And first distinguishing of a twofold circumcision, one made with, and the other without hands, which he calls the *circumcision of Christ*: he tells them, as to both of these, (namely, inward circumcision of the heart, and the external sign thereof too) both are fully answered in baptism; "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism," ver. 11, 12. That is, look, as before inward circumcision of the heart was signified by outward circumcision of the flesh, as the proper, direct, and appointed sign of it; so now, the same inward circumcision, or regeneration of the soul, is as really and fully signified to you, by the new gospel sign of it, which is baptism; and therefore you are as complete, in respect both of outward and inward privileges now, as ever Abraham and his seed were. Do but convert the proposition, and suppose the apostle's design had been to take them off from baptism, and bring them back to circumcision; and in order to it had said, "In whom ye are also baptized with the baptism of Christ, being circumcised with him;" would not the substitution of circumcision in the place of baptism have been clear? And why is not this as clear as that would have been?

(4.) We further say, That except he had intended in these words to have placed baptism as an external ordinance, in place and stead of outward circumcision, he could never have pitched upon a worse instance than that of circumcision, which was so much valued by them: yea, from the very instance he brings, he had put a strong objection into their mouths, against his assertion, ver. 10. That we are every way as complete without it, as the Jews were with it; for then their children enjoyed an ordinance of great value, which ours are deprived of, having none under the gospel in lieu of it. Hence we argue:

Argument. If the ordinance of baptism now be appointed to answer the same ends that the circumcision did to the Jews, and to make us every way as complete in privileges as circumcision did them, then it comes in the place and room of it; and our *children* have the same right to this, as theirs had to that.

But the antecedent is plain, from the scope and argument of the apostle in this text and context: *Ergo*, So is the consequent.

The sum of your answer is, (1.) 'That circumcision in the flesh, is neither expressed nor meant here, but that of Christ in his own person. (2.) That if baptism had been intended to have come in the place of circumcision; then it would follow, that females must be excluded from baptism.'

Reply. Your first *answer* is manifestly false: for if the apostle distinguishes of a twofold circumcision, one made with hands, the other

made without hands; then it is manifest, he means the *circumcision in the flesh*, which is now abolished, and all its ends and uses answered in *gospel baptism*. And whereas you say, The circumcision here spoken of, is no other than the circumcision of Christ in his own person; I would gladly know how the Colossians are said to be circumcised in Christ's personal *circumcision* only? And whether the *baptism* here spoken of, wherewith they are said to be *buried with him*, be not meant of Christ's personal *baptism* too; and, consequently, there is no need of the outward *ordinance* to pass upon them, or us; but especially, it is worth while for you to explain the reason why he calls the Colossians' circumcision, a *circumcision of Christ made without hands*, if he only intends Christ's personal *circumcision*; when we all know, that Christ's personal *circumcision* was a *circumcision made with hands*; and could not possibly be such a *circumcision* as theirs was, consisting in the *putting off* the body of the sins of the flesh, or mortification of their corruptions. Christ had no sin by propagation, to put off or mortify in his own person.

(2.) Your second *answer* is no less absurd; *That, if baptism, according to our argument, succeeds in the place of circumcision, then females must be excluded from baptism*. You had as good have said, that the enlargement of the privilege under the gospel, is no good medium to prove we are as complete now under *baptism* as they were under *circumcision*. Cannot *baptism* stand in the place of *circumcision*, because it answers all its ends with an advantage? This, to me, is a very strange answer; however, it must stand in the place of a better, rather than *baptism* shall stand in the place of *circumcision*.

Object. But if *baptism* succeed in the room of *circumcision*, and there be such an analogy betwixt them, as you pretend; then it will follow, that you are obliged to *baptize* your children on the eighth day as they *circumcised* theirs.

Sol. The objection is frivolous and vain: no man, that I know, doubts, but the *Lord's supper* succeeds in the room and place of the *passover*. Christ was the substance of that, as well as this; and that was abrogated by his institution of this, the very same night: as soon as he and his disciples had celebrated the one, the other was instituted, and immediately succeeded it. And yet Christians are not obliged to the same month, day, or hour, for the celebration of the *Lord's supper*: the analogy is betwixt the substantial parts of both; amongst which, the spiritual mystery, principal ends, and proper subjects, are of principal consideration; not the minuter circumstances of time and place. In the *passover* and the *Lord's supper*, there is a correspondence betwixt the proper subjects of both. No uncircumcised person, or stranger to the *covenant*, might eat of that, Exod. xii. 43, 48. No unbelieving person, uncircumcised in heart, hath a right to this, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28. So in the other; the infants of God's covenanted people were the proper subjects of *circumcision* then, and so they are (say we) of *baptism* now; for the same pro-

nise is still to believers and their children, Acts ii. 38, 39. Here lies the analogy, and not in the variable circumstances of time.

Whereas you say, p. 12. *Baptism* cannot succeed *circumcision*, because it leaves no character or mark upon the body, as that did. This very objection of yours is borrowed in express words from Socinus, that enemy of Christ, in *disp. de bapt.* p. 113. and fully answered by *Maccovius, loc. com.* p. 830, 831.

Object. But it will be further said, That according to our opinion, there can be no analogy, or correspondency, betwixt the very subjects of both ordinances; for *infants*, at eight days old, were the proper subjects of *circumcision*; but the subjects of *baptism* were adult believers, from the time of its first institution: and so the analogy fails in the very subjects.

Sol. This objection is grounded upon a great mistake: it is your opinion, not ours, that destroys it; for with us it lies fairly in these three respects of it. (1.) We find, that at the first institution of *circumcision*, Abraham, the father, at ninety years old, and all the men of his house, were first *circumcised*, Gen. xvii. 25, 26, 27. Answerably, at the first institution of *baptism*, parents, masters of families, &c. being adult believers, were first baptized. (2.) After the *circumcision* of Abraham, and the men of his house, their *infant-seed* were also *circumcised*, the promise belonging to them, as well as their parents. Answerably, under the *gospel*, the whole families of *believers* were baptized; and the promise runs to their *infants* under the *gospel*, as it did before, Acts ii. 39. (3.) As in the days of *circumcision*, if any stranger that had not been *circumcised* in his *infancy*, should afterward become a proselyte, and join himself to the Lord, he was to be *circumcised*, of whatever age he was: so now, if any *infidel* shall be converted, he is to be *baptized*, upon his personal profession of faith: and so much for the analogy. As for your correspondency of *identity*, I cannot understand it.

I meet with little more in your first part, wherein I have any concernment; only there I find four arguments, in mood and figure, against the innovation of *symbolical rites*, by human authority, into the worship of God; which is certainly the best *page* in your book: and of them I have nothing to say, but that they are good ware; and I very well knew the mark and number of that *parcel of goods*, and to whom they properly belong.

But yet before I dismiss your book, I think myself concerned to vindicate one place of scripture more, viz. Rom. xi. 16, 17. which I alleged in the beginning for the confirmation of our first proposition, viz. That God's *covenant* with Abraham, Gen. xvii. is the same *covenant* for substance we Gentile believers are now under, 'If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-

tree, boast not against the branches,' &c. This place is deservedly of great value with us, to prove, that we Gentile *believers*, with our *infant-seed*, are invested under the *gospel* with the same substantial privileges that the Jews and their *infants* formerly enjoyed. Here, without opening one term, you proceed, in your wonted manner, confidently to deny the arguments of our learned divines from this place. I shall therefore open this famous text, and regularly deduce the right of Gentile *believers infants* to *baptism* from it. And here, keeping to the *rules* above ;

(1.) I note, that verses 13, 14, 15. give us the true level and scope of the apostle's argument, which is to prove the calling in again of the Jews, though for the present broken off ; and on this ground to excite himself to all diligence for their conversion, and suppress all *glorying* and *boasting* in the Gentile *believers*, as if they were more worthy than those, because they fill their rooms and places.

(2.) To prove the calling again of the Jews, he argues strongly, ver. 16. from the *federal* holiness derived to the branches from their root or ancestors ; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the *covenant* was made, Gen. xvii. ' For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches ;' i. e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being in covenant with God, a *federal holiness* is from them derived to the branches. And this can be no other than a *federal holiness*, because those their ancestors were utterly incapable to transmit any inherent holiness to them, that being the incommunicable prerogative of God. This *federal holiness* lying still in the root (the *covenant* with Abraham) will recover the branches again to life, though at present many of them be broken off ; as Job speaks in another case, Job xiv. 7, 8, 9. ' There is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease ; though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof dry in the ground ; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.'

(3.) We affirm, by the authority of this text, That all the Jewish nation was not broken off, but only a part of it : So the 17th verse plainly declares ; ' And if some of the branches be broken off,' &c. Not all, but some ; for many of them were converted to Christ ; we read of three thousand at one sermon, Acts ii. and multitudes more at other times. All these converted Jews stood in the apostle's time as branches in the true olive, still enjoying all their privileges ; and that which brake off them that were broken off, was nothing else but their own unbelief : Ver. 20. ' Well then, because of unbelief they were broken off.' For at the promulgation of the *gospel*, a new article was added to their *creed* ; namely, That this same Jesus, whom they had crucified, is the promised and true Messiah. This some believed, and so stood by faith, still enjoying all their ancient privileges of the *covenant* : Others believed not, and their unbelief broke them off.

(4.) We find in this place two sorts of branches growing upon this

root Abraham; some natural branches; namely, Jews by nature, embracing Christ by faith; others wild and foreign branches, viz. Gentiles by nature, but ingrafted by faith, and by their ingrafture growing among the natural branches, and with them partaking of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, verse 17. that is, the rich privileges of the covenant and promise to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed.' This is the sweet juice and fatness of the olive-tree, which both sort of branches live upon, ver. 17. some on the external, others on the internal; some on both.

(5.) These naturally wild, but now ingrafted branches, viz. the *believing Gentiles*, being grafted by faith amongst the natural branches, and with them sucking the fatness of the same root and olive; that is to say, the privileges, ordinances, and franchises of the church; we cannot but judge it to be a natural, clear, and necessary consequent, that the same privileges the natural branches once had, and the remaining branches (amongst whom the *Gentile believers* were ingrafted) then had; the very same the *Gentile believers*, and their children, do now enjoy, by virtue of their interest in the same root; else we cannot understand how we should be said to *partake with them of the root and fatness of the olive*. Certainly the sap is the same which the root sends into all the branches, whether they be natural or ingrafted ones; and is as plentifully communicated to the ingrafted, as to the natural branches: For the watering of this olive with the more rich and plentiful grace of the gospel, must make the olive-tree as fat and flourishing as ever it was, to supply all its branches, and more than ever before.

Seeing then we Gentiles have (1.) the same grafting into the true olive; and (2.) that our present grafting in, is answerable to their present casting out; and (3.) that their re-ingrafting, in the end of the world, shall be the same for substance that ours now is, and their own first was: For when they were first taken in, they, and their children, were taken in together; when they were broken off, they and their children were broken off together; and when they shall be taken in again, they and their children shall be taken in again; And (4.) seeing all these their expected mercies are secured to them by the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which will extend again to them when their *unbelief* shall be taken away; methinks (as was said before) nothing can be clearer than this conclusion, That we Gentile believers are now invested with the same privileges they once enjoyed; and our children have the same *federal holiness* or relation to the covenants theirs had, by being grafted amongst them, and living on the same sap they did, and that by the same promise, Acts ii. 39.

But you will say, There is no mention here made of the grafting in of our children with us. We reply, Neither is there any mention here made of the breaking off of their *children* with them; which yet was so. Nor was there need to say it, seeing both their *infants*

and ours are comprehended in the *parents*, as twigs are comprehended in the branch, or buds in the graft, and the one being holy, so is the other. And this *federal holiness* of the *children* is not only mentioned in this chapter, ver. 16. but also in 1 Cor. vii. 14. *Now are your children holy.* And the very same *promise*, which conveyed the fatness of the olive to Abraham's natural seed, manifestly extends itself to the *Gentile believers* seed, Acts ii. 38, 39. And if men will not shut their eyes, and study evasions, what can be plainer from scripture than this explication and application of this place? We have with us the consent of the generality of orthodox expositors; the sense itself is genuine, easy, and unconstrained, agreeable with the letter and scope of the text. Whether the sense you set up against it, be as probable as this, we come next to examine. And truly, sir, your answer is ambiguous as a Delphic oracle: For (1.) you tell us, p. 8. That the *ingrafting* spoken of in this place, is into the invisible church, by election. We say, it is into the visible church, by profession of faith; for we know not how to understand any breaking off from the invisible church, or falling from election: But it is like, you better considered the consequents of that opinion, drawn upon you by Mr. Sydenham, in his 85th page; and therefore, nauseating those dregs of Arminianism, you speak more orthodoxly to the point, page 27, where you honestly acknowledge, That the church of the Jews and Gentiles, as to the true essence and inward substance of either, is one and the same: In which respect, the believing Gentiles, according to the apostle's *metaphor*, are here said to be grafted in amongst them, and with them, to be made partakers of the root and fatness of the olive-tree: And in reference hereunto, it is rightly added by the apostle, that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance: The inward substance of the church and covenant of grace, whereon it is founded, being invariable, and which shall for ever remain immoveable, though the outward form and administration be not so. Well then, from hence we have gained two things: (1.) That the church of the Jews and Gentiles are essentially and substantially the same church. (2.) That the Jews were not broken off from the invisible church, or from faith and election; for these, you truly say, are invariable and immoveable: And if you had denied it, the apostle assures us, that the foundation of God stands sure; and that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. But what then was their breaking off, and the Gentiles grafting in, which made this great alteration in the church? Can it be any thing else, but our ingrafting into the visible church, by the profession of our faith, from whence the Jews were broken off for their unbelief? For certainly, from the invisible church they were not broken off, and into the invisible church, multitudes of professing Christians are not ingrafted. It is evident, therefore, by grafting us into the olive-tree, he means the visible church; and by the fatness thereof, the ordinances and privileges of that church. Though he deny not but all sincere professors are members of the invisible church

also, and do belong to the election of grace; but that is not the breaking off, or grafting in, here spoken of.

And now, having given up Mr. Tombes' notion of the invisible church, and election, you are again put to your shifts; and must either shuffle, and seek to hide yourself in a heap of strange and unintelligible distinction, or (which had been much fairer) honestly have yielded the cause; and, wherever you meet with them, I find a whole troop of distinctions rallied together for this purpose, page 23, 24.

'This grafting in (say you) may be either into the visible or invisible church; either by faith, profession of faith, or by some outward ordinance. Children may be either grown men, or infants. The ingrafting in may be either certain or probable. Certain, either by reason of election, or their natural birth, being children of believers. Probable, as being likely: either because frequently, or for the most part, it happens so; Though necessary, and so not certain.' The thing to be proved is, That the children of believers are in the covenant of free grace in Christ, and by virtue thereof, to be baptized into the communion of the visible church.

Reply. Words enough, and distinctions enough, to reduce the text to an indivisible point. But whither doth all this tend; I will ask you two or three plain questions, and then make what use you please of your distinctions. (1.) Whether the breaking off of the Jews, and the ingrafting of the Gentiles, here spoken of, have relation to the *invisible church* by election, or to the *visible church* by profession of faith, and some outward ordinance? (2.) Whether, if it were into the visible church by profession of faith that the Gentile believers were grafted in, as doubtless it was (and by relinquishing the former sense, you here seem to yield it, saying, this ingrafture may be certain, upon the account of natural birth, being children of believers;) then I would fain know, why you so state the question, as to make the certainty of believers childrens interest in Christ to be the only ground of their admission into the *communion* of the *visible church*? This (say you) must first be proved, or no baptism for them.

Alas, poor infants! to what hard terms are they here tied up? Very much harder than the terms any of your own society are tied to: And if baptism must be suspended, till this point can be cleared, that the person to be baptized be first in Christ, and in the *covenant of free grace*, as to the saving benefits thereof; then farewell to all baptism, both of infants and adult professors too. For how can you prove, that the persons you baptize, are all, or any of them, really in Christ? May they not deceive you, as Simon Magus did Peter? I did not think you had proceeded in this matter upon a *certainty*, but a *probability*: And if you proceed with yours upon the grounds of *probability*, how come you to tie up the children of believers to a certainty of their interest in Christ as the antecedent suspending condition of

their baptism? We need dispute no more about the proper subjects of baptism, for by this account we have lost the ordinance of baptism itself.

We thought, sir, that our children's title to baptism was derived to them from their believing parents, as the children of the Jews was to circumcision, from their circumcised and professing parents; and that the same promise which conveyed their children's privilege to them, Gen. xvii. had conveyed the right of believers children to baptism unto them also, Acts ii. 38, 39. and that the root being holy, the branches are holy also, that is fœderally holy, Rom. xi. 16. But to this you make such an answer as astonishes me to read, p. 26; where allowing Abraham to be the root, you say, 'The holiness here spoken of, is first in respect of God's election; holiness personal and inherent, in God's intention;' Eph. i. 4. "He hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy." (2.) It is also holiness derivative; but not from any ancestors, but from Abraham only; and that not as a *natural*, but a *spiritual father*; wherein he is a lively image, or figure of Christ, and is derived from the covenant of grace, which passed in his name to him and his seed. And, lastly, it shall be inherent, being actually communicated by the Spirit of God, when they shall be actually called.

Reply. Here we see into what brakes and pits men run themselves, when they depart from the plain and safe path in explications of scripture. Here is such a *tripartite distinction* of holiness, as I never met with before. (1.) *Here is personal holiness inherent in God's intention.* By this you must either mean sanctification decreed for them, and to be bestowed on them at the time of their calling; and then it is coincident with the third member of your distinction. Or else you mean, that it is holiness inherent in the intention of God, as an accident in its subject; and then the simplicity of God's nature resists your incongruous notion. But it would be a less crime, to confound the first with the last member of your vain and self-created distinction, than to speak things so repugnant to the simple and uncompounded nature of God.

Or if your meaning be, That this holiness is in God by way of intention, but in them by way of inhesion; that will not deliver you out of your confusion neither, but run you into greater: For then you confound the *immanent* with the *transient* acts of God, and make the same thing at the same time, to be purely in intention, and in execution; or to be only in God's purpose to bestow hereafter, and yet, at the present, inherent in the persons he intends it for: So that I must leave your strange notion of personal holiness inherent in God's intention, to be cleared by a more *metaphysical head* than mine: or else to stand, among other rare and unintelligible notions, to be admired and applauded by the ignorant reader.

But then, when we come to the second member of your distinction, I am as much at a loss to find your sense as before: For there you

tell us, 'The holiness here spoken of, is derivative holiness also; and that from Abraham only; and from him, not as a natural, but a spiritual father, resembling Christ herein.'

Reply. This word *derivative* is an equivocal word, and may signify either *inherent personal holiness*, or *federal holiness*; for both of them are derived. If you say the former, it looks too black and horrid for me to believe you mean it, though you should say you mean it; for then you make Abraham not only the figure and image of Christ, as you speak, but Christ himself, by attributing to Abraham Christ's incommunicable property and prerogative. Then Abraham may say to all his children, as Christ doth, John xv. 4, 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches, &c.* I am he that sanctifies you. But if you mean the last (as necessarily you must, if you mean any thing that hath orthodox sense in it) then this *derivative holiness* you speak of, is not personal holiness, or internal sanctification, but *federal holiness*, derived from covenanted ancestors, or parents to their children; and therein you come over to us, and to the true sense of the text. But why must this be squeezed from you with so much difficulty? And why did you hide this *federal holiness* under an equivocal term, lest you should seem to yield the controversy with a word? This is not fair.

Object. If you say we are too hasty, and triumph before the victory: For though you do yield it to be a *federal holiness*, yet it is such as can be derived from no other father, or progenitor, but Abraham only.

Sol. Yes, sir, I hope you will allow Isaac and Jacob, at least to be the root and first-fruit, as well as Abraham, seeing the covenant was jointly and expressly made with them all three, and thereby they became the root and first-fruit of that holy nation; and if that people be called the seed of Abraham, they are also called the seed of Jacob; and if father-hood be ascribed to Abraham, it is ascribed to Jacob too, Isa. lviii. 14. And if Abraham be first named in the covenant, so is Jacob: See Lev. xxvii. 42. But if you allow these three patriarchs, perhaps that is all you will allow; for you seem to say, that no *federal holiness* can be derived from any other progenitors. Good sir, whatever your own private opinion be in this matter, allow us to believe otherwise, as long as those scriptures 1 Cor. vii. 14. and Acts ii. 39. stand in our Bibles: For we cannot think but the *federal holiness* of *children* results from the immediate *parent's* faith, or covenant interest, as well as from the remoter *progenitors*; else we cannot understand how the Corinthians' children should be holy, or how the *promise* should belong to the children of them that are afar off, viz. the Gentiles, who could derive no such thing to their children by a lineal descent from Abraham, but only as they became ingrafted branches by faith; and so suck the fatness of the olive to themselves, and to their buds, or children, as the natural branches did. I desire you to consider also, how this *covenant* passed, as you say it did, to

Abraham and his seed, in Christ's name, if it be the same with Adam's *covenant*? Did that pass to Adam in Christ's name too?

I have now dispatched what I at first promised and intended, viz. the confutation of my friend's mistakes about the *covenants*; and the vindication of those *scriptures*, by which our arguments, deduced from one of them, are confirmed. And now I have no farther concernment with Mr. Cary's *solemn call*; save only to note his high confidence, rash, and most unchristian censures, of all his differing friends and brethren, with which he concludes his discourse; wherein he calls *infants baptism*,

(1.) *A great abuse in the divine worship*, page 242, 243. And yet he that so calls it, never looked half way into the controversy; nor is able, without manifest shuffling and contradiction, both to the words of God, and his own words, to answer our arguments; as is here made too evident.

(2.) That it is no other than a change of a divine institution, and making void the *commandment of Christ*, the horrid sin charged by Christ upon those *hypocrites*, the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. xv. 6. With no better than these doth he rank and associate the many thousands of God's choice and dear people, who differ in this circumstantial point from him.

(3.) He compares it with the sin of Nadab and Abihu; and with that of Israel, with respect to the ark; 1 Chron. xv. 13. A sin, which provoked the Lord to execute judgment, by an immediate stroke in fire from heaven upon them. Thus Mr. Cary is ready to *call for fire from heaven upon his brethren*. Alas, poor man! he *knows not what spirit he is of*, as Christ told the disciples in a like case. It is well we are not in his hands, to execute the wrath, as well as charge the guilt upon us. But I hope all this is but rashness in him.

(4.) He affirms it to be no less than a *transgressing of the law, a changing of the ordinances, and a breaking of the everlasting covenant*. If it be a transgressing of the law, he should have shewn us in what scripture that law that forbids it is, or where God hath repealed his former grant to the children of his covenant-people. And for the *changing of the ordinances*, I am of opinion, it is he that is guilty of that sin, and not we: For we have proved, God settled this privilege upon the *infant-seed* of his people; that the *promise*, under the gospel, continues still to them; and if he exclude them from baptism, he changes the ordinance of God. And for breaking the everlasting covenant, for which he cites Isa. xxiv. 5, 6. the Lord make him sensible of the danger he hath put himself under, from that very text he produces against us; for it is manifest, that the covenant there spoken of, is God's covenant with Abraham, renewed with the Israelites at Sinai, which in that text is truly called an everlasting covenant; when mean time, Mr. Cary hath pronounced it to be an Adam's covenant, and now utterly abolished. Who is it, sir, that fights

against, and changes this everlasting covenant, you or we, that are for its continuance to us and our children ?

(5.) He affirms these things to be of highest concernment to us. If so, then sure it must follow, that repentance from dead works, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, must be inferior things to them; for nothing can be higher than the highest, or equal with it. And then by making them the chief fundamentals in religion, as that expression doth (if it be not a vain and sinful hyperbole) the salvation or damnation of men depends upon compliance or non-compliance with them. And then, whether must you send all God's people in the world, that differ from you? Sir, I find your brethren in the appendix to their confession of faith, page 110. placing one of these which you make of highest concernment, among the other circumstances of religion; and doubtless that is in its proper place: Nor do I see how they can free themselves from participation in your sin, till they have admonished you for it, and caused you to expunge it out of your book.

6. That it is a settling of your thresholds by God's threshold: These words you recite from Ezek. xliii. 8. which speak of the *idolatrous kings of Judah and Israel* building temples and altars for their idols, in or near the courts of the temple of God; as the *English annotations* on the text will inform you; an abomination that defiled God's holy name, a wickedness not to be named, and for which the Lord consumed them, and calls it whoredom in the next words. Here sir, you have exceeded all the bounds of society and Christian charity, and made this circumstantial difference about the proper subject of baptism the grossest heathenish idolatry in the world; and consequently dissolved the bonds of Christian charity, and broken off all communion with us; for with such idolaters you ought not to have any communion.

Your more wise and moderate brethren, in the place above-cited, tell us, 'They are loth hereby to alienate their affections or conversations from any that fear the Lord, and are willing to participate of the labours of those whom God hath endowed with abilities above themselves; qualified and called to the ministry of the word; desirous of peace, and not of renewed contests hereabout.' This is a language of another air: And if they be (as I dare not suspect but they are) sincere in that profession, they dare not comprobate such a desperate and unchristian censure as yours is: If they do, then we may easily guess what our lot and treatment shall be, whenever Anabaptism gets the ascendant in England; we may expect as civil usage as is due to gross idolaters, and no better: But I hope better things.

(7.) You say, that as these things are of highest concernment, so *they ought to be our most serious practice and endeavour*, page 243. ult. Good Lord! whither hath zeal for an opinion transported you! *Our most serious practice and endeavour!* Sir, I thought the most serious practice of a minister had been to preach Christ and salvation to the souls of men, and not to baptize: I am sure St. Paul reckoned so,

Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach; that is, baptism is not my principal work, or main business. And ver. 14th, he *thanks God he had baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius*. I believe he never uttered such an expression about his other work of preaching Christ. And for all Christians, I thought the securing of their interest in Christ, living in the duties of communion with him, watching their hearts, and mortifying their corruptions, had been the object matter of their most serious practice, and faithful endeavour; and not the litigations about baptism. But I hope these were only inconsiderate expressions, falling from your pen, whilst you were in a paroxysm of zeal, or a transport in the height of a conceited triumph: But whatever was the cause, I am sure you ought to revoke and repent such words.

(8.) You wish *your testimony rise not up at last as a witness against us*. Sir, we do not apprehend any cause we have to fear your testimony against us, or severest censures of us, whilst we are satisfied, that as you neither have the faculty or commission to be our judge, so neither is there any convincing evidence in your reply to our arguments. But I think you have much more cause to fear, lest those arguments should come at last as a witness against you, who deny and condemn them; when mean time, you are put to most lamentable shifts, even contradictions, and somewhat worse, to escape the point and edge of them.

(9.) To conclude, You tell us, we must not expect the special presence of Christ to be afforded to us, without our compliance in these points with you.

Sir, we never yet deserted the judgment or practice of infants baptism, and yet have had (blessed be Jesus Christ for it) great and manifold, sweet and signal proofs and evidences of his presence with us; He hath owned and blessed our ministry to the conversion of many; and there are some, and those not mean, or few, of our spiritual children, now in your societies in England, who have acknowledged us to be the first instruments of their conversion: The Lord lay it not to their charge, who now desert that ministry in which they first received Christ! But as for the departure of his presence, I assure you, friend, I am more afraid of the rents and divisions you now renew so unseasonably among the churches of Christ, than of any one thing amongst us beside. It grieved my soul to see you, *quieta movere*, awake a sleeping controversy, especially in such a season, when we are little more than half delivered from our enemies and dangers; you *take us by the heel*, as Jacob did his brother, whilst but yet in the birth. Sir, except you return to a more quiet and Christian temper, than you seem here to be in, I am out of hope that ever you and I shall see those blessed days, we have so often with pleasure, comforted ourselves with the hopes of. However, extend your charity (if you have any left) so far, as to believe that I am one, notwithstanding of all this, that am studious of the church's peace, and inquisitive into the rules

of duty, not daring to hold any truth of God in unrighteousness; and yet well satisfied I am, in the path of my duty, wherein, though we cannot walk together, yet I hope to meet you at the end of our way, in our Father's house, where perfect light and peace dwells.

And here I had put an end to this debate, had I not received your return to some of these sheets, whilst the last of them was under my hand; wherein I only find four things in which I am concerned. In general, you tell me, 'You are not convinced of any error, by what I have said.' I am sorry to hear it: But considering the nature of error on one side, and the difficulty of self-denial on the other, you have not much deceived my expectation. More particularly,

(1.) You say, As to your hooking the Sinai covenant into this controversy, I gave you the first occasion of it; for when you shewed me your papers about God's covenant with Abraham, I told you, that you were best first to try if you could prove the covenant at Sinai, to be a covenant of works; forasmuch as our divines are so far from conceiving the covenant with Abraham to be a covenant of works, that they will not allow the Sinai law itself to be so; and to convince you of it, I lent you Mr. Roberts and Mr. Sedgwick on the covenant, to enlighten and satisfy you about it: But little did I think you had confidence enough to enter the lists with two such learned and eminent divines, and make them to follow your triumphant chariot, shackled with the incomparable Baxter and Allen, Sydenham and Borthogg, like three pair of noble prisoners of war. But whatever was the occasion (setting aside your sin) I am not sorry you have given a fit opportunity to enlighten the world in that point also.

(2.) You seem to fancy in your letter, that I once was of your opinion about the moral law, because you find these passages in a sermon of mine, upon John viii. 36. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, then are you free indeed;" viz.

'That the law required perfect working, under pain of that curse; accepted no short endeavours, admitted no repentance, and gave no strength.' But finding me here pleading for the law, you think you find me in a contradiction to that doctrine.

The words I own; the contradiction I positively deny; for I speak not there, and here, *ad idem*; for in that sermon, and in those very words you cite, I speak against the law, not as God intended it, when he added it to the promise; but as the ignorance and infidelity of unregenerate men, make it to themselves a covenant of works, by looking upon it as the very rule and reason of their justification before God: This was the stumbling-stone at which all legal justiciaries then did, and still do stumble, Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33. In this sense the apostle, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, argues against the law, and so do I in the words you cite; but vindicate the law in the very same sermon you mention, as consistent with, and subservient to Christ, in the former sense; and there tell you, 'The law sends us to Christ to be justified; and Christ sends us back to the law to be re-

gulated. The very same double sense of the law you will find in this discourse; and from the mistaken end and abuse of the law, which the apostle so vehemently opposeth, I here prove against you, that the law in this sense cannot consist with, or be added to the promise; and therefore make it my medium to prove against you, that the true nature and denomination of the Sinai law, can never be found in this sense of it, but it must be estimated and denominated from the purpose and intention of God, which I have proved to be evangelical. Try your skill to fasten a contradiction betwixt my words in that sermon and this discourse.

I know you would be glad to find the shadow of one, to make some small excuse, or atonement for the many faults of that nature you have here committed.

(3.) Your letter also informs me, that you hear you are answered by one hand already; and, for ought you know, many more may be employed against you, and I for one; and so we shall compass you about like bees.

Reply. I have only seen Mr. Whiston's little book against your brother Grantham, wherein he hath baffled two of your principal arguments; but you only come in collaterally there, and must not look upon it as a full answer to your book, but only as a lash for your folly, *en passant*. And for our compassing you about like bees, methinks you seem to be elated in your own fancy, by the supposition, or expectation, of a multitude of opponents. You know as well as I, who it is that glories in this motto, *Unus contra omnes*. Sir, I think your mind may be much at rest in that matter. Of all the six famous adversaries mentioned in your title page, there are but two living: and you know, *Mortui non mordent*; and of the remaining two, one of them, viz. Mr. Baxter, is almost in heaven, living in the daily views, and cheerful expectations of the *saints everlasting rest with GOD*; and is left for a little while among us, as a great example of the life of faith. And it is questionable with me, whether such a great and heavenly soul can find any leisure or disposition to attend such a weak and trivial discourse as this.

And as for myself, you need not much fear me; I have not, neither do I intend to vibrate my sting against you, unless I find you infecting or disturbing that hive to which I belong, and to which I am daily gathering and carrying honey; and then who but a drone would not sting.

(4.) To conclude: in the close of your letter you fall into the former strain of love, assuring me, 'That the ancient friendship of so many years, shall continue on your part.'

Reply. All that I shall return to this, is only to relate a short story out of Plutarch, in the life of Alexander; where he tells us, That whilst he was warring in the Indies, one Taxiles an Indian king, came with his company to meet him; and saluting Alexander, said, 'What need you and I to fight and war one upon another? If thou

comest not to take away our water, and the necessaries of life from us, for which we must needs fight: As for other goods, if I am richer than thee, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have less, I will not think scorn to thank thee for thine.' Alexander, highly pleased with his words, made him this reply; 'Thinkest thou, that this meeting of ours can be without fighting; No, no; thou hast won nothing by all thy fair words; for I will fight and contend with thee in honesty and courtesy, and thou shalt not exceed me in bounty and liberality.'

I say with Taxiles, I had never armed against you, had you not come to take away our water, and the necessaries of life; I mean, the covenant of God with Abraham, which contains the rich charter of the Gentile believers children, and make it an abolished Adam's covenant, and told us, that we must come up to the primitive purity in these things; that is, in renouncing it as a covenant of grace, and relinquishing infants baptism, as grounded thereon.

Sir, were my own father alive, I must and would oppose him, should he attempt what here you do. Infant-baptism, with you is not; *singing of psalms*, that plain and heavenly gospel ordinance, with you is not; and will you take away our Benjamin also? What! the covenant of God with Abraham and his children in their generations? *All these things are against us.* No, sir, we cannot part with that covenant, as an abolished Adam's covenant, nor will I give it up for all the friendship in the world.

And yet I will say with Alexander, I will contend with you in friendship and courtesy, even whilst I earnestly contend against you for the truths of GOD, which you have here opposed, and I have endeavoured to vindicate.

One word more before I part with you; I do assure you, and the whole world, that in this controversy with you, I have not, knowingly or advisedly, misrepresented your sense: If you shall say I did so in my second argument, from the words, page 179, I assure you, both myself, and others could understand you no otherwise than I did in the papers I sent you; and when you told me, you meant there was no pardon in either of those covenants, but that it plainly directed to Abraham's covenant, you will find, I have given you as fair a choice as you can desire, either to stand to your words in the first sense, wherein I understand them, or (which will be the same to me) to your own sense, in which you afterwards explained it to me. And whereas I blame you over and over in my epistle and conclusion, for putting the proper subjects of baptism amongst the highest things in religion; let the reader view your conclusion, and see, whether you do, or not. If you say, you speak of the covenant there, as well as of baptism, I allow that you do so; yet I hope it is equally as bad, nay, in deed and truth, a great aggravation of your fault, to make this article, viz. God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. *an abolished*

Adam's covenant, one of the highest concernments of a Christian, the baptism only of adult believers another. My consequences from your words, are just and regular, how surprising soever they seem to you.

If you think fit to rejoin to this my answer, I desire you will avoid, as much as you can, a tedious harangue of words, and speak strictly and regularly to my arguments, by limiting, distinguishing, or denying, as a disputant ought to do: If so, I promise you a reply; but if I find no such thing, it shall pass with me but for waste paper; nor will I waste time about it. The Lord give us unity in things necessary, liberty in things indifferent, and charity in all things!

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS

UPON DIVERS SELECT PLACES OF

SCRIPTURE:

WHEREIN

BELIEVERS are assisted in preparing their HEARTS, and exciting their AFFECTIONS and GRACES, when they draw nigh to GOD in that most awful and solemn ORDINANCE of the LORD'S SUPPER.

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

CHRIST may be said to be crucified three ways; by the Jews *actually*, in the sacrament *declaratively*, and by unbelievers at his table *interpretatively*. Among sins, blood-guiltiness is reckoned one of the most heinous; and of all blood-guiltiness, to be guilty of the blood of Christ, is a sin of the deepest guilt, and will be avenged with the most dreadful punishment, 1 Cor. x. 27, 29. If vengeance be taken seven-fold on him that slew Cain, what vengeance shall be taken on him that *crucifies afresh the Lord of glory?*

The heaviest blow of divine justice is still ready to avenge the abuse of the best mercy: what can the heart of man conceive more solemn, more sacred, or more deeply affective, than the representation of the most gracious love of the Father, and the most grievous passion of the Son? What sin can be more provoking to God, than the slight and contempt of those most awful mysteries? And what punishment can be more terrible, than for such a wretched soul to eat and drink dam-