

THE  
Ax laid to the Root :

CONTAINING  
An EXPOSITION of that Metaphorical  
Text of Holy Scripture, *MAT. 3. 10.*

PART II.

WHEREIN

Mr. *John Flavel's* last Grand Arguments in his  
*Vindiciarum Vindex*, to prove Circumcision a Gospel-  
Covenant, are answered.

Also a brief Reply

To Mr. *Rothwell's* late Treatise, Intituled, *Pædo-Baptismus*  
*vindicatus* ; as to what seems most material.

To which is Added

Some short Reflections by way of Confutation of a Book  
Newly published by Mr. *Joshua Exell*, Minister of the Gospel---  
Intituled ; *A Serious Enquiry into, and certain producing of plain*  
*and express Proofs, that John Baptist, did as certainly baptize In-*  
*fant as the Adult.*

By *BENJAMIN KEACH*, Pastor of a Church of  
Christ, meeting at *Horsly-down, Southwark.*

*JOB 6. 25.*

*How forcible are right words, but what doth your arguing reprove ?*

London, Printed for the Author, and are to be sold by  
*John Harris* at the *Harrow* in the *Poultry*. 1693.

ERRATA.

P Ag. 2 line 39, r. *disprove*, p. 4. line 26 for *ordinal* r. *original*, p. 4. l. 32. for *r.*  
*Law* r. *this*, p. 11. l. 12. for (12.) r. 2. p. 13. l. 14. for *Rite* r. *Right*, in p. 29. l. 3  
for *Circumcision* r. *Commission*, p. 13. l. 28. for *usurb'd* r. *absurd*, p. 16 l. 2. blot out *3*  
*gainst*, p. 20 l. 12. a false point, r. *Covenant-Holy*: blot out the Interrogation Point, and  
put a Colon after *Holy*; p. 24. l. 29. for *Abraham* r. *God*, p. 34. l. 12. for *Rite* r. *Right*  
p. 34. l. 34. for *Rite* r. *Right*, p. 38 l. 10. for *rom* r. *from*, p. 39 l. 10. for *weighty*  
*mighty*, p. 41. l. 39. for *prophaned* r. *prophane*, p. 39. l. 40. for *prophaned* r. *prophan*  
p. 43. l. 5. for *penitent* r. *penitents*, p. 43. l. 6 for *must* r. *might*, p. 46. l. 25. for *inter-*  
*nals* r. *internal*, p. 47. l. 37. blot out *Truth*, p. 48. l. 26 blot out *the*.

T H E

Ax laid to the Root, &c.

Sermon III.

P A R T. II.

M A T. III. ver. 10.

*And now also the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees, every Tree therefore that bringeth not forth good Fruit; is hewn down and cast into the Fire.*

*Beloved,*  
**I** Have already opened the Scope and Coherence of this Place of Holy Scripture, as also the Parts and Terms, and then took notice of one or two Points of Doctrine.

That which I have largely Profecuted, is this, *viz.*  
 Doct. *Now the Dispensation is changed, to be of the Natural Root, viz. Of the National Church of the Jews, the Seed of Abraham, or Children of Believers, according to the Flesh, is no Ground for Church-Membership, 'tis no Argument to be admitted into the Gospel-Church, or to Gospel-Baptism.*

We have proved, that there were Two Covenants made with Abraham, one with him and his natural Seed as such, signified by *Agar, the Bond-woman*; the other made with him and his spiritual Seed as such, signified by *Sarah, the Free woman*; and also, have clearly made it appear, That the Covenant of Circumcision did not appertain to the Covenant of Grace, but that it was a Rite of the Legal Covenant.

We shall now proceed to Answer the other Objections, having the last Day only insisted upon One.

2. Obj. Circumcision was the Type of Baptism.

1. *Ans.* If the Circumcision of the Heart was the Antitype of Circumcision in the Flesh, then certainly Baptism was not, could not be the Antitype thereof; but this the Holy Ghost fully intimates, was the Antitype of it, see 1 Col. 2. 12. 13. Rom. 2. 29. See Dr. Taylor, as recited in

2. If Baptism, and Circumcision were both in Force together for some time, then Baptism is not the Antitype of, nor did it come in the room of Circumcision, but that they were both in Force together for some time, I shewed before. *John*, and the Disciples of Christ, Baptized. *Joh. 4. 1, 2.* one thing come in the room, or place of another, till the other is actually, and legally removed, and took away? Why, now since these Two Rites had a Being together, I affirm (as I have formerly done) one could not be the Type of the other. A Type can abide no longer, then till the Antitype is come; therefore Circumcision was not the Type of Baptism.

3<sup>dly</sup>, and lastly, (As to this) I see not indeed, how one Thing, that was a Figure, could be the proper Shadow, or Type of a Figure; sure no Wise Man has Reason so to think; all may see, that Baptism it self, is called a Figure, 1 Pet. 3. 21. And this is sufficient to remove the Second Objection.

3. Obj. The Third Objection I mentioned, is this, viz. Infants were once in Covenant, and never cast out, therefore they are in still: See Mr. Rothwell's *Pædo-Baptism*.

*Ans.* I Answer, Tho' Infants were in Covenant under the Law, in the Legal Church of the Jews, and that by God's Appointment. *Gen. 17. 7.* the Jewish Church, doth not prove them to be Members of the Gospel Church: They had then many outward Privileges, which we, under the Gospel, have not; they went all off when the *Ax* was laid to the Root, i. e. When the Old Covenant was abogated, and the Old Church State cut down, then their Old Church Members fell likewise: The Branches cannot stand, when the Tree is cut down, or rooted up.

2. We have proved the Covenant; for in Covenanting of Infants, under the Law, was no Gospel Covenant; and therefore this Objection hath nothing in it to hurt us, unless it can be proved, they were taken a-new into the Gospel Church, or Gospel Covenant, which we positively deny, and they can't disprove: For, according to that Maxim, *Omnis Privatio intimat habitum*, (you know) that every Dispossession, implyeth a Possession: Infants therefore, cannot be cast out of the Gospel Covenant, or Gospel Church, unless they had been first received into it; therefore they must prove, if they can, they are in the Time of the Gospel, taken in as Members; if so, I will not undertake to prove them cast out, but I am sure,

at the Dissolution of the National Church of the Jews, they lost their Right of Church Membership; and God hath not constituted another National Church, under the Gospel, to bring in the carnal Seed again, but the Church is now purely Congregational. God's Spiritual Temple, is built up with spiritual, and lively Stones, 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.*

Obj. 4. Circumcision was part of the Ceremonial Law. Thus I find Mr. John Flavel, expresses himself in his *Vindiciarum Vindex* (in Answer to Mr. Philip Cary) pag. 214. viz. *If Circumcision be part of the Ceremonial Law, and the Ceremonial Law was dedicated by Blood, and whatsoever is so dedicated, is by you confessed no part of the Covenant of Works, then Circumcision can be no part of the Covenant of Works, &c. But it is so, Ergo.*

Ans. 1. I Answer, It argues these Men are hard put to it, since they are forced to fly to such an Argument as this, to prove Circumcision to be a Gospel Covenant, I shall not now enter upon the Debate, Whether the Ceremonial Law, was a part of the Covenant of Works, or not? tho' I must say, I judge it was an Appendix to it; and that it appertained to the First Covenant, the Apostle affirms, *Heb. 9. 1.* They are to clear up this, viz. How the Ceremonial Law is part of the First Covenant, and yet no part of the Covenant of Works.

2. Yet their Work lies not so much in that neither, as it doth in this Respect, viz. They are to prove, That the Ceremonial Law was part of the Covenant of Grace, which, as yet none of them (that I ever heard of) have attempted to do (tho' we grant it was a Shadow of it) when they have proved, that they have in the

3. Third Place, another Task, viz. To prove, that Circumcision was a part of the Ceremonial Law; for tho' it was a Figure, or a Sign, yet it may be doubted of, Whether it was a part of that Law, or not — Yet

4. It might be a part of, or appertain unto the Sinai Covenant; for (1) 'tis called a Covenant, that's evident; but, Where is the Ceremonial Law so called? (2.) It gave the Children of Israel an Assurance of the Sinai Covenant, and that the Apostle calls, The great, and chiefest Advantage they had by it. (3.) It also was of the same nature and quality, and had the like Promises annexed to it, upon their Obedience, and the same Threatning upon their Disobedience. (4.) It obliged those, who were Circumcised, to keep the said Law. *Gal. 5. 3.* It was, I have proved, of the same Nature and Quality, i. e. a Conditional Covenant, and like Promise of Earthly Blessings, and like Threatnings annexed to it.

Secondly, Was not the Ceremonial Law, a Part of that Law St. Paul calls, *The Hand-Writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross? Col. 2. 14.* If Circumcision was part of this Law, sure it did not appertain to the Gospel, or New Covenant, much less the Seal of it; for then it could not be against us,

us, but for us, not contrary to us, but agreeable to us, as a Choice Blessing.

2. And if the Covenant of Circumcision was a Part of the Ceremonial Law, 'tis evident that Covenant is abolished; and if the Covenant be cancelled, or abolished, What good will the Seal do them?

3. That the Ceremonial Law was part of the First Covenant, 'tis evident, *Heb. 9. 1, 2. Then verily, the First Covenant had also Ordinances of Divine Service, and Worldly Sanctuary.* The Old Covenant comprehended not only the *Sinai* ministrations, as a Covenant of Works, (*do this, and live*) but also the whole *Mosaical Oeconomy*, and *Aronical Priesthood*, *Sacrifices*, and all Covenant Rites, or Legal Ordinances, Circumcision was one of the chief; so that this makes against them.

4. All the Holiness and Sanctification of the Ceremonial Law, only appertained to the Flesh, and therefore, no part of the New Covenant, *Blood of Bulls, and Goats*, that could not take away Sin, purge the Conscience, nor make any thing perfect.

Mr. Elton on *Colossians*, speaking of *Col. 2. ver. 14.* puts forth this Question, *viz.*

*Quest.* How were the Legal Ceremonies of the Jews a Hand-Writing of Ordinances.

*Answer.* 'I answer (*said he*) they were so, in regard of their Use to the Jews, who, in using them (as it were) Subscribed to their own Guiltiness of Death and Damnation. — In using Circumcision, they made known, they had ordinal Sin, and were guilty of it; their Washings shewed, they were exceeding filthy in God's sight, and so guilty of the Curse of the Law, and so did their Sacrifices. Hence God, in infinite Mercy, sent his Son to pay our Debts; and he has satisfied Divine Justice, and so has cancelled this Hand-Writing, that witnessed our Guiltiness, and bound us over to Punishment. — What good will it do them, to grant, That Circumcision was part of the Law, I know not, these Things considered.

For they, evident it is, were bound exactly to keep all the Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, of that Law; (which, I think a Learned Man says) were more then 300) nay, and if they continued not in doing all these Things, they were Cursed *when they sat down, and when they rose up, when they went abroad, and when they came home*; see *Deut, 27. 20, to 26. Gal. 3. 10. Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Mind it well, all Things in the whole Book of the Law, not only the Ten Precepts, but all things contained in the Ceremonial Law also.

6. Therefore, tho' the Blood of *Bulls, Goats, and Heifers*, are called, the Blood of the Covenant, yet it was not the Blood of the New Covenant, but

but of the Old ; *neither the First Covenant was dedicated without Blood*, Heb. 9. 18. True, the Blood of the Old Covenant, figured the Blood of the New, yet that doth no more prove the Ceremonial Law, was part of the New Covenant, then the Shadow can be proved to be the Substance ; and therefore, tho' those Sacrifices pointed to Christ, yet that Law was part of the Covenant of Works, *i. e.* no Life by it : In those Sacrifices, God's Soul had no Pleasure.

7. Nor could they see, or look beyond those things, which are abolished : see 2 Cor. 3. 13. From hence I argue, If the Ceremonial Law, was a Hand-Writing, *i. e.* a Bond, or Obligation of Conviction, Accusation, and Condemnation to the Jews, binding them farther to the Curse of the Moral Law, it was no part of the Covenant of Grace ; but the former is true, *Ergo*, Therefore, whatever gracious Design God had in it, or however useful to the Elect, yet in it self, it was a Law of Works, tho' given in Subserviency to the Gospel Law, as the *Sinai* Law was.

6. Obj. *God gave himself to Abraham to be his God, and the God of his Seed, in the Covenant of Circumcision, or made over himself by way of special Interest to them in it ; (so Mr. Flavel positively affirms.) Therefore it was the Covenant of Grace.*

*Ans.* I Answer, This I am persuaded, is the grand Cause of their great boldness and mistake, in affirming the 'Covenant' of Circumcision was the Covenant of Grace ; and therefore, ought the more carefully to be Examined, Considered, and Answered ; for if Mr. Flavel, and the rest of our Brethren, are right in this Assertion, *i. e.* That God gave himself in Circumcision to *Abraham*, and to all his Seed, to be their God, by way of special Interest, they say a great deal, but this we deny.

1. As to *Abraham*, God gave himself to him to be his God, yea, gave him special Interest in himself, but it was before he gave him the Covenant of Circumcision. This they cannot deny, nay, and not only to himself, but to be the God of all his true spiritual Seed, and that also, before he entered into the said Covenant of Circumcision with him, and his natural Seed ; see Gen. 12. 3. Gen. 15. 1. *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great Reward ;* see ver. 5. and then 'tis said, *he believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteousness,* ver. 6. — Therefore,

2dly, 'Tis for ever to be noted, that this special Interest in God, he obtained through Faith, in the Free Promise (which is the Covenant of Grace God made with him) And the Apostle plainly shews, in Rom. 4. 9, 10. That this Blessedness, he (in the Negative) received not in the Covenant of Circumcision, but in Uncircumcision. *How was it then reckoned, when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision,* ver. 10. I cannot but wonder at the darkness of those Men, who affirm, That *Abraham* received special Interest in God, in the Covenant of Circumcision ; whereas the Holy Ghost positively denies it, or affirms the contrary. His main Business being there to take them off of

Circum-

Circumcision, and so to distinguish between Circumcision, and the Covenant of Faith; but, in direct Opposition to the Apostle's Design, these Men go about to magnifie Circumcision by ascribing it to that.

3. And let it also be noted, That the same Apostle excludes *Abraham's* natural Seed as such, (with whom the Covenant of Circumcision was made) from this special Blessing of special Interest in God, in *Rom. 9. 5.* Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all Children: (that is, by way of special Interest in God, so as to have God to be their God, by vertue of the Covenant of Grace made with Abraham) But in *Isaac shall thy seed be called, ver. 7.* That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise, are counted for the seed, ver. 8. None can deny, but that those, whom the Apostle calls the Children of the Flesh (whom he denies to have any Interest in God as such) the Covenant of Circumcision did belong unto, and was made with, as well as it was made with the true spiritual Seed; therefore I may from hence, with the greatest boldness imaginable, affirm, That in the Covenant of Circumcision, God did not make over himself to be *Abraham's* God, so as to give him, or to his Seed, special Interest in himself.

Obj. But 'tis positively said, That God did promise in the Covenant of Circumcision, to be a God to him, and to his seed after him, in their Generations, when he promised them the Land of Canaan, *Gen. 17. 8, 9, 10.*

Ans. I do not deny it, but not by way of special Interest (that is, the thing we differ in) so he was not the God of his Seed as such, according to the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and that for the Reasons before understood; therefore it behoveth us to consider, in what respect we are to understand the Holy Ghost. I do not say neither, that ever God made himself over to Men, to be their God, by way of special Interest, upon the Terms of the *Sinai* Covenant, that was impossible for them to Answer, (nor can I believe, notwithstanding what *Mr. Flavel* has affirmed, that my Reverend Brother, *Mr. Philip Cary*, will assert any such thing) the Inheritance was not by the Law.

1. Therefore we are to consider, That God may be said to be the God of a People, in a Covenant way, Two manner of ways.

1<sup>st</sup>. By the Free Promise, or Covenant of Grace in a spiritual Gospel Sense, which gives special and Soul-saving Interest in him, as all *Abraham's* Spiritual Seed, i. e. True Believers have; or,

2<sup>d</sup>. God may be said to be the God of a People, by entering into an external, legal Covenant with them: And thus he gave himself to be the God of *Abraham*, and his natural, or fleshly Seed, i. e. He took them into a visible external Covenant Church-State, and separated them from all other People and Nations in the World, to be a peculiar People (in that Covenant) unto himself; and, in this sense, he was said Federally, or by Covenant, to be married

married to the whole House of Israel, as so considered, and to be an Husband  
 to them: See Jer. 31. 31. God there makes a Promise to Israel and Judah,  
 that he would make a New Covenant, *Not according to the covenant I made  
 with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the  
 land of Egypt (which covenant they break, although I was an husband to  
 them saith the Lord)* ver. 32 In this Covenant God gave them their Church  
 State, and many external or earthly Blessings, Laws and Ordinances, and  
 they formerly struck Hands (as I may so say) with God, and promised  
 Obedience, *Exod. 24. 3, 7, 8. And he took the book of the Covenant, and read in  
 the audience of the people, and they said, all that the Lord hath said, will we do  
 and be obedient:* And thus God became as an Husband to them, *i. e. He fed  
 them, and took special care of them, and to lead them with great Bowels in the Wil-  
 derness, and bestowed the Land of Canaan upon them, with other Temporal Blef-  
 sings,* according as it was promised to them in the Covenant of Circumcision:  
 Like as a Husband cares for, and provides for the Wife, so did God care and  
 provide for them and preserved them, so long as that Law (I mean the Law  
 of their Husband) did continue: But that Law is now dead, *Rom. 7. 4.*  
 and God now is no longer such a Husband to them, nor hath he Married  
 in that Sense any other external Nation, or People of the World; but now  
 God, in the Gospel Covenant, is an Husband indeed; to them he was but  
 a Typical Husband, and their God in an external Federal Relation: And  
 thus he was the God of all *Abraham's* natural Off-spring; for, in him, he first  
 espoused them as a *National Church*, and People, and gave them the Covenant  
 of Circumcision, as the Sign, or Token thereof, with many *Ecclesiastical  
 and Civil Rites*. And this is further confirmed by a *Reverend and Learned  
 Writer*: 'Howbeit from the strict Connexion of this 7th. verse with the 6th.  
 and the Assurance here given, that God will establish his Covenant with  
 Abraham's Seed, to be their God: It is evident (*saith he*) that the Number of  
 Abraham's carnal Seed and the Grandeur of their Civil State, is not all that is  
 promised; nor yet the Principal Blessing bestowed on them therein but rather  
 the forming them into a Church State, with the establishing of the Ordinan-  
 ces of publick Worship among them, wherein they should walk in Cove-  
 nant Relation to God, as his peculiar People: Understand it still (*saith  
 he*) of the Old Covenant, wherein they had their peculiar Right and  
 Privilege, no less can be intended in this, *I will be a God unto them, in  
 their Generations*; and it is also made more evident by the following Ac-  
 count that is given of this Transaction, with respect to *Isaac* and *Ishmael*,  
*Gen. 17. 18, 21.* When the Lord had promised unto *Abraham* a Son, by  
*Sarah*, whose Name should be called *Isaac*, he thus prayed, *O that Ishmael  
 might live before thee! which the Chaldee Paraphraseth thus, i. e. Might live  
 and worship before thee.* No doubt, his Prayer was, that *Ishmael* might also be  
 an Heir of the Blessing of this Covenant; but that was not granted to  
 him; for the Lord would have his Covenant Seed called by *Isaac* only: With  
 him God would establish his Covenant, having appointed and cho-

sen him alone, to be the Heir thereof, who was to be the Child of the Promise, and Son of the Free woman; and yet for *Ishmael*, in special Favour with *Abraham*, whose Seed he was: Thus much he obtained, *i. e.* That he should be made Fruitful, and multiply exceedingly, Twelve Princes, or Heads of great Families, should spring of him; which imports some Analogy to the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* after the Flesh, and God would make him a great Nation; and yet, all this fell short of the Blessings of *Abraham's* natural Off-spring, by *Isaac*, from which *Ishmael* was now excluded: It is plain therefore, that the Privilege of the Ecclesiastical, as well as the flourishing of the Civil States of *Israel*, did arise unto them out of the Covenant of Circumcision.

We conclude therefore (*saieth he*) That notwithstanding the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, could not as such, claim a Right in the spiritual and eternal Blessings of the New Covenant, because of their Interest in the Covenant of Circumcision, yet their Privileges, and Advantages in the Church-State, tho' immediately consisting in things outward and typical, were of far greater Value and Use, than any meer Worldly, or Earthly Blessings, as to giving them choice means of the Knowledge of God, and setting them nearer to him, than any Nation in the World besides. Thus far this Learned Author.

Dr. *Bates* also, in his Sermon preach'd at Mr. *Baxter's* Funeral, shews, That God may be said to be the God of a People, several manner of ways,  
1. ' Upon the Account of Creation: Thus he is our God and Father  
' O Lord thou art our father, we are the clay, and thou art our potter, and we all  
' are the work of thy hands, *Isa.* 64. 8

2. ' Upon the Account of external Calling, and Profession, there is an  
' intercurrent Relation of the Father and Son, between God and his Peo-  
' ple: Thus the Posterity of *Seth*, are called, the Sons of God, *Gen.* 6.  
' and the entire Nation of the Jews are so styled: *When Israel was young, I*  
' *called my son from Egypt*, *Hos.* 11. And all that have received Baptism, the  
' Seal of the Holy Covenant, and profess Christianity, in this general Sense,  
' may be called the Children of God.

Thus he clearly confirms what I have said; but observe, in this Sense, God is not said to be the God of a People by way of special Interest.

' But 'tis not (*saieth he*) the outward Dedication, entitles Men to saving Interest in God, unless they live according to that Dedication. There are Baptised Infidels, as well as Unbaptised, &c. Then say I, some Infants Baptised, are in his Opinion, but in an external Covenant with God, and so have no special Interest. ——— Moreover

Sure none can deny, but, by gross Idolatry, the *Israelites* broke this Covenant; and yet, when they, in *Ezekiel's* time, became guilty of vile Abominations, the Lord still claimed an Interest in their Children, by virtue of this Covenant. *Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devour-*

red: Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, Ezek. 16. 20, 12. The Children they begat in a natural way, when by cursed Idolatry, they had Apostatized from God, (by vertue of this Covenant) God calls his Children, which could not have been, if their Covenant Interest had been as our Brethren affirm, *i. e.* suspended on the good abearing, or Faith of immediate Parents: But, as the Apostacy of Parents could not hinder their Children from that external Covenant Interest they had in God, and God in them, so the Faith and Holiness of Parents, could not Interest their Children in the special Blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

Lastly, 'Tis remarkable, that when God gave the Sinai Covenant, *Exod. 20. 1,* 2. where he pleads Interest in them as his People, he mentions expressly, upon what account he so owned them; read the Text, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage, Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* I am Jehovah, and thy God, having chosen you to be a People to my self above all People; as 'tis said elsewhere, not that as they were thus his People, and a chosen Nation, they had special Interest in God by eternal Election, and peculiar Adoption, no, but a few of them (as it appears) were in that sense, his People: But their God, by vertue of that legal and external Covenant he made with their Fathers, and now again with them, and so bestowed temporal Blessings upon them; therefore 'tis added, *That brought thee out of the land of Egypt,* not Land of spiritual Darkness, nor house of spiritual Bondage, but literal Bondage, &c.

In the Covenant of Works, (saith Reverend Mr. Cotton) the Lord offered himself, upon a Condition of Works; he bid them obey his Voice, and provoke him not; for I will not pardon your Transgressions. — But, in the Covenant of Grace, he will do this, but not in the Covenant of Works; all is given upon Condition of Obedience. The Lord giving himself, &c. tho' it be but to work, yet he is pleased to receive them into some kind of relative Union expressed, *Jer. 32. 22.* Which my Covenant they break, as though I was an Husband unto them. He was married to them in Church-Covenant; he was their God, and they were his peculiar People, and yet the Lord cast them off from this Marriage-Covenant, from this Union. Thus Mr. Cotton on the Covenant. P. 39.

40. So much shall serve to the answering this grand Objection.

Obj. 6. Sixthly, Circumcision was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith. *If Circumcision was the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith (saith Mr. Flawell) it did not appertain to the Covenant of Works: For the Righteousness of Faith and Works, are opposite; but Circumcision was the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, Rom. 4. 11. Ergo, pag. 220.*

1. Answ. We Answer first, That the Text they bring, doth not call Circumcision the Seal of the Righteousness of Faith: As 'tis such, or in common to all that were Circumcised, pray let us read the Words; *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had*

had them yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all men that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also: Rom. 4. 11.

First, Observe Circumcision is directly, here called a Sign, and so it was in it self:

1. A Sign, or Token of God's making good his Covenant to Abraham's natural Seed, that from his Loins Christ should come by Isaac.

2. A Sign, or Token, that the promise of all these Blessings granted to them, either Ecclesiastical, respecting their National Church State, and Civil State, and Temporal Blessings, with their Possessing of the Land of Canaan.

3. Of the Circumcision of the Heart, for that it was a Sign of.

2. But it is not called any more a Seal to Abraham, of the Righteousness of that Faith, he had before he was Circumcised, then it was of his being the Father of all them that believe. Now since it was principally called a Seal to him, of that peculiar Privilege, and Prerogative, of being the Father of all True Believers, which none had ever granted to them besides himself, Why should they suppose, that Circumcision is here called, a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith to all, as well as to Abraham himself? I desire this may be considered; for Mr. Flavel passes it by in silence, and speaks nothing to it.

3. But Thirdly, To put the Matter out of doubt, it could be a Seal to no other Person, or Persons, but to Abraham only. Because it was a Seal of that Righteousness Abraham had, being yet Uncircumcised, and such a Righteousness, none of his Seed ever had actually, as he had it; (neither of his fleshly, nor spiritual Seed) for first, Isaac had no such Faith before he was Circumcised, because Circumcised when but Eight Days old, and so were generally all his Seed, except you will mention such, who neglected to Circumcise their Children, and so Transgressed the Command of God, or mention Adult Profelites.

But that will not help the Matter; they must carry it to be a Seal to all that the Covenant of Circumcision belonged to, or else to none but to Abraham only: but to all, it could not be a Seal, as it was to Abraham, it being positively said, not to be a Seal of the Righteousness of their Faith, they should have after Circumcised, but of that Faith Abraham particularly had, being yet Uncircumcised.

4. The Scope and Drift of the Holy Ghost, proves it to be thus as we say; for else, there's no need for the Apostle to mention it, as a Seal of that Righteousness of Faith, he had before Circumcision, if others might have it in Circumcision, viz. The Righteousness of God, as 'tis contained in the Covenant of Grace: (for that they must say, or they say nothing) And it farther appears by what the Apostle speaks, viz. That he might be the Father of them that believe, that were not Circumcised. If it had been in Circumcision, or after Circumcision, What Argument would there have been in the Case, i. e. That Abraham should be the Father of those that believe, that are not Circumcised.

There-

Therefore, in direct Opposition to what Dr. *Ames* speaks, as cited by Mr. *Flavel*, I must say, The main Drift and Scope of the Apostle's Argument from the Coherence of the Text, is to take off the Jews from seeking any spiritual Benefit from Circumcision, or the Law, but by Faith, only seeing; *Abraham* was Justified, and received the Righteousness of Christ, by Faith, before he was Circumcised, or without Circumcision; and his receiving Circumcision, sealed not only the Righteousness of Faith to him, which he had, being Uncircumcised, (and so to none else) but also, *his being the Father of all that Believe, whether Circumcised, or not Circumcised.*

5. But again, it must be granted to belong to *Abraham*, only as a Seal, because St. *Paul*, speaking of Circumcision, *Rom. 3. 12.* says, The chief Advantage, or Privilege, they had thereby, was, *because that unto them was committed the Oracles of God.* Certainly, he would not have called that the Chief, if Circumcision had been given in common, as a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith: However, when he is a treating of the Privileges that come by Circumcision, surely he could not have forgotten this, *viz.* that it was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith.

6. Let not Men mistake themselves any more, for evident it is, that Circumcision, as 'tis called a Seal to *Abraham*, so it did not seal to him something, which he then had not, but might have; but it did seal, really, and truly, the Righteousness of that Faith, which he at that time had: If therefore you Baptize Children, who before they are Baptized, do truly believe; no body will be displeas'd with you, or if you can prove, your Infants have really and truly such a Faith as *Abraham* had, and that their Baptism doth seal that Faith to them for Righteousness, which Circumcision sealed to *Abraham*, you do your business: But Sirs, pray what Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, doth Baptism now seal to your Infants? O, *says one, the Covenant is theirs, it belongs to them, and shall we deny them the Seal? what, not let them have a bit of Wax?* But stay a little, you must first prove the Covenant of Grace, doth indeed belong to Believers Children as such, before you talk at such a rate as you do. A Seal, all Men know, makes firm and sure all the Blessings to the Person, to whom it is sealed, which are contained in the same Covenant, to which it is fixed: Therefore, take heed you do not blind the Minds of People, and deceive them, by making them think they are in Covenant, when indeed it may be no such thing.

7. Besides, if Circumcision was the Seal of the Covenant of Grace, then it would follow, that the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*, is Abrogated; for the breaking off the Seal, all Men know, cancels the Covenant, and makes it of none Effect: And that Circumcision, which you call the Seal of the Covenant of Grace, that was made with *Abraham*, is broke off, or torn off by the Death of Jesus Christ, is evident (And this proves, if it was a Seal of the *Sinai* Covenant, which I say, not but only a Sign) that Covenant is gone, because the Seal is broken off.

8. Circumcision was so far from being a Seal of the Covenant of Grace to all, to whom it did belong, that it sealed not all those outward Blessings admitted to dwell in *Abraham's* Family; for it did not seal to them all the outward and external Privileges of the Commonwealth of *Israel*; for they only belonged to those who were natural Israelites.

Now, from the whole, it seems to me to be a strange Thing, which is lately asserted, *viz.*

‘That the Infant Seed of Believers, (during their Infancy) have all of them a certain Interest in the Covenant of Grace: By vertue of which, they are compleatly Justified before God, from the Guilt of Original Sin, both Originans, and Originations; and yet, when they come to Years of Discretion, may (yea must) by their actual closing with, or refusing the Terms of the Covenant, either obtain the continuation, and confirmation of their Covenant Interest, or be utterly, and finally cut off from it, and so perish Eternally in their Ignorance of God, and Rebellion against him.

*Answer,* To which I must say, That they seem to make the Covenant of Grace, such a Conditional Covenant, that renders it in Nature and Quality, like the *Sinai* Covenant, or Covenant of Works, *i. e.* If they perform the Righteousness required, they shall live; if they Obey not, or make not Good, this pretended Covenant of Grace, they shall dye, or be cut off: Let our Brethren, who are sound in the Doctrine of Free-Grace, consider this.

2. And as the Promises of the New Covenant, will admit of no such partial Interest, (saith a Learned Author) so neither can this Opinion consist with the *Analogy of Faith*, in other Respects; for either the stain of Original Sin, in these Infants is purged, and the dominion of Concupiscence in them destroyed, when their Guilt is pardoned, or it is not; if it be, then the Case of these Infants, in point of Perseverance, is the same with Adult Persons, that are under Grace, by actual Faith; and then a final Apostacy, from the Grace of the New Covenant, must be allowed to befall the one, as well as the other, notwithstanding all Provisions of that Covenant, and Engagement of God therein, to make the Promise sure to all the Seed, *Rom. 4. 16.*

But this the Author will not admit: If he say, That their Guilt is pardoned, but their Natures are not changed, or renewed, nor the Power of Original Corruption destroyed, so as that Sin, shall not have Dominion over them; it will be replied, That then, notwithstanding their supposed Pardon, they remain as an unclean Thing, and so incapable of admission into the Kingdom of God. Thus this worthy Author.

3. To which let me add, Certainly if Divine Habits were in those Infants, they would immediately be manifested; or be sure when they are grown up, would appear in them by gracious Operations flowing from thence;

thence: But since those Acts, or Products of such a gracious Habit, appear not in them, 'tis evident, they never had them infused.

4. All that are in the Covenant of Grace, (if they live) the Fruits of Faith and Holiness, will flow naturally from those sacred Habits, God hath by his Spirit planted in them, as *heat* and *light* doth from the Fire, when 'tis kindled on the Hearth. The Truth is, such who are united to Christ, and have Faith in him, and so are actually in the Covenant of Grace, are also washed and purged from Sin, and Pollution, see *Ezek. 16. Rom. 5. 14. Act. 15. 10.* None can have Union with Christ, but by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit; and wheresoever the Spirit of Christ is, it applies, The Blood of the Covenant, not only for Pardon, but also for the *purging the Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living God*: 'And therefore, (as the same Learned Author observes) as certain as any derive a New Covenant Rite from Christ for Pardon, they also receive a *vital Influence* from him, for the renovation of their Natures, and conforming their Souls to his Image: Therefore, to assert, That the Grace of Christ, is applied to some, for remission of Sins only, or that the guilt of any Sin, can be pardoned to any Person, and yet that Sin retains its Dominion over them, is a Doctrine, I understand, not to be found, or agreeable to the *Doctrine that is according to Godliness.*

5. To conclude with this, 'tis evident, these Men must, by their Notion, make every believing Parent to be (considered in respect of that Covenant made with *Abraham*) a common Head and Father, not only to his own natural Seed, but to all Believers also, as *Abraham* was, and then it would follow, that there are as many common Fathers, like as *Abraham* was so called, as there are believing Men in the World, and so a *knowing, or knowledge of Men still after the Flesh*, which the Apostle disclaims, *2 Cor. 5. 17.* Besides, the Thing is usurp'd in it self: Therefore, let all know, That a Believers Right to the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham's*, or by vertue of that Promise made with him, do relate to such a Seed as do believe, and not as Co-ordinate with him, in Covenant Interest; they are not each one, by this Covenant, made the Father of a Blessed Seed, as *Abraham* was the Father of the Faithful, neither can they claim the Promise for themselves, and their Seed, according to the Tenour of *Abraham's* Covenant, as he might, (as this Author observes) but they must believe as *Abraham* did, or have a Faith of their own: For if ye be *Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's* seed and heirs according to the Promise, *Gal. 3. 29.* This the same Author notes.

Obj. 7. The Covenant of Circumcision, was an Everlasting Covenant, therefore it was the Covenant of Grace.

Ans. I Answer, 'Tis not unknown to our Opponents, that the Hebrew Word, for Everlasting, sometimes signifies no more then a long continuance of time.— And so extensive was the Promise of God's peculiar Favours

to the natural Seed of *Abraham*, and the original of their Claim therefrom, that the severity of that Law afterwards given to them, was so far restrained, as that (notwithstanding their manifold breach of Covenant with God, and forfeiture of all legal Claim of their Right and Privileges in the Land of *Canaan* thereby) that they were never utterly cut off from that good Land, and ceased, to be a peculiar People unto God, untill the end of that period of time, determined by the Almighty, was fully come; which was the Revelation of the *Messiah*, and the setting up his spiritual Temple, under the Dispensation of the Gospel; and thus far, the Word *Everlasting* doth extend. 'Tis said, God promised to give the Land of *Canaan* to *Abraham*, and to his Seed for ever; and again, *Gen. 17. 8.* for an everlasting Inheritance; whereas it is evident, they have for many Ages, been dispossessed of it: Nor may this seem strange, if we consult other Texts, where the same Terms are used with the like Restriction; for the Priesthood of *Levi*, is called an Everlasting Priesthood, *Numb. 25. 13.* And the Gates of the Temple, Everlasting Doors, *Psal. 24. 6.* so the Statute, to make an Atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and for the Tabernacle, and for the Altar, and for the Priests, and for all the People of the Congregation, is called, an Everlasting Statute, *Levit. 16. 34.* And this shall be for an everlasting statute, &c. So that from hence 'tis very clear, that the Word *Everlasting* is to be taken sometimes with Restriction, and refers to the end of that Dispensation, to which the Law, Statute, or Covenant did belong; and when Christ came, as all *Mosaical* Rites ended, so did the Covenant of Circumcision also.

God never said, he would be the God of *Abraham's* natural Seed as such, as he gave himself to him, and to all his true spiritual Seed; for to them he gives himself, or an Interest in all God is, or has (so far as communicative) even for ever and ever, or to all Eternity; the Covenant of Grace, being ordered in all things, and sure, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* 'Tis impossible this Covenant, and Covenant Blessings, which is comprehensive of all Grace here, and Glory hereafter, should refer to a certain Period of time; and since he was not thus in Covenant with *Abraham's* carnal Seed as such, 'tis evident, the Covenant of Circumcision, (tho' called, an Everlasting Covenant) was not the Covenant of Grace. And so much to this Objection.

8. Obj. *There was never but one Covenant of Works, and that God made with Adam, and in him with all his Posterity; therefore the Covenant of Circumcision did not appertain to the Covenant of Works:* See Mr. Flavel.

Ans. First, Our Controversie, lies not so much about, the Covenant of Works, as given to *Adam*, but about the Nature of *Sinai* Covenant, since Circumcision appears to be of the same Nature with that: I do not say, in every respect, there is no difference between the Covenant of Works made with *Adam*, and that made with the People of *Israel*, though they differ not Essentially in Substance, 'tis all one and the same Covenant, viz. Requiring compleat and perfect Righteousness.

2. Therefore, tho' there is but one Covenant of Works, yet there was more than one Addition, or Administration of the said Covenant: This is evident, although given upon a different end, purpose, and design, by the Lord.

*Adam's* Covenant, I grant, had one end and design, and the *Sinai* Covenant of Works had another; yet, may be, both, as to the Effence and Substance of them but one and the same Covenant: Which, doubtless, is all Mr. *Cary* intends.

1. *Adam's* Covenant had Happiness, and Justification in it, by his perfect Obedience thereto; and he being able, in the time of his Innocency, to keep it, he was thereby Justified.

2. But the Second Edition, or Ministration of the Covenant of Works, given to the People of *Israel*, tho' in its Nature and Quality, it was a Covenant of Works, and one with the former, yet it was not given for Life or to Justifie them, nor was it able so to do, by reason of their Weakness through the Flesh, *Rom. 8. 3.* But it was added because of Transgression.

1. To restrain Sin, (or as I said before) to regulate their Lives under those external Covenant Transactions of God with them, as his People, as before expressed.

2. To make Sin appear exceeding sinful.

3. To discover to them, what Righteousness it is God doth require, in order to the Justification of the Soul in his Sight.

4. To make known to them thereby, what a Righteousness Man, originally, in the First *Adam*, had, and lost; and sibly, It did discover their woeful Condition to them, and might put them upon seeking Relief and Justification, by the promised Seed, and so be as a School-Master, to bring them to Christ.

6. That in their Conformity to it, to their utmost Power, to continue all those outward Blessings, and Privileges to the House, or *Church of Israel*, as God promised to *Abraham* upon that Account; for 'tis evident, the Promises made to them, upon their Obedience, were Earthly and Temporal Promises, and not Spiritual. Hence the Apostle saith, the New Covenant is established upon better Promises. — And

Now, that the *Sinai* Covenant was a Covenant of Works, (as considered in it self) notwithstanding the end and design of God therein, (I find many of our sound *Protestant Divines* do affirm) tho' given with a merciful and gracious intention, or in subserviency to the Gospel.

1. It commanded, or did require perfect or compleat Obedience.

2. On these Terms, *Do and Live.*

3. It gave no strength, nevertheless, to perform what its just Demands were: Hence the strength of Sin is called, the Law; it did Condemn, but could not Save.

4. Nor was there any Pardon, or Remission of Sin, by that Covenant, for any Soul that broke it; for, *He that despised against Moses's Law, dyed without mercy, under two or three witnesses*, Heb. 10. 28. — Moreover,

5. It curst all that did not continue in all Things that were contained in the whole Book of the Law to do them, Gal. 3. 10.

6. The Holy Ghost calls it the Old Covenant, in contra-distinction, and direct Opposition to the Covenant of Grace, or Gospel Covenant.

*The law is not of faith: but, the man that doth those things, them shall live in them*, Gal. 3. 12. And tho' *Moses* was the Mediator of that Covenant, yet he was but sings of that Covenant, and to prevent the Threatnings of Temporal Judgments; for there was never but one Mediator between God and us, upon a spiritual Account, i. e. To stand between eternal Wrath and us, or to make Peace with God for our Souls. —

Take what the Learned *Bishop Usher* hath said about the Law, as a Covenant of Works, viz.

Quest. *How doth this Covenant (i. e. The Covenant of Grace) differ from that of Works.*

Ans. His Answer is much every way, for first, in many Points, the Law may be conceived, by Reason; but the Gospel, in all Points, is far above the reach of Man's Reason. Secondly, the Law commandeth to do good, and giveth no strength; the Gospel enableth us to do good, the Holy Ghost writing the Law in our Hearts. Thirdly, The Law promised Life only, the Gospel Righteousness also. Fourthly, The Law required perfect Obedience, the Gospel, the Righteousness of Faith. Fifthly, The Law revealeth Sin, rebuketh us for Sin, and leaves us in it, but the Gospel doth reveal unto us Remission of Sins, and freeth us from the Punishment belonging thereunto. Sixthly, The Law is the ministration of Wrath, Condemnation, and Death; the Gospel is a ministry of Grace, Justification, and Life. Seventhly, The Law was grounded on Man's own Righteousness, requiring of every Man, in his own Person, perfect Obedience, Deut. 27. 26. And in default, for satisfaction, everlasting Punishment, Gal. 3. 10, 12. But the Gospel is grounded on the Righteousness of Christ, admitting Payment and Performance in another, in behalf of so many as receive it, Gal. 3. 13. 14. *Bishop Usher's Summ and Substance of Christian Religion*, p. 159. A multitude of Protestant Writers, I might produce, who all assert the same Doctrine.

And if the *Sinai Covenant* was not a Covenant of Works, Why do all our Brethren say, as it was a Covenant of Works, 'tis done away? and, Why doth the Apostle say, Christ is the end of the Law, as touching Righteousness? It is not abolished, or done away, as 'tis a Rule of Righteousness, for as so it abides, as a perpetual Rule and Law to us.

Therefore, I wonder at Mr. *Flavel's* Out-crys against Mr. *Cary*, as if it was impossible for the Saints to be under the Covenant of Works, under the

the former Dispensation, and yet in the Covenant of Grace ; for I would know, Whether or not, they were not, at that time, under the Ministration of that Covenant ? but what, tho' no sooner did they believe in Christ, *the Promised Seed*, but they were delivered from the Curse of the Law. Nor is this any strange Thing, For are not all now, in these Days, under the Dispensation of the Gospel ? yet, untill Men and Women believe in Christ, they abide still under the Curse of the Law of the First Covenant ; for Christ is not the end of the Law to all the World, (so as some erroneously assert, *i. e.* all are justified in God's sight, from the Curse of the Law) but he is only *the end of the Law, touching Righteousness to every one that believeth*, to them, and to no other Adult Person : Therefore Men might be under the outward Dispensation of the Law of Works, and yet through Faith, be Justified ; and also, others may be, and are now, under the Dispensation of the Gospel ; and yet, for not believing in Christ, be Condemned, and under the Curse of the Law : For the Gospel is not the Cause of our Sickness, but our Cure ; none believing, is the refusal of the Medicine : So that there's no Reason for him to say, (because we assert this) ' That the Godly, under that Dispensation, hung mid-way, betwixt ' Life, and Death, Justification, and Condemnation ; and after Death, ' mid-way betwixt Heaven, and Hell, p. 180. Therefore, as all that lived under the Dispensation of the Law, or Covenant of Works, were saved by Faith, in the Promise of Christ, or by the Covenant of Grace, *Abraham* (saith our Saviour) *saw my Day, and was glad*, so without Faith, or Interest in Christ, such that live under the Dispensation of the Gospel, cannot be saved ; nor are they delivered from the Curse of the Law, or Covenant of Works. Therefore, (to conclude with this,) 'tis evident, the Covenant of Works, though but one, (as to the substance of it) yet there was several Ministrations of it ; as it was given also upon different Ends, and Designs by the Lord : And therefore, because the said Covenant of Works was first given to *Adam*, (by vertue of which he was accepted, and justified in his Innocency) Could not God give forth a Second *Addition*, *Ministration*, or *Transcript* of his Righteousness, and Holy Law, requiring perfect Obedience, though not to Justification, yet to aggravate their Sin, and so to their just Condemnation ? And doth not the Apostle assert the same Thing ? *Rom. 3. 19, 20.* compared with *Rom. 7. 13. Gal. 3. 19.* But saith Bishop *Usher*.

Quest. *Doth not God wrong to Men, to require of him, that he is not able to perform ?*

Ans. He Answers ' No ; for God made Man so, that he might have performed it ; but he, by Sin, spoiled himself, and Posterity of those Gifts. Therefore,

To proceed, I do affirm, That always, generally, when the Apostle speaks of the Old Covenant, or Covenant of Works, he passes by, in silence,

the Covenant made with *Adam*, and more immediately, and directly, applies it unto the *Sinai* Covenant, and to that of Circumcision, as all careful Readers, who read the Epistles to the *Romans*, *Galatians*, and to the *Hebrews*, may clearly find.

And farther, to evince the Truth we contend for; 'tis evident, That although there is (and ever was) but one Covenant of Grace, yet nothing is more plain than that there were several distinct Additions of it, altho' we say, the Promise, or Gospel Covenant, was one and the same, in all Ages, in respect of the Things promised, with the Nature and Quality thereof; which is a free and absolute Covenant, without Works, or Conditions of foreseen Acts of Obedience, or Righteousness done, by the Creature whatsoever, *Rom. 4. 5.*

The Substance, and Essential Part of this Gospel Covenant, as to the Promises of it, is Christ, Faith, a New Heart, Regeneration, Remission of Sins, Sanctification, Perseverance, and everlasting Life: Yet, this Evangelical Covenant, had divers Forms, Additions, or Transcripts of it, which signified those Things, and the various Sanctions, by which it was given forth, and confirmed.

To *Adam*, the Promise of it was under the Name Of the Seed of the Woman, bruising the Head of the Serpent. To *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c. in other Terms. To *Abraham*, under the Name of *His Seed*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. To *Moses*, by the Name of *A great Prophet among his Brethren*; and it was signified also unto him under dark Shadows, and Sacrifices. Unto *David*, under the Name of *A Successor in his Kingdom*. To other Prophets, more clearer still made known, Unto us a Child is born; a Woman shall compass a Man; a New Covenant I will make, &c. In the New Testament, in plain Words, *We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

But now, because there were so many Additions, or Ministrations of the Gospel, or New Covenant, Doth it follow, there are so many New Covenants? This being so, Mr. *Flavel* hath done nothing to remove Mr. *Cary's* Arguments, but they stand firm: For he says not, That the *Sinai* Ministrations of the Covenant of Works, was ordained to justify Mankind; nor was it possible it could, after a Man had sinned; and yet in its Nature, an absolute Covenant of Works, or do for Life, or Perish. The Man that doeth these Things, shall live in them.

Obj. 9. Circumcision could not oblige the Jews, in its own Nature, to keep the whole Law, because Paul Circumcised Timothy: If, in the very Nature of the Act, it had bound Timothy to keep the Law for Justification, how could it have been Paul's Liberty so to do? saith Mr. *Flavel*, which he asserts it was, Gal. 2. 3, 4. p. 226.

Ans. 1. That Circumcision did oblige the Jews to keep the whole Law, is evident, Gal. 5. 3. and, as I hinted before, our Learned Annotators, on the said place, speak the same Thing positively. Take more largely their  
very

very Words : ' They were obliged to one Part of the Law ; they must be obliged to all other Parts of it ; besides, that Circumcision was an owning, and professing Subjection to the whole Law, &c.

Obj. ' But did not the Fathers then, by being Circumcised, acknowledge themselves Debtors to the Law ? (*be Answers*) Yes, they did acknowledge themselves bound to the observation of it, and to endure (upon the breaking of it) the Curse of it ; but they were discharged from that Obligation, by believing in Christ, who was made a Curse for them, that he might redeem them from the Curse of the Law. Thus *Pool's* Annotations.

2. But, as to *Paul's* Circumcising *Timothy*, it was, when he knew Circumcision was abolished ; and therefore, it could not oblige him, *Paul* well knew, to keep the Law. Sith no Law, in its own Nature, can oblige any Person, according to the Nature, and Quality of it, when 'tis abrogated and in no force, tho' he saw it was his Liberty, for some Reasons to do it : But those Christians, corrupted by *false Teachers*, did not believe, That Circumcision, and other Legal Rites, were abolished, but that they were in full Force as ever ; and therefore, he tells them, (granting it was, as they believed) if they were Circumcised, they were obliged to keep the whole Law, tho' his great Design was to take them off from seeking Justification by Works. Therefore,

3. 'Tis evident, *Paul* did not Circumcise *Timothy*, in Obedience to the Law given by the Lord ; but for other *Politick* Reasons, in complying with the weakness of some Jewish Christians : After the same manner he submitted to some other Rites also, of the Ceremonial Law, as *shaving the head*, and *purifying himself*, which was then also abolished, tho' not deadly ; *say Expositors*, then though those Ceremonies, were dead, and this *Paul* knew, in them, *Act. 21. 24.* Circumcision was, alas ! dead, and this *Paul* knew, therefore could not hurt *Timothy* : But those, to whom he wrote, thought it was alive ; and therefore, it would not only hurt, but destroy them, or be destructive to them, upon the Account of the Obligation it lay them under, if it was as they conceived. This being so, What is become of *Mr. Flavel's* Argument, which he makes such boast of, as if unanswerable ? pag. 231.

Obj. 10. *The Root is Holy, therefore the Branches ; that is, as Abraham was Holy, so were all his Seed ; and as Believers are Holy, so are all their Children ; and as the natural Branches of Abraham was broken off for their Unbelief, so the Gentiles are grafted in, in their stead, and succeed in their Privileges, and so their Seed are Holy, with an external relative Covenant Holiness, Rom. 11. 16. and therefore, may be Baptized, and have Right to Church Membership.*

\* *Ans.* There is a Two fold Holiness spoken of :

- 1st. An external foederal Holiness.
- 2d. A True spiritual inherent Holiness.

\* I am forced to repeat this Answer again ; also you have it at large in *Rector Rectified*, in Answer to *Mr. Burket*, Pag. 108, 109, 110.

Now the Children of Believing Gentiles, are not Holy with an external relative federal Holiness nor have they a Right to Baptism, nor Church-Membership, for Two Reasons:

*First*, Because Baptism is of mere positive Right, nothing but a Command, Example, or some well grounded Authority from Christ, that can give them a Right thereto.

*Secondly*, Because the Gospel Church is not constituted, as the Jewish Church was, 'tis not National, but Congregational; it consisteth not of the carnal Seed as such, but only of the spiritual Seed, *i. e.* Adult Persons who believe. Where do we find, in all the New Testament, That the Children of Believers as such, were Baptised, and taken into the Church, as being in an external relative Covenant? Holy *Mr. Tho. Goodwin* (as I find him quoted by a Learned Writer, in a Book called *Two Treatises*, p. 67.) saith, 'In the New Testament, in a Book about which, he challenged all the World, to shew to the contrary. I have shewed you, *The Ax is laid at the Root* of all external, relative, federal Holiness, which qualified under the Law, for Jewish Ordinances, and Church Membership. — But

3 We will now come to examine this Text of Holy Scripture, *Rom. 11. 16.* There are various Interpretations of what is meant by the Root in this place.

1. *Some understand it of the Covenant.*
2. *Some of Christ.*
3. *Some of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*
4. *Some of Abraham only.*

I now agree with the last, and say *Abraham* is the Root spoken of here: But pray observe, as he was a Two-fold Father, so he was a Two-fold Root: *First*, The Father, or Root of all that believe, *Secondly*, The Father, or Root of all his Natural Seed as such; but this place refers to him, as he was the Root of all his True spiritual Seed; and if so, the Holiness of the Branches is real, spiritual, and internal; (and not external federal Holiness) for such, as is the Holiness of the Root (as meant here) such is the Holiness of the Branches; but *Abraham* was believingly, personally, spiritually, and internally Holy, *Ergo*, such are all the Branches spoken of here. And indeed, for want of Faith, and spiritual Holiness, that was in the Root, were many of the Natural Branches broken off, from being any more a People, in an external Covenant-Relation with God; for this is the Covenant I have shewed; The Ax is now laid at the Root of, *viz.* the External Covenant. The Jews were broken off, or cut down by their Unbelief; their Old Church State, and Covenant being gone, they not believing in Christ, and so united to the *True Olive*, and the *Gentiles* by Faith, were grafted in; they having obtained the *Fruit* of the Root, or

*Fruit,*

*Faith, and Righteousness of Abraham, and of the Covenant of Grace made with him, who is called, The Father of all that believe.*

A Learned Writer says,

1. 'The Holiness here meant, is First, in respect of God's Election, *i. e.* Holiness, personal and inherent in God's intention.
2. 'It is also a Holiness, derivative, not from any Ancestors, but *Abraham*, not as a natural Father, but as a spiritual Father, or Father of the *faithfull*; and so derived from the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*.

From hence it appears, There is nothing in this illustrious Scripture, for what these Men bring it, who think hereby to prove a Holiness, which the New Testament knows nothing of; applying, *the Holiness and Infection* to outward Dispensation, only in the visible Church, which is meant of Saving Grace, in the invisible, and make every believing Parent, like Root to his Posterity with *Abraham*, to his Seed; which we deny.

Let therefore the Jews Covenant, standing before they were broken off (from being any more a Covenant People) be what it would, I am sure no Gentile is grafted into Christ, nor Jew neither, but by Faith; nor can any be grafted into the Gospel Church, without the Profession of such a Faith.

The Jews, 'tis true, were broken off by their Unbelief, and were also now no more a Church; nor is there (as I said once before) any such kind of Church, constituted under the Gospel Dispensation, as theirs was, *viz.* A National one: For they, amongst the Jews, who were True Believers, (or the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*) who receiving Jesus Christ by Faith, were planted a-new into the Gospel Church; and between them, and Gentile Believers, there is no difference, since the middle Wall of Partition is broken down, *Eph. 2. 14.* Jew, and Gentile, stand now by Faith, and not by external, relative Covenant Holiness. Thou standest, (saith *Paul*) by Faith: O Believer! (mark it) not by Birth, Privileges, but by Faith; (as worthy Mr *Cary* observes) 'Thy standing is by Faith, yet not thy Seed by thy Faith, but thou thy self by thine; and they, by their own Faith. Faith is that, by which (thou standing, and not thy Seed) hast Right to stand in the Church, and not thy Seed; but if thy Seed have Faith, and thou hast none, then they have Right in this Church, and thou shalt be excluded. And, although under the Law, we deny not, but that the natural Seed, or Progeny of *Abraham*, were all Holy, with an External, Ceremonial, Typical Holiness; and consequently, they were then admitted to an external Participation of Church Privileges; yet now 'tis otherwise, *Old things are passed away, and all things are become new*; now we know no Man after the Flesh, *2. Cor. 5. 16, 17.* That Old Church State is dissolved, and manner of Admission into it, by external Birth, Privileges, or relative Covenant Holiness; and 'tis very evident this was effected by the Death of Christ: See *Eph. 2. 14.* *For he is our peace, who hath made both one,*  
and

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making Peace, *vers.* 15.

The Legal External Covenant made with the Jews, whilst it abode, was a Wall of Separation, or Partition between them, and the Gentiles, and caused Enmity in them both, in the Jews, because they contemned the Gentiles, as a People Unclean, and Abominable; not being Circumcised, they Hated them: And the poor Gentiles, they seeing themselves out of the Covenant, and so deemed *Strangers and Foreigners, and without God in the World*, they envied the Jews: But now Jesus Christ has broken down this Wall of Partition, and slain the Enmity that was between them, which was the Ceremonial Law, and Covenant of Circumcision, and all other external Privileges, as they were God's peculiar Covenant People, and these being abolished, and gone, now both Jew and Gentile are made one in Christ, and become one new Body, or Church, *viz.* A Christian Gospel Church: And hence he adds, *And, that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body by the Cross*, *ver.* 16. That is, The outward Wall of Jewish Rites, and Privileges being gone, Christ thereby designed, to bring both Jew, and Gentile (*viz.* all the Elect) unto God, and both into one Church State, no Person, nor People now, having any external Privilege above others, by the Gospel Covenant: And if the Jews external Birth-Privileges, were a Wall of Partition between them, and the Gentiles, let Men take heed how they set up another like Wall of Partition among them, who are Believers, and their Seed, and Unbelieving Gentiles, and their Seed, lest that prove a ground and cause of like Enmity between believing, and unbelieving Gentiles, as the Old Rites, and Covenant Privileges did, between Jews, and Gentiles.

But to open that Text, *Rom.* 11. 16. a little more fully, as I have formerly done, 'tis evident the Apostle, in the 9<sup>th</sup>. and 10<sup>th</sup>. Chapters to the *Romans*, is treating of the Election of Grace, and of the Covenant of Grace, God made with *Abraham*: These were his People which he had not cast away, *chap.* 10. 1. And of this sort, God had 7000 in *Elias's* Days, *ver.* 4. *Even so, saith he, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace*, *ver.* 5. Hence he says, *What, then Israel hath not obtained, &c. but the Election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded*, *ver.* 7. He farther shews, That abundance of the natural Seed of *Abraham*, were broken off, How were they broken off? Why, for their Unbelief; they were not Receiving Christ, but Rejected Him, and the Gospel: And the New Church State were broken off; but that *the Gentiles might not boast over them*, the Apostle shews, There is ground left, to believe, all those that belong to the Election of Grace, shall, in God's due time, be brought in again, and so partake of the Blessings of the Gospel Covenant, or Promise of Grace made to *Abraham's* spiritual Seed; and to prove this, he in *ver.* 16. lays down an Argument; *For, if the First-fruits be Holy, the Lump is also Holy, and if the Root be Holy, so are the Branches.*

By the *Root*, I understand (as I said before) *Abraham*, is meant, *Root*, and *Father*, signifying here the same thing; *Abraham* being counted the *Root*, or *Father*, as God represents him, (not only of his own natural Offspring) but of all that believe, or the *Root* of all his true, holy, and spiritual Seed, and so intended here.

By the *First-fruits*, may be meant, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and all the Holy Patriarchs, for they were given to *Abraham*, as the *First-fruits* of the Covenant of Grace, or Free Promise of God to him; and these were Holy, with a true, spiritual, personal, and inherent Holiness: Also,

*Thirdly*, By the *Lump*, may be meant, (and doubtless is) the whole Body of the Elect, or spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, from the time the *First-fruits* were given to him, untill the Gospel Days, or whole *Lump* of God's true *Israel*, who also were all Holy as the *Root*, and *First-fruits*, were Holy.

*Fourthly*, by the Branches, he means, the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, or the Elect Seed, that then were living at that present time, as *ver. 5*. Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the Election of Grace. And these were Holy likewise, even as all the rest, both as the *Root*; *First-fruits*, and *Lump*, or whole Body were Holy; that is, all the the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, were like himself, *viz.* Holy, in a Gospel Sense, with a personal and inherent Holiness. Now observe, he speaks of some Branches that were broken off, these seemed to be Branches, or Children of *Abraham*: And so they were according to the Flesh; (but were like those Branches in *Christ*, who bear no Fruit, *Joh. 15. 2, 3, 4.* and therefore taken away) he alludes, to the natural Seed of *Abraham*, to whom he stood, not, as a spiritual Father, or *Root*, but as a natural, and legal Father, as they were a National Church, and sprang from him as such, to whom the external legal Covenant was made; and these as such, for rejecting of *Christ*, were broken off, (1.) Not broken off from the Election of Grace, for to that they did not belong. (2.) Nor were they broken off of the Gospel Church, for they never were grafted into that: but (3dly,) they were broken off from being any more a Church, or People, in Covenant with God, the whole Old Church State, and Constitution, being gone, by the coming in of the Gospel Dispensation, and they not closing in with *Christ*, in the Covenant of Grace, and Gospel Church, but utterly rejected him, and the New Church State: For this they were broken off as a lost People, because not re-planted, or implanted into *Jesus Christ*, and the true Gospel Church, the Old being gone, quite rased, and taken away: They have now no *Root* to stand upon, having lost their Legal standing, and Privileges, as *Abraham* was their Father, upon that very Foot of Account, and they not appearing to be the true Branches, or Seed of *Abraham*, as he was the Father of all the Faithful, or of all the Elect Seed, they must, of necessity, from hence be broken off, from being the People of God, or belonging to any Common Head, or *Root*, in any Covenant Relation to God, at all: The Dispensation being changed, the Old House pulled

pulled down *Agar*, and *her Son*, cast out. *Old things past away, and all things being now, become New.*

But this New State, New Blessings, and New Church Privileges they rejected, and so were the natural Branches broken off, and the *Gentiles* (who were wild by Nature, that is, never were in any visible Covenant State with God, nor, in any sense, related to *Abraham*, as a Root) were grafted into the True Olive, Jesus Christ, and into the Gospel Church and so Partakers of the sap, and fatness of the Root, and of the Olive, that is, of the spiritual Blessings of Christ, and of the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*, and Privileges of the Gospel Church; and this they received, and partook of us, as being first grafted by saving Faith in Christ, and so united to his Mystical Body. But since there are a great Number of the natural Branches, that are beloved for their Father's sake, that is, for their Father *Abraham's* sake, as the Root, and Father of all the Elect Seed, they shall, in due time, be grafted in again, and so become a People visibly owned of God, and in Covenant with him, as the True Seed now actually are, and formerly were.

And if this be considered, What doth this Text do, to prove the natural Seed of Believers are in the Gospel Covenant, or are externally, relatively, and federally Holy; for if the natural Seed of *Abraham* can lay no claim, nor have any Right to Gospel Precepts, or Privileges as such, but are broken off, What ground is there for us, to think within our selves, that we, or our natural Off-spring, as such, should be taken in, and so another Wall of Partition, and cause of Enmity, set up between believing, and unbelieving *Gentiles*, and their Seed as such?

The Apostle speaks, not of Branches, or of being Holy with an external, relative Covenant Holiness, but of such a spiritual Gospel Holiness that was in the Root, *viz. Abraham*, who believed in God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness: And thus, all his true spiritual Seed, who are actual Branches, and in Covenant are Holy, and also, all the Elect of *Abraham*, not yet called, are discretively Holy, or in God's sight so, who calls things that are not, as if they were; they are all Holy in his Account, and beloved for their Father's sake, with whom the Covenant of Grace was made for himself, and all his spiritual Seed: And 'tis from this Argument, the Apostle argues, for the calling of the *Jews*, and grafting them in, who belong to the Election of Grace. —

Therefore, there is no ground for *Infants Church Membership*, or *Baptism*, from hence, and those who make every Believer a common Head, or Root of their natural Off-spring, as *Abraham* was, either way, know not what they affirm, nor what they say: see *Rector Rectified*. Moreover, the *Jews*, who were broken off, are still the natural Seed of *Abraham*; and if therefore, this Holiness was an external, relative, federal Holiness, they are still in that Sense Holy, as far forth as any Child of believing *Gentiles* as such, can be said to be; but, 'tis evident, this is not that Holiness, of which

which the Apostle speaks, nor is there any such Holiness, under the Gospel Dispensation, spoken of, as to that Text, in 1 Cor. 7. 14. Else were your Children unclean, but now are they Holy — this is so fully answered in that late Treatise Entituled, *The Rector Rectify'd*, &c. that I shall speak nothing now to it; for from the Scope of the place, 'tis evident, the Apostle speaks of Matrimonial Sanctification, and of the Holiness of Legitimation, see pag. 134. to 140. so that there Mr. Rothwell hath his Arguments answered, touching Infants sadoral Holiness under the Law, &c.

Obj. 11. *If the Children of Believers, as such, are not now under the Gospel in Covenant with them, and so to be admitted Members of the Church as formerly, then the Privileges of the Gospel Covenant (and Membership) are straitned, and fewer than they were under the Law, Mr. R's. Pado-Baptismus,* pag. 2. 3.

Ans. 'Tis not once to be supposed, but that the External or Temporal Privileges of the Jews under the Law, were more and larger (as well as Church-Membership) than those we have under the Gospel Dispensation, since their Church was national, and their Promises and Privileges consisting in earthly Blessings: (as they were a People considered in that old Covenant Relation) for the Jewish Teachers or Priests of God had many external Privileges, which no Gospel Minister can once pretend unto.

Minister's Sons had all a Right to the Ministry, they had a Right to the Tenths of all their Brethren's Increase and first Fruits, and a multitude of other Advantages besides, viz. they had a Civil Government of their own, Power to punish Capital Offenders with Death; their Temporal Rulers were among themselves, but Christ hath not set up such a Gospel political Church-State, nor given such Power and such a Government to his Church under the Gospel: what will be in the Kingdom of Christ in the last days we know not.

They had a lovely and fruitful Land given to them for their Inheritance, that flowed with Milk and Honey, they were promised outward Peace, Riches, and gathering of much Wealth, so are not we; they had a glorious external Temple, and what not; also all their natural Off-spring, were born Members of their Church. But none of these Privileges can we lay claim unto; all that are to be admitted into the Gospel-Church, have only a Right by Regeneration (by the second Birth) and not by the first Birth, we are to expect Persecution and trouble in the World, and not Peace and Prosperity; Poverty and Want, and not Riches or earthly Fulness: yet our Privileges are better and greater under the Gospel, than theirs were under the Law, the Gospel Covenant being established upon better Promises: Our Children when grown up, sit under the clear and glorious Light, and Preaching of the Gospel; which they, and theirs had then held forth, but in dark shadows, moreover the Partition Wall being now broken down, the Gospel Church is not confin'd to

the one People or Nation only, but now all, in all Nations of the World, who believe and embrace Christ by saving Faith; whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are Joint-heirs together, and have Interest in like spiritual Blessings, now greater Infusions of the Spirit. Alas! what Privileges had the poor *Gentiles* under the Law, and their Children? Is not the matter well amended with us? Sir, this being so, what is become of your Rational Arguments, for Infant Baptism? p. 2, 3.

Obj. 12. *Circumcision in the very direct and primary End of it, teach'd Man, the Corruption of his Nature by sin, and the Mortification of sin; therefore no Covenant of Works, or Condition of it. (to this purpose Mr. Flavel speaks, pag. 231.*

*Answer.* I answer, though it should be granted, that Circumcision had such an End, yet that, that was the direct and primary End of it, he proves proved) was something else, although we grant it was a dark Sign, Type or Figure of that they speak of, *viz.* to discover the Corruption of Nature by sin, and the Mortification thereof, and so also did most of the Ceremonies of the Law: but doth it therefore follow, those Ceremonies (and so Circumcision) did not appertain to that Ministration of the Covenant and done away. Must the Shadow or Sign be part of the Substance, or belong, or appertain to the Substance?

Wherefore, (as Mr. Cary well saith,) until they can prove the *Sinai Covenant* and *Ceremonial Law*, &c. not to be in their own Nature a *Covenant of Works*, this which they object here, has nothing in it; since *Sacrifices*, *the Passover*, &c. as well as *Circumcision*, were *Types of Christ*, and other *Gospel-Mysteries* likewise: and indeed Mr. Flavel seems to me to run upon a Mistake all along in his Answer to Mr. Cary, as if the latter makes no distinction between *Adam's Covenant of Works*, and those after Administrations of the same *Old Covenant*: for Mr. Cary, I am satisfied, means no more than what I have said, *viz.* That they agree in Nature and Quality, tho' *Adam* had Life and Justification by his own perfect Obedience unto that Law or Covenant, while he stood, and it was given to him to that end; yet God gave not the *Sinai Covenant*, which required perfect Obedience, to the end Man might be thereby justified; nor was it possible he could, since he had sinned, and lost his power to obey: but that Law contains a clear Transcript of the first Law, and so of the Holiness of God, and of that Righteousness Man originally had, and lost; and of the Impossibility of his being justified, without such a compleat and perfect Righteousness: but the Law as written in the two Tables, was given in Mercy (upon the Score or Account I have mentioned) to *Israel*, in Subserviency to the Gospel, and to it was annexed the Ceremonies, to shew that a plenary Satisfaction must be made for the breach of God's Holy Law, and that this must be by Blood, tho' not by blood of Bulls or Goats, but they might have understood,

understood, that by them, the Sacrifice and Blood of Christ was figured, could they have seen to the end, or purport of them.

Therefore the true Distinction lies here, *viz.* Both are the first Covenant of Works; both shew Man must live, and sin not, if he would be justified in God's sight: the first in Man's Innocency, answered the end of a Covenant of Works; the second Administration thereof could not give Life, nor was it given to that end, but it answered the end for which God gave it: and so much to this Objection.

Obj. 13. *You cannot deny, but Circumcision sealed the Righteousness of Faith to Abraham, and how can you prove a Seal of the Covenant of Works can be applied to such a use and service? Thus Mr. Flavel, p. 234.*

Ans. 1. I answer first, who of us say that Circumcision was a Seal of the Covenant of Works? there is a great difference between a Seal of a Covenant, and that which was given as a Sign or Token of that legal and external Covenant God made with all *Abraham's* natural Seed as such, and that Circumcision was such a Sign we have before shewed; as also of their having the Covenant or Law of *Mount Sinai*, and *Land of Canaan* given to them, &c.

2. But that Circumcision was a Seal of that Faith *Abraham* himself had, (not being yet Circumcised) and that he should be the Father of all that believe, *Paul* possibly affirms, *Rom. 4. 16.* and yet it might well be of use to him also, as a Sign or Token of those other Covenant Rights and Blessings granted to his natural Off-spring, is evident.

3. And from hence we have proved, that Circumcision could not be so, a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith to any other Person or Persons, none having the like Faith before they were Circumcised, as *Abraham* had; nor were they made common Fathers to all true Believers, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

Obj. 14. *Where the Covenant of Circumcision is by the Apostle contra-distinguished to the Covenant of Faith, Rom. 4. 13. the Law in that place, is put strictly for the pure Law of Nature, and metatypically signified the Works of the Law, p. 235.*

Ans. 1. I suppose no Man besides *Mr. Flavel*, ever asserted such a thing as this is: I would know how Circumcision (a meer positive Precept) came to be a part of the Pure Law of Nature? for 'tis evident, that the Law *Paul* contra-distinguisheth from the Righteousness of Faith, had Circumcision in it, or else the same Apostle needed not to have taken such pains to have distinguished between Circumcision and the Righteousness of Faith; and had Circumcision appertained to the Righteousness of Faith, or been a Gospel-Covenant, why doth he exclude it with the Law from being so counted? read *v. 10, 11, 12, 13.*

2. The Law therefore, of which the Apostle speaks, is that Administration of the Law given to *Israel*, of which Circumcision was part, and so

of the like Nature and Quality with it ; and both contra-distinguished to the Covenant of Grace, or to the Righteousness of Faith.

And that the Law here is put strictly for the pure Law of Nature, is wholly without Reason, Proof, or Demonstration ; what Law doth the Apostle speak of in the preceding Chapters, and also in this, see *chap. 3. 1, 2.* is it not that he calls the Oracles of God, or *Lively Oracles, Act. 7. 38.* given on Mount *Sinai* ? The Law of Nature, and the written Law contained in the two Tables, are all one and the same Law ; as to the Substance of them, they are materially the same, tho' not formally ; both convinced of Sin, both bring Sinners under Guilt and Condemnation, and so that all *Mens* may be stopped, and all the World become guilty before God, Rom. 3. 19. both are a Rule to walk by, both Witnesses for God, but neither of them can give Life, nor justify the Sinner in the sight of God, v. 20. Therefore neither of them are any part of the Covenant of Grace, for if one of them is a part of it, both of them are ; if the Law of Nature be not so, the Law written in the Tables of Stone was not so : yet the *Jews* had the Advantage of the *Gentiles*, because their Law was wrote in far more legible Characters than the dimm Law of Nature, Rom. 3. 2. as well as in many other respects.

Obj. *The denying Baptism to Infants, hinders the Progress of the Christian Religion.*

1. *That Principle which hinders the Progress of the Christian Religion, can be no Christian Doctrine ; but the denying Baptism to Infants, hinders the Progress of the Christian Religion ; therefore such a Principle can be no Christian Doctrine, this is Mr. Rothwell's main Argument, pag. 2, 3. to prove the Minor thus he argues, ( viz. )*

2. *That Principle which makes the Covenant of Grace less beneficial and extensive than the Covenant of Works, hinders the Propagation of the Christian Religion : but the former Principle does so. Ergo,*

To prove the Minor of this Argument, he adds another, viz. *That Principle which allows not as great Immunities, Benefits and Privileges to the Covenant of Grace, as to the Covenant of Works, makes the Covenant of Grace less beneficial and extensive than the Covenant of Works ; but the Principle that denies Baptism to Infants, does so, Ergo.*

Ans. 1. This Gentleman calls these *Rational Arguments*, but I have nothing but his own word for it : but to proceed, he should have shewed what those Immunities and Benefits were in the Covenant of Works, which we by denying Infants Baptism, render the Privileges of the Covenant of Grace to be less than those were : but, do you not intimate hereby, that Circumcision belonged to the Covenant of Works ? and if so, in vain do you urge Circumcision as a Privilege ; and also since the Covenant of Works is abrogated, what is there in your Arguments for the baptizing of Infants ? For all *Jewish* Rites and Privileges may be forced upon the Christian World by this Argument of yours, or else we may say, the Privile-

ges of the Gospel are less than the Privileges of the Jews under the Covenant of Works; which I have already answered.

2. His mentioning that Passage of *Calvin*, is remote to his purpose, he speaks of the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*, not of the Covenant of Works, which we say is not curtail'd by Christ's coming, but is every way as extensive now, as it was from the beginning: but we have proved that there was a Two-fold Covenant made with *Abraham*, and that Circumcision did appertain to his Natural Seed as such, and so part of the legal Covenant.

Obj. But the Commission, Mat. 28. 19. (you say) is as full, or rather more beneficial and extensive than the Covenant of Works; and consequently, that the baptizing of Infants is a Christian Duty; for had there been as general a Commission given by Moses to Twelve Elders of Israel, as the Blessed Jesus gave to his Disciples, and it had been said to them, Go teach all Nations, Circumcising them; this had been no Prohibition to Circumcise the Jewish Children, &c.

Ans. 1. Is this that the Mountains have brought forth? we were big in Expectation by your Title Page, wondering what new Notion or Arguments you had found out, from the Commission, Mat. 28. 19, 20. or what your different Method should be to prove Infant Baptism — But truly Sir, the Log is still too heavy, you cannot lift it up — I see nothing new in your whole Tract, nor any thing but what has been answered; but this being the main Pin upon which all hangs, I shall give a brief Reply to you.

1. I thank you for your plain and just Concession; I see you conclude and grant Circumcision did belong to the Covenants of Works: I doubt not, but you are right so far, and with that, your Cause is gone, and *Calvin* and all that came after him, have said nothing in calling Circumcision a Gospel Covenant.

2. But Sir, suppose the People of *Israel* had never been commanded by the Lord to Circumcise their Children till *Moses* came, and *Moses* had given such a Commission that you mention, viz. to teach all Nations, Circumcising them; do you think they would have had ground from thence to have circumcised their Infants? whereas his Circumcision required the teaching of all Nations first, before they were circumcised, of which Infants were not capable.

3. 'Tis evident, that our Saviour in his Great Commission, enjoineth no more to be baptized, but such who are first taught or made Disciples, and this agrees with his own Practice, Joh. 4. 1. he made and baptized more Disciples than John: he first made them Disciples, and then baptized them; nor were there any baptized in the New Testament, but such who first professed Faith in the Lord Jesus. See our Answer to *Mr. Burkit*, (which I sent you.) Also our Answer to the *Armenian Society*, this is there fully spoken unto.

4. If the Commission be so extensive, as you intimate, Why do you not go, (or stir up some Ministers to go) into all Heathen, and Pagan Nations, and Baptise them, and their Children; and so that way, make them all Christians: You may teach them the Christian Doctrine, *i. e.* Faith and Repentance, afterwards, as you do your Children; but the Truth is, there is no need to teach them afterwards, the way of Faith, and Regeneration, (if your Doctrine be true) because the chief Thing they received in Baptism, you say, is *divine Grace*, *viz.* *Regeneration, Adoption, and a Title to the Inheritance of eternal Life*, p. 20. Sure those divine Habits can never be lost. Reader, take what this Man says farther on this Respect.

*Obj.* But you say, we neither regard, nor consider the chief Thing in Baptism, *viz.* The Testification, or Witness of the divine Benevolence, taking them into Covenant Protection, and Patronage, and conferring, and bestowing Grace upon them; in Baptism, the chief Thing is *divine Grace*, which consists, and stands in the remission, pardon, and forgiveness of Sins; in Adoption, or Sonship, and in a Right, and Title to the Inheritance of Eternal Life, of which Grace, Infants stand in need, and are as capable as the Adult, &c. p. 20.

*Ans.* This is such Doctrine, that few *Pædo-Baptists*, besides your self, do assert, or believe; but, What Proof do you give us to confirm it, from God's Word? You say right, we do not regard it indeed. — Doth Baptism do all this? — 'Tis wonderful: How! conferr Grace, and give Pardon, and Eternal Life! — You Ministers of the Church of England, if this be so, can do as strange things, as the *Popish Priests* in Transubstantiation; you can, by sprinkling a little Water on the Face of a Babe, it appears, change the *evil*, and *vicious Habits*, form *Christ in the Soul*, raise the Dead to Life, and of a Child of Wrath, make a Child of God. It grieves me to think, a Man called a Minister of the Gospel, should teach such corrupt Doctrine, and deceive the Ignorant.

For, as it is without Scripture-Evidence, nay contrary to it; for God's Word, that tells us, *Baptism washes not away the Filth of the Flesh*, that is, the Corruption of depraved Nature; so 'tis contrary to Reason, and without any rational Demonstration, as *Reverend Stephen Charnock*, (tho' a *Pædo-Baptist*.) shews, ' Many Men (*saieth he*) take Baptism for Regeneration; ' The Ancients usually give it this Term; one calls our Saviour's Baptism, ' his Regeneration. This confers not Grace, but engageth to it; outward ' Water cannot convey inward Life. How can Water, an external Thing, ' work upon the Soul, in a Physical manner? neither can it be proved, That ' ever the Spirit of God, is tyed by any Promise, to apply himself to the ' Soul, in gracious Operations, when Water is applied to the Body. If ' it were so, that all that were Baptised, were Regenerated, then all that were Baptised, should be saved, or else the Doctrine of Perseverance falls ' on the Ground — And again he says, ' That some indeed say, That Re- ' generation is conferred in Baptism, upon the Elect; but how so active a ' principle, as a spiritual Life should lye dead, and sleep so long, even many ' Years,

'Years, which intervene between Baptism and Conversion, is not easily conceivable. *Charnock on Regen.* p. 75. Sir, Do but prove what you here affirm, and I will write no more against Infant-Baptism; and till that's done, all you say is nothing, in my Judgment.

But to proceed: Such a Commission you speak of, would not, in your sense, Authorize those Twelve Elders of Israel, to go, and Teach, and Circumcise the Jews, and their Children only, but all others, in all Nations of the World; this would be an easie way of making People Christians: But, Sir, The Gospel, whatsoever you think, according to our Doctrine, is more extensive, then was the Law to the Jews; for that was restrained to that People. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes, and judgments to Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, for his judgments they have not known them;* Psal. 147. 19, 20. But the Gospel is not restrained, or limited to any one particular People, or Nation, but it is to be preached to all the World; and, whatsoever are made Disciples, *i. e.* Do believe, and are baptised, shall be saved, Mark. 16. 16. (Not that we suppose, Men can't be saved without Baptism; for that makes no Person a Christian, or a Disciple of Christ; neither Young, nor Old, though 'tis the Duty of Believers, to submit there-to.)

We doubt not, but that the same spiritual, and eternal Blessings, which the Jewish dying Infants had, by the Death, and Merits of Christ then, the dying Infants of Christians have now, according to the Election of Grace: But as touching the legal and external Privileges of the Jews, we have proved (in this Tract, and elsewhere) that they had many more, in divers respects, under the Law, than those, we Christians, and our Children, have under the Gospel.

As to those great Advantages, Blessings, and Privileges of the Covenant of Works, which you talk of, I wonder what they were; for the Covenant of Works could not give Life, no Justification, nor Righteousness (that could) save by that Covenant, no pardon of Sin; but, contrarywise, Death, Wrath, and the Curse, is denounced upon every Soul of Man, for the breach of it. How vain then are your Arguments? in the Gospel is Life, is Justification, is Pardon of Sin, to every Man that believeth; *To the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles,* Rom. 1. 16. Time would fail me, to shew how absurd your Notions are, to what almost all our Learned Protestant Divines, have wrote about the Covenant of Works.

The Jewish Infants received no Soul Spiritual, and Eternal Advantage by Circumcision: (What the chief Advantage, or Profit was which they had thereby, St. Paul tells us, *Rom.* 3. 1, 2.) Tho' it was commanded of God, for the Ends, and Designs, I have already mention'd; and if so, What Benefit can any Infant receive by Baptism, (or rather Rantism) which is a mere humane Innovation? You confess, it was instituted by the Church, as a needful Thing, p. 37. And the Church hath Instituted it, because it is needful; it was indeed never Instituted, or Appointed by our Lord Jesus: And,

as to that Custom among the Jews, (you speak of) p. 7, 8 of their Baptizing Profelytes, I have fully Answer'd it, in my Treaty, called, *The Rector Rectified*, p. 24, 25. and in my Answer, to the *Athenian Society*. Sir, you go upon a Mistake all along, taking it for granted, That Circumcision, and other legal Rites, were great spiritual Privileges; for 'tis no such Thing: It was a Yoke of Bondage, not to be born; and a great Mercy it was to them, that they were delivered from it, *Act. 15*. And therefore the Jews, did they believe in Christ, and see the Nature of, and Tendency of Circumcision, would never speak after that manner as you mention, in p. 9.

(*Viz.*)

*Obj.* I will rather be a Jew, than a Christian, because, as soon as I own, and profess their Faith, my Child, after such a Declaration, is in covenant, as well as my self, and hath a Right to the Sign, &c.

*Ans.* Sir, The Jewish Childrens Right to Circumcision, was not deferred, till their Parents made a profession of Faith; but as they were the natural Seed of *Abraham* as such, it was the Command of God to *Abraham*, that gave them that Right, and nothing else.

*Obj.* So, that by this account, it plainly appears, That denying Infants Baptism, is an hindrance to the progress of the Holy Gospel.

*Ans.* True, if Infant-Baptism doth make them Christians, you say right, it must follow, That the denying them Baptism, hinders the progress of the Gospel; but this is false which you assert: Baptism makes them not Christians; we say, none but Christ, by his Spirit, can Regenerate the Souls of Men, or make them Christians: True, you may thereby give them the Name of Christians, but can't give them the Nature of Christians; you may deceive them, and make them believe they were so made Christians, and thereby undoe them eternally, by relying upon a mere Cheat and Delusion: This is he, whose vile Nature was never changed? You would do well to get a great Number of Ministers, if Baptism does make Christians, (as I said before) to go into the Heathen Nations, and Baptise them, and so make all the World Christians; but if you know no other way, for the progress of the Gospel, then this, of making Christians by Baptism, God deliver the World, from your way of Christianing the Nations.

You will not see, That the Gospel Church is not National, but only Congregational; the Jewish Church, in that, differ'd from the Christian: For, What is more clearer than this? Christ's Church, is called, a *Garden inclosed*; Christ's Flock, is a *little Flock*: Those who were added to the Church were separated, either from the Jewish People, or Heathen Nations, were commanded to *separate themselves*, and *not to touch the unclean Thing*. *Ye are not, saith Christ, of the World*. — You would make whole Nations the Church, and from the Commission, infer such a false Conclusion. I have consider'd what you have said in p. 10, 11. Sir, When all the Pagan World are instructed, and believe in Christ, we will say, they have a Right to the

Sign,

Sign, *i. e.* Baptism — but not till then, hath one Soul a Right there-  
 to: prove what you say, if you can, *i. e.* That the Children of  
 Christians as such, are Christians, as the Children of *Jews*, were  
*Jews*: or, that Baptism makes any, either old, or young, True  
 Christians, or regenerates their Souls: 'Tis not your bare Assertions, or  
 your Saying it, that is worth any thing: what Authority have you from  
 God's Word to affirm such things? you give no more proof for what  
 you assert, than the Papists do for their vain Traditions and Popish Cere-  
 monies; Grace must be implanted in the Soul before Baptism, or the Per-  
 son has no Right to it, 'tis an outward Sign of an inward spiritual Grace, as  
 your Church asserts: Baptism is not Grace, nor conveys Grace, if you  
 can prove it does, I will say no more, but submit and acknowledge my  
 mistake: but if you err in saying it does, do not go about to deceive your  
 People any more. — You plead for making false Christian, nominal  
 Christians: Christianity is another thing than what you seem to imagine,  
*The Way is narrow, and the Gate is straight*, — Regeneration is a difficult  
 Work, it requires the Mighty Power of God to be put forth on the Soul;  
 nay, the same Power that God wrought in Christ, when he raised him  
 from the dead, *Ephes. i. 19, 20*. As to Infants being capable of the Ble-  
 sings of the Gospel, so are *Heathens and Pagans*, when God calls them, and  
 infuses Grace into their Souls: I have answered all you say upon that Ac-  
 count, in my Answer to Mr. *Burkit*. The Commission in the largest Ex-  
 tent, comprehends no more than such that are *μαθητεύετε* disciplined by  
 the Preaching of the Gospel in all Nations: the Parents must be discipled,  
 and the Children must themselves in their own Persons be discipled, as well  
 as their Parents; and as their Parents were before baptized; and when a  
 whole Nation, both Parents and Children, are by the Word and Spirit, made  
 Christ's true and holy Disciples, and as such baptized, then all the Nation may  
 be look'd upon to be Christians: but we know what sort of Christians  
 you make, and your national Church does consist of, that are made so by Bap-  
 tism, to our trouble; if God does not make your Members better Christians  
 than your Sprinkling, or baptizing them (as you call it) hath done; none  
 of them, (as it appears from Christ's own words, *Joh. 3. 3.*) can enter into  
 the Kingdom of Heaven. In my former Books you may read Mr. *Perkin's*,  
 and Mr. *Baxter's* Expositions of the Commission they talk; not at such a rate  
 as you do; tho' *Pedo-Baptists*.

And tho' in your late Letter to me, you seem to boast, as if some ad-  
 mire your Book, and that your Arguments are invincible, or unanswerable.  
 Yet that is not my Conceptions concerning it; and had your Anta-  
 gonist so judged of it, I doubt not but he would attempted your strong-  
 est Fort before this time; for I know very well his Ability to defend this  
 Cause: indeed I wonder at his silence.

But if you do proceed to provoke a farther Answer, you may have

it; ——— This which I have done, was occasioned by my Preaching on this Text; not intending a particular Reply to every thing you have said, nor is there any need; for you are fully answered already in our late Treatises: yet I think the Controversie much concerns you of the Church of England, and such who are for a National Church.

As for our Brethren, called Congregational, I cannot tell what they mean by contending for the Practice of *Pædo-Baptism*, nor do I well know what their Sentiments are about it: they agree (as I do understand) with us (and other Christians,) that Baptism is an initiating Rite or Ordinance; now if their Infants are in Covenant with themselves, and are made visible Church-Members by Baptism in Infancy, and until by actual Sins they violate their Rite and Privilege, abide Members thereof. (1.) Then I would know whether they have their Names in their Church-Book, or Register, as Members? And (2dly,) Whether they ever Excommunicate (or bring under any Church Censure) such of their Children who fall into scandalous Sins, or actual Transgressions, or not? (3dly,) If not, what kind of polluted Churches must thir's be, who have not purged out such corrupt Members? The truth is, I see not how Infant Baptism is consistent with any Church State, unless it be National; and no doubt, the first Contrivers or Founders of it, devised that way for the Progress of that they call the Christian Religion, and so opened a Door, that Christ shut, when he put an end to the National Church of the *Jews*. ——— Therefore I wonder at our strict Independants, considering their Notions, (knowing how their Principles differ from; and their Understanding or Knowledge of Gospel-Church Constitution exceeds others) for Baptism does not initiate into their Churches, it seems by their Practice; unless their Children, when baptized, were thereby made Members with them. It is evident, that under the Law, when Infants were Members of the Jewish Church, they were born Members thereof, tho' the Males were to be Circumcised on the Eighth day; nor was the case difficult to know the Right, Infants had to Circumcision: it was not from the Faith of immediate Parents; but it was their being the true Natural Seed of *Abraham*, according to the Flesh, or being Profelytes, &c. which gave them a Right to Circumcision, by Vertue of God's positive Command to *Abraham*: ——— But now if the Infant's Rite arises only from the True and Real Faith of their Parents, the Child, when grown up, may doubt if its Parents, or Father or Mother were not true Believers, whether they had a Right to it or not; or may see cause to question, whether either of them were in truth in the Covenant of Grace, or no; (for who knows who are in a true spiritual Sence in Covenant with God,) especially if their Parents should fall away, or Apostatize, and become vicious; which may demonstrate, they were not true Believers, and so not the Elect of God themselves: and if so, their Children had no more Right to Baptism, than the Children of open and prophane unbelievers Children have.

The truth is, what I have said in these Sermons, may serve to reprove such, who set up a new Wall of Partition, ( like that which Christ Abolished by the Blood of his Cross ) and so cause Enmity to rise between the Seed of Believing *Gentiles*, and the Seed of unbelieving *Gentiles*; by making the Children of ungodly Ones to say, Our Parents were wicked, and not in Covenant with God; and tho' we were baptized, yet had no Right to it: we cannot but envy your Privilege, you are the Children of believing Parents, and are in Covenant, &c. nay, and it may cause too, to trust to that Birth-Privilege, and so destroy their Souls, by looking out for no other Regeneration, but that which they had in Baptism in their Infancy.

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Some Reflections on Mr. *Exell's* new Treatise, Entitled  
*A serious Enquiry into, and containing plain and express  
 Scripture-Proofs, that John Baptist did as certainly Bap-  
 tize Infants, as the Adult.*

**R** EADER, just as I had closed with all I intended to have added to this short Tract, a Gentleman brought me another Book newly Published; called, *Plain Scripture-Proof, that John Baptist did certainly Baptize Infants, as the Adult*: — This Book is written by one Mr. *Exell*, who calls himself a Minister of the Gospel: but with what good Conscience a Man of his Function can give a Book such a Title, I know not: for if there is such plain Scripture Proofs, that *John the Baptist* did baptize Infants, as he positively asserts; 'tis strange none ever saw, nor found out those Proofs: neither *Pædo-Baptists*, nor *Anti-pædo-Baptists* till now: — but I will appeal to all thinking and impartial Persons, whether or no, this new and bold Attempt of this Man's, does not give cause to all People to doubt of all the former pretended Arguments and Proofs for *Pædo-Baptism*? since new ways are thought necessary to evince it; but such who read over this Man's *plain Scripture Proofs*, &c. will certainly conclude, that his Title contains a grand Untruth; (to speak no worse) it argues these Men are strangely left to themselves, or to Blindness, that shall undertake to affirm for Doctrine, without Scripture Demonstration or solid Reasons, such things, which are nothing but their own Fancies; but those who are willing to be mistaken or deceived, let them be deceived: but to undeceive them, I shall make some short Reflections upon his Proofs, and if any of my Brethren think it worth their while, to answer either of these two new Asserters of *Pædo-Baptism*, let them do it. —