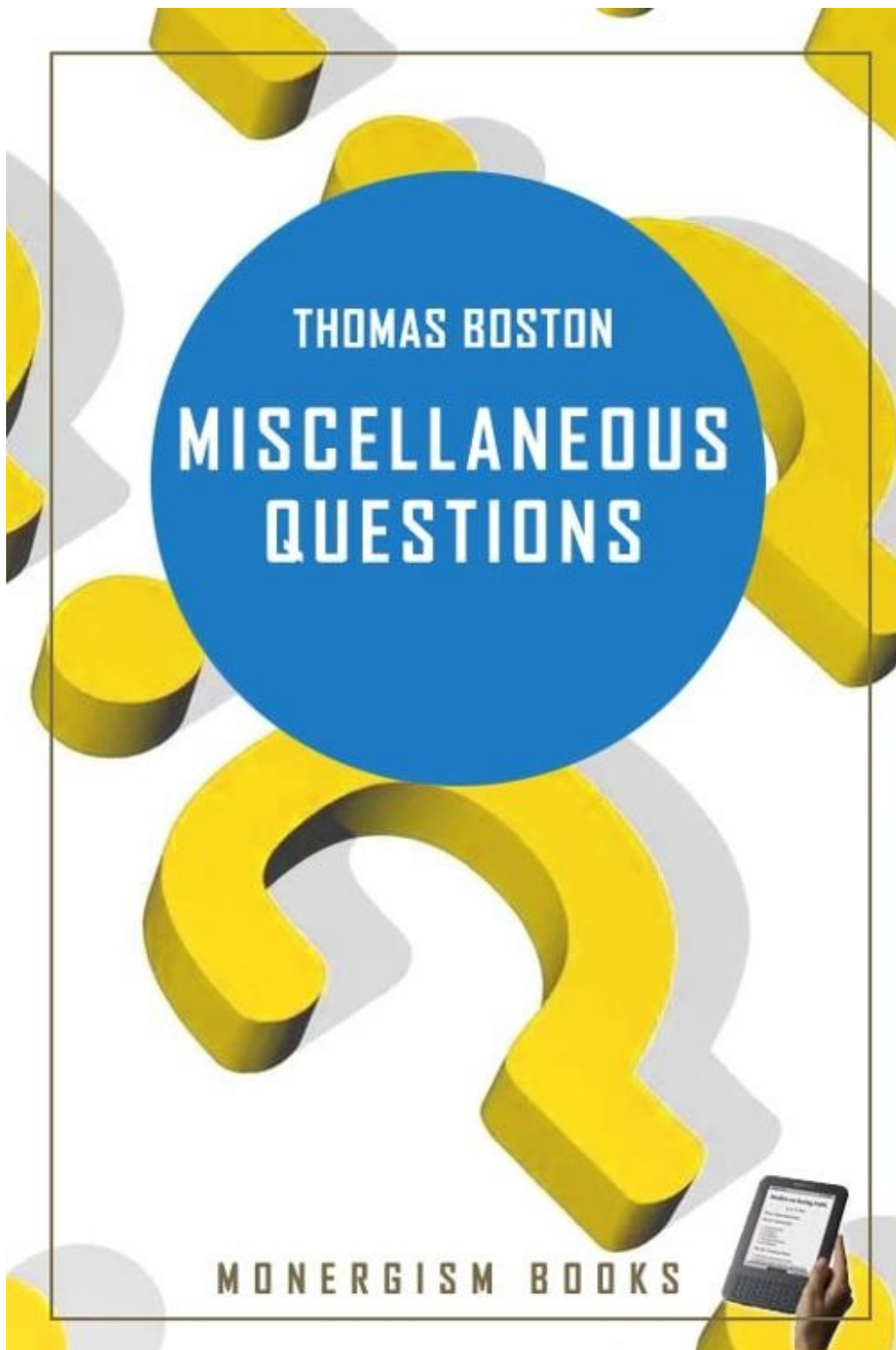




THOMAS BOSTON  
**MISCELLANEOUS  
QUESTIONS**

MONERGISM BOOKS



## **Miscellaneous Questions**

**by Thomas Boston**

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**ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION**

THE Discourses and Sermons contained in this volume are all printed from the manuscripts of the worthy author, my father; whom I must love and honour in the grave. The "Miscellaneous Questions," and "Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Galatians," were written in his younger years, while he was minister of Simprin, for his own improvement, and not with any design of printing them; though, it is hoped, the publication of them now may be for the edification of the church of Christ. The Sermons are also taken in his own notes, prepared for the pulpit only; and therefore they are not so full as, doubtless, they would have been, had he prepared them for the press. But though these volumes labour under

the disadvantages which commonly attend posthumous works, there is ground to hope they may, through the divine blessing, be of singular use to the people of God.

They who had the happiness to be acquainted with the author, and have heard him preach—especially those who lived under his ministry—will easily observe in these Discourses that clear and distinct method of opening up texts, and deducing points of doctrine from them, wherein he excelled; as also the occasional opening up the Scriptures in the course of his sermons; with the close and warm application of the several subjects to the cases both of saints and sinners; in all which he "shewed himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He used to observe, that when he had continued for some time preaching on a subject, he still got the clearer insight into it, when he came to bring it home upon the consciences of his hearers.

So great was his delight in his Master's work, and so earnest his desire to be found occupied therein, when he should be called hence, that he preached two or three Sabbaths from a window in the manse to the people sitting without, after that he was no longer able to go to the kirk. And as the two Sabbaths, or three at most, in which he was, by his growing indisposition, laid aside from his public work, were very heavy upon him; so his Master was pleased to call him home on the Saturday, May 20, 1732, to celebrate the eternal Sabbath in that place where "the inhabitant shall not say any more, I am sick."

The subjects here handled are of the last importance, both to saints and sinners; and therefore justly claim their most attentive consideration. The character of the author is long since established; and any further commendation of him, as there is no need for it, so neither would it be so decent from the pen of such a near friend as his Son,

THOMAS BOSTON.

OXNAM MANSE, July 2, 1753.

## QUESTION. 1

### WHETHER OR NOT THE SINS OF BELIEVERS WHILE UNREPENTED OF, MAKE THEM LIABLE TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT?

THERE are two things which the children of God ought diligently to study; what they are in themselves; and what they are, and do enjoy, in Christ. The consideration of the former will serve to keep them humble; and the knowledge of the latter will be a store house of comfort against discouragement, a magazine of armour, wherewith they may resist the devil in his assaults, and will afford unto them great matter of thankfulness and praise, which well becometh Christians. For, to exalt Christ is the Christian's great work; and no wonder, seeing it is the great design of the gospel to exalt him, and the riches of free grace, as the Apostle Paul almost every where teacheth. Wherefore we may safely lay it down for a certain conclusion, and rule of doctrine, That whosoever doth most exalt Christ and free grace, so as it have a native tendency to a holy walk, is a gospel-truth; which, if duly noticed, will readily lead us unto a true answer to the question proposed. Now, amongst all the privileges which believers do in their own person enjoy, the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, is not the least; which, how far it extends itself with respect to the sins of believers, is the subject of the present inquiry. In which, that we may the more happily proceed, I shall premise these few things to be considered.

1. Sin is a relative term, and denotes somewhat to which it hath a relation; and that is a law; "for where there is no law," saith the Apostle, "there is no transgression; and sin is a deviation from the law of God, to which the creature, in point of right, is subject; and therefore is called anomia, 1 John 3:4. Now, there are two things in the law which are here to be taken notice of; the command, which is the rule of life; and the threatening, which is a denunciation of the punishment the guilty doth incur. Agreeably thereto, there are two things in sin, besides the action itself, (in sins of commission, which may be called the substratum, or the To materiale of sin, which is metaphysically good). First, The disconformity of the action (in sins of commission), and of the power and principle of

action (in sins of omission,) to the law of God; which may be called the *Formale* of sin, being that which constitutes the action, or the power, sinful. Secondly, There is the guilt of it; which is an obligation to punishment: and this is a consequent of sin, flowing both *ex natura rei*, et. *ex institutone Dei*; from the nature of sin itself; and the sanction of the divine law.

2. The guilt of sin may be considered two ways (1.) In *actu primo*, (2.) In *actu secundo*. As it is considered under the former notion, it denotes the intrinsic demerit of sin, whereby the sinner, in whatsoever state he be, doth indeed deserve the wrath and curse of God for his sin, and that so much the more as the sin is aggravated by light, mercies received, and the like. And thus believers are more guilty than others. In this sense, guilt cannot be separated from sin, no more than risibility from a man, or heat from the fire. The guilt of sin considered in *actu secundo*, denoted an actual obligation to undergo the penalty denounced in the law, whether a remission be to follow or not. There is a vast difference betwixt these two, and therefore the distinction is carefully to be noticed in this question. The difference betwixt them is as great, as betwixt a man's deserving a sentence of death to pass upon him, and the actual passing of the sentence. And although guilt under the former notion is inseparable from sin, yet in this sense it is separable, therefrom; even as the three children in the fiery furnace were in *actu primo* combustible; but not in *actu secundo*;\* the fire could have no power over them. The pardon of sin takes away the guilt of it in the last sense, though in the former it still remains. And so Christ took on our guilt in the latter, but it remains with us in the former sense. Turretine calls the one potential guilt, the other actual; the one, says he, respects condemnability, the other condemnation.

3. We must also distinguish betwixt actual guilt, or the actual binding over the sinner to punishment; and the execution, or actual inflicting of the punishment. The former may be where the latter shall never follow; as the elect unconverted are lying under the condemnatory sentence of the law, though it shall never be executed upon them. The confounding of these two cannot but lead men into mistakes. All the three do clearly appear, if we compare the case of a sinner with that of malefactors

committing capital crimes. The malefactor by his deed first deserves death, then he is adjudged thereto, and last of all the sentence is executed. All these are not only to be distinguished, but they may indeed be divided; which I need not stand to enlarge upon.

4. Punishment is taken either largely or strictly. Largely, it is used for the afflictions, or *mala tristia*, that come upon men,\* whether good or bad, for their sin. So the scripture useth it, so orthodox divines use it sometimes; and therefore we may make use of the word in the present inquiry without any imputation of heterodoxy. Strictly so called, it respects only those evils that are inflicted for sin upon men, by the Lord as a just judge, without any mixture of fatherly love; and so it is termed judicial punishment, in opposition to the evils inflicted on the children of God, flowing from fatherly love. In respect of the end of punishment, it is either correctory or vindictive. The first is inflicted for the correction of the offender; the other for the satisfying of justice without respect to the amendment of the party; which I understand of God's intention simply: for as to the vindictive punishments inflicted on the reprobates, on this side of time at least, the amendment of the party may be justly looked on as the *finis operis*, though we cannot rationally suppose it to be the *finis operantis*, seeing it is not effected. In respect of its duration, it is either temporary or eternal. Correctory punishments are temporary, in regard the end of them is effected, therefore are they confined within the limits of time; but the other are eternal, and never have an end, in regard men are never able completely to satisfy the justice of God.

5. Lastly, The sins of believers are of two sorts. First, Some such as they having fallen into, do lie in, at least for a time, through the growing power of corruption, not having risen therefrom by the renewed acts of grace. In this case was David when Nathan came unto him, 2 Sam. 12. Secondly, Some they have fallen into; but, by the influences of the Spirit upon the principles of grace in their hearts, putting grace in exercise, they have recovered therefrom, having renewed their faith and repentance. In this case find we David, Psal. 51. These things premised, we

ASSERT I. That the sins of believers whether repented of or not, in regard of their disconformity to the law of God, make them liable in *actu primo*, not only to temporal, but to eternal punishment. This is so clear that none

who know what God is, or what sin is, will deny it, but will cheerfully subscribe to the truth of it. Therefore David testifies,\* that no man living can be justified in God's sight; and when the worst comes upon us here from our Father for sin, we must still say, "That with us he hath not dealt as we sinned. Therefore believers not only may, but ought to confess their sins, mourn over them, condemn themselves for them, &c. And the contrary practice is so far from a gospel spirit, that it doth evidently argue a licentious spirit, regardless of the honour of God, and the purity of his law. Believers, so far as in them lies, by their sins do cast themselves into the fiery furnace of eternal wrath, so that if there were not one with them, "like unto the Son of God," the fire should actually fasten on them; wherefore they may look on themselves, as indeed they are, "brands plucked out of the fire; and sing that song, "Not unto us, Lord, not to us," &c. And the truth is, as one says well, In some respects the sins of the godly are worse than the sins of others; for they grieve the Spirit more, they dishonour Christ more, they grieve the saints more, they wound the name of God more, they are more against the love, and grace, and favour of God, than other men's sins are.

ASSERT. II. The sins of believers while unrepented of make them liable actually to the temporary strokes of God's fatherly hand. So that a guilty conscience in a believer, fearing a stroke from the hand of God, doth not fear where no fear is: for though God "sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor transgression in Israel," so as to punish them in a way of vindictive justice, as he does the reprobate, though Papists would have it so, yet no doubt he sees it in them, so as to punish them with the stroke of a fatherly hand; which is manifest (whatever Antinomians say to the contrary) from the many instances thereof recorded in scripture, as Moses, Samson, David, and many others; and from that plain scripture, Psal. 89:30, 31, 32. "If his children forsake my law—Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, &c." of which more anon.

ASSERT. III. The sins of believers, even while unrepented of, do not make them liable, in actu secundo, to the stroke of vindictive justice, or make them not actually liable to eternal wrath. Take it in hypothesi thus: David being a gracious man, even while he lay under the sins of murder and adultery unrepented of, though he did lay himself open to the



temporary strokes of God's paternal anger, and deserved eternal death thereby, yet he was not actually liable to eternal wrath.

ARGUMENT. I. That promise Psal. 89:30, 31, 32, 33. seems to carry it so, "If his children forsake my law—Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Where it is evident, that by the rod and stripes, he means only temporary strokes of his fatherly anger. This is a repetition of that promise, 2 Sam. 7:14, 15. Let us inquire to whom these scriptures do relate, that it may be seen how they favour our purpose. To exclude David and his son Solomon here, and the continuance of David's line and kingdom, were unaccountable, especially considering that clause, 2 Sam. 7:15. "As I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." But surely it looks farther than to David and his seed, even to the Lord Jesus Christ; as appears from 1 Chron. 22:10. He is the true Solomon, the builder of the Lord's house, whose kingdom is established for ever indeed; and of him Solomon, the king was a type. David himself testifieth this, while he shews that these promises were to be fulfilled in him, 2 Sam. 7:21. "For thy word's sake (says he) hast thou done this." Compare 1 Chron. 17:19. "For thy Servant's sake hast thou done all this." Where it is observed by Witsius\* and others before him, that whom he calls in the one place, the Lord's Word, in the other place he calls, the Lord's Servant, meaning thereby the Messiah. But the Apostle puts it beyond all doubt; when speaking of Christ, he cites that scripture, and applies it to him, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son," Heb. 1:5. From all which it seems to be plain, that the promise mentioned does belong to Christ's spiritual seed; that is, believers; "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13. Here then is a promise of temporary punishments, which are to be merely correctory, to bring them in from the extravagancies into which, by temptation they may fall. And I think I may call it a promise of the covenant: for it is much to be doubted, if the gospel and covenant of grace know any threatenings properly and strictly so called. And truly this fatherly nurture is that which the children of God cannot want; yea, these rods and stripes are the peculiar privilege of those who are his; and they have as good right to them by the covenant, as to any other benefit. Here we have a discovery of the Lord's

way of dealing with his people as plainly laid down as any where else: yet not the least hint of any actual liableness to eternal wrath. So that we may justly conclude, that their liableness to temporal strokes, is their utmost hazard; which will more clearly appear, if we consider, under what notion the Lord deals thus with them; even as they are Christ's seed, the fruit of his soul-travail under the pangs of death, in which he having taken on their guilt, they can be no more liable: only the rod of a reconciled God remains to them, called "the rod of men,"\* 2 Sam. 7:14.

ARG. II. If the sins of believers, even while unrepented of, do make them actually liable to eternal wrath, it must be by virtue of some law: wherefore there must be one found in this case, who may say of the believer, as the Jews said of Christ, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die;" or, which is all one upon the matter, he must be liable to death by some covenant: for however God might have exacted obedience of man, and threatened and inflicted punishment in case of disobedience, merely upon the account of his sovereignty, without making any covenant with him; yet being pleased to enter into a covenant with man, he deals with him covenant-ways; which I think I need not stand to prove. But I say, there is no such law, and no such covenant, by virtue whereof the believer can be made actually liable to eternal wrath: for if there were any such, it must either be the covenant of grace, or the covenant of works. I can scarcely think it will be said, That it is the covenant of grace, by virtue whereof the believer under sin unrepented ought to die; for that were to bring in the law, with its cursing and condemning power, into the new covenant, and so utterly to overturn it, and make it a covenant of works. The tenor of the covenant of grace runs thus, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved;" but it does not say, "He that believeth not, shall be damned;" for the covenant of Works says that completely, and secures the destruction of those that despise the covenant of grace: but *Frustra fit per plura, &c.* It must needs be said then, that it is by virtue of the covenant of works, or by the law. But the Scripture teacheth us, that believers being now under the covenant of grace, are no more under that of works; for a man cannot be under both; they are therein incompatible. We are plainly taught in God's word, that believers are "dead to the law," Rom. 7:4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body," i. e. the sufferings of Christ in his body), (*Pars pro toto, Senec.*, that ye should be

married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead; that is, to Christ. It seems then that the Apostle is of opinion, that a man cannot be married to Christ, unless he be dead to the law, more than a wife can be married to two husbands at once; that is plainly, one cannot be both under the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, at one time: for if to be married to Christ, signify the bringing of the man within the covenant of grace, which I think cannot be denied, with any colour of reason, by those that acknowledge consent of parties necessary to the making up of the covenant; the being dead to the law, must be freedom from the covenant of works. Now, I pray you, what is it that makes the believer liable, in any case, to eternal punishment? If there be any thing, it must needs be the law; but we hear he is dead to it; but if dead to it, how can it have any power over him? To be dead to the law, says Luther,\* is to have nothing at all to do with it; not to be held by the law, but to be free from it, and not to know it. And so the orthodox teach with one consent, that believers are free from the law, as to its cursing and condemning power; for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And indeed, according to the Apostle's reasoning in the fore-cited place, the law, as it is the covenant of works, and as to its condemning power, has no more to do with believers, or no more authority over them, than a man has over her, who alive was his wife, but is now dead; and therefore the believer needs no more fear the threats of the law, nor concern himself with them, as directed against him, than a dead wife, the threatenings of him who sometime was her husband; for what has the law to do with him now, when death hath dissolved the relation? The Apostle teacheth the same doctrine, Rom. 6:14. where, speaking to believers, he tells them, it is their privilege, that "they are not under the law, but under grace." The law and grace have two distinct dominions; therefore a man under grace is not liable to answer at the court of the law, he not being under the jurisdiction of the law, or covenant of works. So that the law, with its condemning power, can no more reach the believer, than the laws of this kingdom, those that dwell under the great Turk. From all which I may thus argue, He that is thus divorced from the law, that lives not under its dominion, but is as a dead man unto it, cannot be condemned by it, nor by virtue of it made liable to punishment; but such is every believer. Ergo. And I doubt not, but if we were as much dead to the law in point of practice, as we are in point of

privilege, we would more easily believe this. But the truth is, that, in respect of practice, believers are rather dying than actually dead to the law. And it is not easy for a man that is exercised, to quit living to the law: and therefore Lather,\* speaking of this privilege of believers, has that feeling expression, "These things (says he) are easily said, but happy he who knows them well in the conflict of conscience; that is, who, when sin rushes on him, when the law accuseth and terrifieth him, were able to say, What is that to me, that thou, O law, makest me guilty, and convincest me that I have committed many sins? That is nothing to me. Now am I deaf, I hear thee not, because I am dead to thee." This will be yet more clear and convincing, if we consider, that the law is dead to them, as well as they to it, Rom. 7:1. "Know ye not, brethren, how that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth?" So our translation reads it: the words in the original are, eph' hoson chronon ze; and may as well be rendered, "as long as it liveth, referring the life to the law, not to the man. And I think the context does fairly carry it this way: for all along this discourse, the Apostle speaketh of the law under the notion of an husband, even the first husband to elect sinners; and it is clear, that in the two verses immediately following, he speaks of the life and death of the husband: "The woman is bound to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead,"—ver. 2. "If while her husband liveth—but if her husband be dead," ver. 3. So the connection of the fourth verse with the former, plainly appears; for having premised that the law is dead to the believer, he concludes, that therefore they are dead to it, and their relation to it is now ceased. And thus it is read and understood by several judicious interpreters, both ancient and modern. The Apostle more clearly asserts this, ver. 6. "That being dead wherein we were held; apothlanontos en ho cateichometha." The context also cleareth this exposition: for the Apostle adds, "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the latter;" importing so much, as that "that wherein we were held," made us to "serve God in the oldness of the latter," viz. of the law: which cannot be properly said of the flesh, or of sin, for that stirs up, even to sin against the letter of the law; but well may be said of the law, with its threatenings, which forcibly sets on even the unregenerate to outward obedience. Whereunto well agrees the term used by the Apostle, speaking here of the law, "in which (says he) we were held;" the word signifies forcibly holden, and is used of those who are

detained in prison and custody, which the Apostle Gal. 3:23. doth plainly speak of, the "keeping under the law;"—"We were kept ephrouroumetha," kept as in a prison, and shut up, &c. And this word held, seems plainly to answer to that, ver. 2. "The woman is bound to her husband." Now, that husband is dead, even the law wherein we were held. Thus said Luther, "The law which bound me, and held me captive, is now bound and holden captive by grace." The law then is dead to the believer. Christ, by his death, hath been the death of the law, in point of condemning power: the law, which was the strength of sin, that is, whereby sin had a power of binding over the soul to eternal wrath, is now gone by the death of Christ, 1 Cor. 15:46. By his blood he hath "blotted out the hand-writing, (Col. 2:14.), nailing it to his cross." For to the cross two were nailed, the Son of God, and the law of God. The law nailed Christ to the cross, and Christ would not die alone, but crucifies the law that crucified him; as Samson at his death was the death of those that were the cause of his death. Upon which consideration, Luther brings in the believer insulting over the law, with a kind of holy pride, and thus speaking to the law: "I do nothing value thy terrors and threatenings, because thou hast crucified the Son of God. Therefore the sin which thou hast committed against him, is unpardonable; thou hast lost thy right; and now hereafter thou art not only to Christ conquered and strangled, but also to me believing in him, to whom he hath gifted that victory." Thus he. All which being considered, I think it will be very hard to shew, how a believer can ever be actually liable to eternal wrath.

ARG. III. Those scriptures which declare the believer to be "free from condemnation," plainly teach this doctrine which we now prove. John 3:18, "He that believeth, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already. It is easy to see what the meaning of this is, which is said of him that believeth, if we consider the antithesis in the text; "He that believeth not, is condemned already;" not that the sentence is already executed upon him, but that he is sentenced by the law, and so liable, in actu secundo, to eternal wrath: so he that believeth is under no sentence, or is not liable so as the other is. So John 5:24, "He that believeth, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life;" where it is plain, that the same thing is taught; for passing from a legal death, to a legal life, which is nothing else but the taking off of the

sentence of death, whereby the soul is made actually liable to eternal wrath, is opposed to coming into condemnation. The words in the original press this more strongly; eis krison uk erchetai alla metabebeken ek tu thanatu; cometh not, in the present time into judgment, but hath passed, &c.)\* the word krisis here, and krinomai in the former, being simple words, do no doubt signify judgment, and to be judged, but tropically condemnation: only properly, I think the judgment or condemnation here spoken of, relates not only to the judgment and condemnation to come, but also to that which is in this life, But nothing can be more plain than what the apostle hath, Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." But believers even lying under sin unrepented of, are in Christ Jesus; therefore there is no condemnation even to them. I shall not say with Jackson, that the meaning is, there is no cause of a damnatory sentence in them; but I shall say with judicious interpreters, that it holds forth freedom from guilt, whereby they might be bound over to eternal punishment; and am well content to hold by the argument from this place, which Wendelin says the orthodox use against the Papists for the perfection of justification. The argument is this "Where there is no condemnation, there is no punishment; but to the justified there is no condemnation: Ergo, To them there is no punishment; or, they are bound over to no penal satisfaction. The proposition is proved, because condemnation is an adjudging to punishment." Thus he. How shall the force of this argument be invalidated? Will any say that this privilege is restricted by the following clause, "that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and so belongs not to those who lie under unrepented-of guilt? This were to make two sorts of persons in Christ; some in Christ, that "walk after the Spirit;" and others in him, that "walk after the flesh:" and if there be such, let us no more ask, what concord Christ can have with Belial, light with darkness? But the apostles plainly applies the not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit, to all believers, to all in whom the "righteousness of the law is fulfilled, ver. 4. And the walkers after the flesh, he makes the same with them that are in the flesh, ver. 5, who cannot please God, ver. 8. have not the Spirit, and are none of Christ's, ver. 9. If any shall say, that the meaning is, There is no actual condemnation to them, though there want not something condemnable in them; it is the truth, and the very thing we plead for, viz. That though

by their sins they deserve to be damned, yet there is no sentence passed against them, binding them over to eternal wrath, even though this sentence should never be put in execution. But this is not the meaning of those that make this exception; but thus they understood it, as we commonly say, They shall never be damned; that is, the sentence shall never be executed upon them; the wrath they are actually liable to by their sins, shall be diverted; the antecedent being put for the consequent, condemnation for the execution of it. But if so, I would fain learn of those men, what the apostle hath done, in asserting this, seemingly at least, great privilege of believers beyond others? and why he adds this NOW to it, importing, as it would seem, somewhat which those persons had not before? Are there not thousands out of Christ, that are as highly privileged as they? Are there not many that are yet enemies to Christ, walking after the flesh, regardless of the Spirit, who shall never have the sentence of condemnation executed upon them, but shall certainly be saved? Is it not as true of the elect unconverted, that the sentence shall never be executed against them, as of believers? Yea, surely. It must needs then be meant of this actual liableness to eternal wrath, the freedom from which is the peculiar privilege of believers.\*

ARG. IV. If believers under sin unrepented of, be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the strokes of vindictive justice, then they are liable to pay a debt over again which hath been once already paid to the full; which is absurd, and unworthy of the divine Majesty, impeacheth his justice, as our divines say against the Papists, and reflects dishonour on the merits of Christ's death. We believe, that "by once offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" he hath fully paid the believer's debt, and satisfied for all his sins past, present, and to come: and shall the believer himself be yet liable to pay that debt? This argument Beza hath pithily holden forth in his confession of faith, "Thou wilt say then," says he, "that there be infinite iniquities in me, which deserve eternal death. I do grant; but I add more to it, which thou, (Satan) hast maliciously omitted: that is, that the iniquities which be in me, were sufficiently revenged and punished in Jesus Christ, who hath borne the judgment of God in my stead. So upon this I make my conclusion contrary to thine; that is to say, Forasmuch as God is righteous, and will not be paid double, and Jesus Christ, God and man, hath, by one infinite obedience, made

satisfaction to the infinite Majesty of God; it followeth, that my iniquities can no more fray nor trouble me, my accounts and debts being assuredly erased and wiped out by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was made accursed for ME." But here it will perhaps be said, that if this prove anything, it proves too much, viz. that the elect unconverted are not actually liable to eternal wrath, for Christ hath satisfied for their sins, as for the sins of believers. In answer to this, it would be considered, That there is a vast difference betwixt a man's paying his own debt in person, and another's paying it for him. When he pays it himself, he is ipso facto discharged of it; but when another pays it for him, the debtor is not presently discharged from the debt, in regard of the surety, but to be discharged when the surety pleaseth. Now, our sins were charged on Christ as our surety, and he did pay our debt; look therefore, when he pleaseth, we are discharged from them, and that (saith he\*) is upon your believing, not before, Rom. 5:1. So Bridge. It is certain, the remission of sin, which takes away actual liableness to eternal wrath, is not communicated but to those who believe; for as Parisiensis saith, As the damnation of Adam doth not pass, but by natural generation, upon those that are carnally generated of him; so the grace of Christ, and remission of sin, doth not pass but by regeneration, to those who are spiritually regenerated through him. Further, it is to be considered, that although payment be made by the surety, yet the debtor is still liable in law, till it be instructed that the debt was paid for him in particular; the ground of which is the union betwixt the cautioner and the principal debtor. Now, it is certain, that the union betwixt Christ and a soul is made by faith only; that is, when the soul believes, and not till then. It is true, that from all eternity there was an union betwixt Christ and the elect, in the designation and decree of God; but as sure it is, that *Decreta Dei nihil pomunt in actu*. To this purpose speaks Mr. Durham, "It is not," says he, "the cautioner's payment simply, that is sustained, as a relevant defence in judgment, till that be instructed, and except the defence be founded thereon; for so the law provideth: so it is not Christ suffering simply, but his satisfaction pleaded by faith, and fled unto, that justifieth." And thus I think there remains nothing in this exception to invalidate the argument: for the elect unconverted are still liable to eternal wrath, in regard the time set by the surety for their personal discharge is not yet come; they are not yet Christ's seed by regeneration; they are not yet united to Christ;



nor have they by faith pleaded his satisfaction before the bar of the court of heaven. But believers being united to Christ by faith, even then when they lie under sins unrepented of, cannot be liable. And therefore the believer, even in this case, may look the law in the face, and say, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" I was crucified with Christ, in him I obeyed, in him I satisfied thee, O law, in whatsoever was demanded; I am therefore no more liable to thy condemnation: and with Lather,\* "O law, thou hast no power over me, in vain dost thou accuse and condemn me; I believe in Christ, he has poured out his life most largely for me, besides him I will hear and see nothing." This I say a believer, may do de jure, though he cannot de facto, under those sins that waste the conscience, and darken the sight of his interest in Christ.

If it be alleged, that there must still be a fresh application of the merits of Christ's death, before the soul have the benefit of them for the particular sin, and repentance must be renewed for the same end: this is a mere begging of the question. But I truly wonder. how repentance comes in here: for it can have no instrumentality here, consistent with the nature of the new covenant; for it is a giving, not a taking grace; and therefore the Lord hath made it to be "of faith," not of repentance, "that it might be of grace," Rom. 4:16. As for that of the necessity of faith, it is more tolerable; and there is no doubt but it is necessary in order to the attaining of the comfort of the pardon of after sins, as repentance may likewise be. But I believe, that the righteousness of Christ is a perfect righteousness; and that at the first moment of believing, we put on the Lord Jesus with his perfect righteousness; that the Lord seeing us clothed therewith, declareth us perfectly just; and that we remain for ever without interruption clothed with the same, and are thereby kept from all liableness to eternal wrath in actu secundo. So that there is no need of fresh application here for this end, the thing supposed being false. But I would gladly understand what they mean by a fresh application of the merits of Christ's death here: for either they are applied to them before that application, or not till then; or that righteousness is theirs before the fresh application, or not till it be anew applied. If they say the latter, then the state of justification is interrupted by the believer's after sins; if the first, then they cannot be liable to eternal wrath. This must only be needful for the comfort of their privilege. And this leads us to another

argument; which is,

ARG. V. Believers, even in their worst case, have a perfect righteousness, and so are perfectly righteous: therefore they can never be liable to eternal wrath. The reason is, because to be perfectly righteous, is to be conformed to the law,; but to be perfectly conformed to the law, and yet to be liable to the condemnation of the law, is a flat contradiction. It is true, that the righteousness is not originally and inherently theirs; but it is derivatively theirs, and imputed to them; which, with respect to Adam's sin, was sufficient to make us actually liable to eternal flames: and why shall not the imputed righteousness of Christ be sufficient to make us free from that actual liableness to the revenging wrath of God? Are they not perfectly righteous; Hath the law any more to require of them than what it has got? There were but two things it could demand, according to the strictest tenor of the first covenant; to do and to suffer perfectly; and they have in Christ their head both done, and suffered accordingly, Rom. 8:3. 4. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," &c. Rom. 6:10, 11. Gal. 4:4, 5. "We learn (says Beza.\*) to pay by him, who hath set himself debtor and payer for us, who hath put himself in our place, and hath paid our debt, as the principal debtor, even unto the uttermost penny, in such wise, that the rigour of the law, which did before fear us, now comforteth us in Jesus Christ; forasmuch as life eternal is due to those who have fully obeyed the law, and Jesus Christ hath fulfilled the same for us." Now, surely, what Christ hath done for us, is as good as if we had done it ourselves; yea, for the honour of the law, it is a thousand times better, because of the incomparable dignity of the person. What then should make them liable at any time to eternal wrath, being at all times clothed with this perfect righteousness? It cannot be, that falling asleep, and faith not being in exercise, they let the grips of it go, and therefore they are thus made obnoxious to divine vengeance. But surely it is not so easily made ineffectual. If inherent grace remain so securely under the grievous backslidings of the regenerate, that they cannot become children of the devil; much more doth the imputed righteousness remain, so that they cannot become children of wrath, that is, actually liable thereto, Eph. 2:2. If they cannot keep the covenant, the covenant will keep them. If any shall say, that God will not impute it to us for the covering of that particular sin or sins we lie under for the time, till we do

anew receive it by faith for that end; it is false: for if a perfect righteousness be at all imputed, it covereth all sins. The ground of this opinion seems to be a mistake anent the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as if the imputation of it were a making of it ours, and that this imputation were carried on by repeated acts, so as it is still made anew as the soul stands in need of it, falling into new sins. That the first of these is a mistake, appears from this, that Christ's righteousness is ours before it be imputed, I mean not in order of time, but in order of nature. It is not ours, because it is imputed; but is imputed, because it is ours. It is evident, that it is used in this matter forensically, and is a judicial word and act; and is nothing else but a legal accounting of a thing to be ours. Now we know, "that the judgment of God is according to truth; and therefore he cannot account that to be ours which really is not so.\* And the word itself will import no other: for whether you understand the primary signification of it to be the casting up of an account, and finding the total sum, as Arithmeticians do; or the concluding of a thing by reason, and argument, as in Logic; it still imports the being of the thing so, before it be imputed; as two tens are twenty, before the Arithmetician cast up the number, and the Logician finds the conclusion in the premises, before he gather it out of them. So, in this metaphorical sense, we are sinners in Adam, before Adam's sin be imputed to us, or we be reckoned guilty of his sin; and also righteous in Christ, before his righteousness be imputed to us. Hence I cannot but judge, that the Westminster Assembly, in their definition of justification, are much more accurate than several learned foreign divines, who make our justification formally consist in the imputation of Christ's righteousness: for indeed, as they accurately give it, it is presupposed to our justification, as the ground thereof. Now, the way how Christ's righteousness becomes ours, is by faith, (as the aforesaid Assembly teacheth), and that as it doth make up an union betwixt Christ and the elect person; which I conceive to be the primary and immediate effect of faith. Hence issues a communion betwixt Christ and the believer; so that as all his sins, wants, &c. become Christ's; the righteousness, obedience, and death of Christ become theirs; which so being, God accounts it, and judicially owns and acknowledgeth it to be theirs, as indeed it is; and therefore justifies them; that is, pardons their sins, and accepts them as righteous upon the account of the righteousness they appear before him clothed with. So Witsius teacheth.

Now, what is it to be righteous, but to be conformed to the law? And seeing no righteousness can be sustained at the tribunal of God but that which is perfect, it remains that believers, at their first believing, are reputed perfectly conformed to the law of God; that is, to have perfectly obeyed and suffered; and this in regard of their union with Christ: and therefore, unless this his state be changed, which can never be till the union be dissolved, which the scripture holds forth as constant and perpetual, he can never be liable to eternal wrath. Hence it follows, that the opinion of a repeated imputation is also a mistake: for the imputation can no more be anew made, than the soul can be anew united to Christ Jesus. And, as Durham\* saith, "Imputation being a judicial word and act, it supponeth an instant sentencing of such a righteousness to belong to such a person, as it were, and to be accepted for him: for if he hath not perfect right, there is no legal imputation, (to say so); but if it be perfect, then it is an instantaneous act." I add, and if instantaneous, then it is not repeated; nor is it a continued act, formally considered, though virtually it be; that is, the virtue of the imputation once made in the court of heaven never ceaseth, but remains still in force for all time to come.

ARG. VI. If the sins of believers unrepented of make them actually liable to eternal wrath, the salvation of many of the regenerate is lost; yea I shall add, "Who then can be saved?" for believers may die under sins unrepented of; and therefore, according to this principle, they must needs perish, being actually bound over to the eternal wrath of God; unless you say, either that God saves them, and takes them into glory while they lie under a sentence of condemnation, or that he takes off the obligation after death: both which are absurd. This argument is not so trivial as to be dismissed, as some would, with a, What if they die not in that case? But it is said here, that although God, by his absolute power, can cut off believers in this case, yet, by his ordinate power, he cannot; for he will not do it; he hath secured them in that point, that though they fall, yet they shall arise by repentance ere they go off the world; they cannot die under sin without repentance, because they "are kept by the power of God unto salvation," 1 Pet. 1:5. But this I refuse, as what cannot be made out by the scriptures; and must needs do so till I see a promise of it in God's word; for to expect a benefit not promised, were too great rashness: but such a promise I confess I have never, as I conceive, heard of, or seen in the

word of God. The scripture alledged doth indeed prove, that the salvation of the godly is sure, so that it cannot fail. That we deny not: only we judge, that the doctrine we impugn, is not the doctrine of the gospel; because it is not consistent with this certainty of the salvation of the regenerate, which is here taught us by the scripture cited; but their salvation is sufficiently sure, without this renewing of the acts of repentance, though in some cases at least it is necessary to their comfort. I deny not, but there are promises of the influences of grace for the renewing of repentance, made unto believers: but this I say, that they are no more to be extended to every time, than the promises of increase of grace; so that they are indefinite in respect of time. It is a command to grow in grace, and there is a promise thereof too, Psal. 92:13, 14. as well as repentance is commanded and promised. And yet I suppose it will not be denied, but that the last days of some may be worse than their first days, and that believers may die in a time of the decay of grace. But if we may judge of what God hath promised (as certainly we may) by the event, for "his counsel shall stand," we shall soon find that there is no such thing. Let us consider Eli\* sitting by the way-side and in an instant falling back and breaking his neck. Was it not his sin, that the news of the ark of God being taken, did so affect him as to destroy nature? Though this argued much good in him, yet doubtless it was his sin, arising from weakness of faith; which, if it had been duly exercised, would rather have set him on to wrestle with God for the bringing of the ark back again; which faith could tell he was able enough to do. Yet Eli dies under this sin unrepented of; but yet we have no reason to doubt his being in glory. Yea, unless we maintain a perfection of grace in this life, it is impossible to evite this: for suppose that the renewed acts of repentance were the actions of the last moments of our time, yet repentance itself is as filthy rags; there is still sin in it when it is in the most lively exercise; so that either we must never die, or die under sin unrepented of. It will not at all satisfy here to say, that the question is not to be understood of sins of infirmity, but of the more gross sins; that the latter is that which thus makes liable to eternal wrath. For, 1. The distinction is naught here; all the sins of the godly being sins of infirmity, Heb. 4:15. Wherefore I cannot but differ from Mr. Bridge, who, in his sermon "of the sin of infirmity," tells us, that a great, gross, foul, scandalous sin cannot be a sin of infirmity. He gives the reason, because it is a sickness, not a weakness.

If a man have some distemper in his body, and yet he bears up to meat and to his work, he is not sick, but hath an infirmity. Thus he. Now, I think it will not be denied, but a godly man may fall into a great, gross, and scandalous sin; so then they fall into sins that are not sins of infirmity. Let none then that have fallen into gross sins, take any comfort of that, Heb. 4:15. "For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; though he was in all points tempted like as they have been," even to those of the grossest sort, self-murder, and worshipping of the devil. This is strange divinity. The reason is no less strange; because it is a sickness, not a weakness. The learned gentleman Leigh\* tells us, that *astheneia*, the word put for infirmity signifies *invaletudo*, *morbis* often, and *imbecillitas*, *debilitas*, *morbis*: for which he cites Plato, Xenophon, and Thucydides. And the Apostle, when he would show what sickness, or rather death, we were under by nature, he tells us, we were infirm, so far were we from bearing up to work, Rom. 5:6. *onton hemon asthenon*. But not to stand on words; Was not Peter's sin in denying of his Master a sin of infirmity? He was resolved against it; and Christ prayed for him, that his faith should not fail; he had a principle of resistance within, by the weakness whereof the tempter gained the day: so that it was a sin of infirmity indeed, yet a gross sin. But the foresaid author tells us, that, properly and strictly, an infirmity is that sin which a man is taken captive by, against his will, Rom. 7 that is, against the general bent and frame of his heart, which he hath not present strength to resist. So Rom. 15:1. Thus he. And this is the very truth which the scripture teacheth, Rom. 7 and elsewhere; and thus it was with David, Peter, and others, in their gross sins. But here is the mystery of this distinction according to him, that gross sins committed by a believer are not against his will, nor the general bent of his heart; that there is no resistance at all made to the temptation by the will, but that it goes on with full swing. And so Rom. 7 hath no respect to gross sins: and that law whereby a godly man is brought into captivity, against his will, to the law of sin that is in his members, hath no respect to adultery, fornication, &c.; the contrary whereof the Apostle teacheth, Gal. 5:17, 19; and John, while he tells us, that he that is born of God doth not commit sin, 1 John. 3:9. But enough of this. The learned Zanchius teacheth more orthodoxly in answer to that question, "But how do the saints make increase when they sin daily, and sometimes most grossly?" His answer

is, "They sin of infirmity and according to the flesh; but their mind abides right with God." But, 2. Those sins which are quotidianæ incursionis, as some term them, and the more gross sins are alike as to the point in hand; in regard it is not sin as it is lesser or greater, more or less evitable, but sin as "contrary to the law of God," that makes men liable to God's wrath or eternal punishment in actu primo; and sin as it is unrepented of (ad hominem), that makes them liable in actu secundo; for a qua tali ad omne valet consequentia.

Further, I urge, That a believer may die even under gross sins unrepented of: as we see in the Patriarchs and others their polygamy and incestuous marriages: which I hope will readily be reckoned gross sins: yet it is generally said by divines, that they repented not of these sins expressly, but virtually. Which is no doubt a firm truth. But if any shall make use of it here for an evasion, it will be so far from helping them, that it is a manifest yielding of the cause: for what is virtual repentance, but actual repentance virtute suce causæ?\* So that the meaning is, That although they did not expressly and actually repent, yet they had a principle or habit of repentance in them, which, positis ad agendum requisitis, would have broke forth into action with respect to that particular. But the question is not of this virtual and habitual repentance; for a believer in the case supposed hath still the habit of repentance, and the act is in the virtue of the cause, power, or habit; but it is of actual repentance, or else there is nothing said at all. If any shall say, that this is not the virtual repentance they mean, but that it is when a man is heartily affected with such a particular sin or sins as he knows, and for the corrupt inclination that is in him that is the seed of all, though there be some particular which either he knows not, or is not actually in his mind; yet so he may be said virtually to repent of the same; because he repents of one sin upon the account which is common to all: I answer, That when it comes to the arguments for it, taken from the necessity of confession, forsaking, &c. more than all this seems to be pleaded for. But however, the necessity of actual repentance is pleaded for in the case of sins known, and minded, but not in the case of sins unknown, or out of mind. But where find they this difference? Psal. 19:12. "Cleanse thou me from secret sin," will not ground it; for that is a prayer for repentance, not repentance itself otherwise than was said before; unless it be said, as is indeed alleged, that

the actual turning from one sin unto God, is a virtual turning from all, sufficient to bring the soul from under the liableness to eternal wrath for the sin unminded and unknown; which I suppose they shall not easely prove: and, if I mistake not, it will be found inconsistant with their own principles; for they will readily allege for their cause, I mean the necessity of repentance in believers in order to their pardon, David's case, supposing him to be liable to eternal punishment ay and until he renewed his repentance, when Nathan came unto him: and yet I think it will be very hard to say, that David, all that three quarters of a year and more, never exercised one act of repentance for any one sin all that time. So Joseph's brethren remind their sin in selling Joseph, when they say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother;" which our adversaries understand of actual liableness to eternal wrath. But who can suppose, that they did not forsake one sin by repentance all that time; But what more ordinary than for saints to commit sins which they know not to be sins for some time; or if they do, they slip out of their mind not repented of: yet ere they know that particular action to have been sinful, or before the other come back into their minds, it may be a long time, and they may both have and lose a tender frame, and a repenting heart, in the interval. I say then, in this case, when the sin is known, and minded first before actual repentance for the same, the man is either actually liable to eternal punishment for it, or not. If it be, then the virtual repentance now pleaded for is not sufficient to free the soul from actual liableuess to eternal punishment, as is alleged: if not, then actual repentance is not necessary for the taking off the obligation to eternal wrath by known sin; the contrary whereof is here pleaded. Whence it appears, that this is a mere shifting of the thing that is in question.

Moreover, it were surely worth their pains who stand so much for believers' liableness to eternal wrath by their sins while unrepented of, seriously to consider, whether or not all those that die by their own hands, are set beyond a possibility of salvation; and whether or not it may be, that some truly godly under unrepented of sin may be struct with madness, or taken with a raging fever, and die in that case? and whether or not good men in a carnally secure frame may be killed while asleep, and surprised with sudden death; It may be rationally supposed that many such cases fall out in the world.



ARG. VII. Justification is an instantaneous act, and immediately perfect upon our believing, as is generally maintained by the orthodox: for, as Mr. Durham says,\* "If Justification be not immediately perfect, it must either be upon one's not believing in Christ, or because of some defect of the righteousness that faith presenteth, and so faith were not a sufficient shield; or it must be because the word doth not pronounce him just upon the ground of that righteousness; which were also absurd." I shall not stand more upon the proof of this. But from thence it follows, that the after sins of the justified do not make them actually liable to eternal punishment: which I prove thus. The state of perfect justification is either interrupted by the after sins of believers, or not. If ye say it is, then, 1. The gifts and calling of God are not without repentance. 2. A believer is sometimes under grace, sometimes under the law. 3. There is condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; or, the after sins of believers dissolve the union. I shall say no more of this at the time. If ye say, it is not interrupted by their after sins, then they do not make them liable to eternal wrath; for an uninterrupted state of justification, and being actually liable to eternal wrath, are utterly inconsistent. And I prove the assertion thus.

1. To be justified, is to be absolved from guilt in actu secundo. To be liable actually to eternal punishment, is not to be absolved from guilt in actu secundo; which is a flat contradiction: The man is absolved, and not absolved; absolved, because justified; not absolved, because he is liable to eternal punishment. I know it will be said, for solving the matter, that it is in different respects that the man is absolved, and not absolved; absolved in respect of sins repented of; not absolved in respect of sins unrepented; he is justified in respect of his state, but in respect of that particular sin or sins he is liable to eternal wrath. But I answer, That this is meant either of the man's past state, whereof he hath no benefit now, or of his present state. If you say the former, then the state of justification is interrupted, in such sort that the man must begin anew again, as at the first moment of believing; and so the believer under unrepented of sin, is in no better case, in respect of justification before God, than he was when unconverted; and if so, why is it urged here? If it be meant of his present state, the distinction is not to be admitted: for the man hath no benefit of that state, more than what flows from former experience of God's

goodness, and readiness to forgive; and so his state is not indeed a state of justification, (call it as you will), but of condemnation; for *bonum non nisi ex integra causa, malum ex quolibet defectu*: which, according to the law, is applicable here; for the curse is pronounced on him "that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them," Gal. 3:10; and the Spirit of the Lord expressly tells us, that "whosoever offends in one point, is guilty of all," James 2:10.; and when "the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all the righteousness that he hath done, shall not be mentioned," Ezek. 18:24. I confess these scriptures hold forth the Lord's way of dealing with men according to the covenant of works, not according to the covenant of grace; which knows nothing of condemning or adjudging to eternal wrath, as was said before. But if men will needs be dealt with according to the law, is it reasonable they take their hazard of all it says. Should the foresaid distinction be used (as it might be on the same grounds) for the comfort of a man, who having been frequently accused of treason, yet was still absolved; but now one treasonable act being proven against him, and he for the same condemned to die; would he not think you miserable comforters; and conclude himself to be in a state of condemnation?

2. The Apostle Paul makes them inconsistent, Rom. 8:33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" viz. those of them that believe. *Synec. generis*.\* The interrogation is a strong denial. Q. d. None shall lay any thing to their charge. The word *encaleo* here used, signifies to enter action or suit against a man in some open court. Now, if there be none to lay any thing to their charge, yea none so much as to enter action or suit against them *de jure*, then there can no sentence pass upon them, making them actually liable to eternal wrath. So saith Luther, "Every one that believeth on him, is righteous; the law cannot accuse him," &c. The Apostle goes on in his holy boasting, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" says he. NOT Christ, he is our Advocate; not sin, for Christ "was made sin for us;" not the law, for Christ hath "fulfilled the law for us;" not Satan, for God is his judge; and if he have acquitted us, what can the jailor DO? We see the ground of the Apostle's boasting his justification before God. Q. d. God justifies us, Ergo, None can condemn us. Now, where lies the strength of this argument, if to justify and condemn be not inconsistent; or, which is all one, to be justified, and to

be liable actually to eternal wrath? If believers may be so liable notwithstanding that they are justified, or in a state of justification, when the Apostle says, "Who is he that condemneth?" he may have an answer to his question. Yea, may the law say, I condemn him, for he lies under unrepented of sin, though he be a believer. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Yea, says Satan, I have unrepented of sin to lay to his charge. "But who is he that condemneth?" Why? here is the charge, his own conscience cannot deny it. The law then must condemn him, yea hath condemned already; for he is actually liable to eternal punishment, so that there remains nothing but the execution of the sentence. If any shall say, That the Apostle's meaning is, that howsoever the godly be condemned, reproached, &c. by the world, yet they have no ground to be discouraged, seeing God justifies them; I shall not quarrel it, so that it justle not out the other; which cannot rightly be done, as the context makes evident. See the golden chain, ver. 29 30. what, knits the links together, ver. 32. and how he goes on in that holy exultation, particularly in the two last verses of the chapter. The ground of non-condemnation here alleged, which is the death, and resurrection, and intercession of Christ, plainly teacheth the same. And indeed it had been small ground of boasting, if a man were still in hazard of the judgment of God, though he needed not fear the world's condemning him. In fine, the words are general; and it were too much boldness to restrict them. But what if God himself condemn them, or declare them actually liable to eternal wrath? then I say, the Apostle hath an answer to his question. And their is not so great cause of boasting of the privileges of believers; for if a man were freed from all hazard of angles, devils, and men, but yet liable to God's wrath, it is too great boldness to boast till that be over. But one would think, that the Apostle had sufficiently secured us against suspicion with respect to God, while he tells us, ver. 31. "If God be for us;" that is, seeing God is for us, as appears from the context: and so it is that God is for them; therefore they need not fear he will turn against them to condemn them.

If it be said, Why may not the state of justification consist with a believer's being actually liable to eternal punishment upon the account of some particular sin unrepented of, as well as a state of sanctification with the prevailing of some particular lust, or as well as health and sickness in

the same body? I answer, the reason is plain: Because justification is a legal and judicial act, makes only a relative change, is perfected in an instant, and admits not of degrees: but sanctification is a physical or hyperphysical work, makes a real change on a man's nature, is imperfect, and carried on by degrees. If a man be not perfectly justified, he is not justified at all; if the least unpardoned sin remain, the law condemns him for it, Gal. 3:10. But a man may be holy, though not perfect; and in health, though not perfectly. Suppose a murderer to be lying in prison, dangerously wounded with the same sword wherewith he killed others. The libel is drawn up against him, consisting of several articles. The man hath both the physician and the advocate to employ. The physician sets to work, and by his medicine so prevails, that he cures his wounds, though not perfectly as yet; but he tells him, and that truly, he is in a state of health, though he goes halting, and that there is no fear of death. The advocate doth his part, and of twenty articles disproves nineteen; but as to the twentieth article, though he said much against it, yet he could not invalidate the proof of it; but thereupon he is condemned. He cannot say now to him, as the physician, that there is no fear of death. And the reason is obvious.

OBJECT. 1. The command to repent, with respect to believers lying under unrepented of guilt, is prefixed to the promise of pardon, as is manifest in the church of Ephesus, Rev. 2:4, 5; and the ground is general, Rev. 3:19. "Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent;" where repentance is put in as a necessary midst for removing of God's rebuke and quarrel, even from those whom he loveth. John keeps the same method, writing to believers, 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive." This is confirmed by the experience of the godly. Witness David, Psal. 32:3, 4, 5.—"I acknowledged my sin,—and thou forgavest," &c. Ergo. Answ. 1. That there is a necessary connection betwixt the pardon of sin and repentance, I grant: so that there is no pardoned sinner, but he is also a penitent; so that, sooner or later, virtually or expressly, whatever way sin be forgiven, it is also repented of. But will the objectors screw up this so high, as that no sin can be forgiven, unless it be expressly repented of? They cannot, surely, as long as that remains true, "Who can understand his errors?" Psal. 19:12. And so we must admit of virtual repentance in the first scripture, and virtual

confession in the two last. Which I say still is beside the question. And therefore, if they mind to prove any thing here by these scriptures cited, they will prove to much, viz. That express repentance is necessary to pardon; which is contrary to the scripture cited before. For if a sin be not known, it cannot be expressly repented of. And yet no doubt they must say, that a sin unknown may be pardoned. E. g. Jacob lives in polygamy, and that with two sisters; he could not expressly repent of it, not knowing it to be a sin, as is commonly said: yet this sin was no doubt pardoned, and Jacob saved. Then virtual repentance was sufficient, which Jacob never wanted, unless he lost the habits of grace; which I hope our adversaries will not say. As for the prefixing of the command to repent unto the promise of pardon, it can of itself have little weight, in regard the order of words is not always the order of the things themselves. So Mark 1:15. repentance is prefixed to faith; though it is evident, that, in order of nature, it follows the same, if it be understood of gospel-repentance. See 2 Cor. 7:10, 11. But of this perhaps more afterwards. But, 2. I deny the consequence of this argument; which I conceive may be, and must be thus framed categorically. Repentance must go before pardon; but pardon is the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath: Ergo. Now, the minor, if understood of the elect entering into a state of justification, is true; but so it hits not the point in hand. But if understood of those that are already justified, or in a justified state, it is false; pardon to them being nothing else but either the sense of pardon, or the taking off of temporal strokes, or relaxation of temporary punishment or chastisements. Which interpretation the instances adduced do very fairly accept of. In the church of Ephesus there were some under a decay of their love. What were they liable to upon the account of it? Not to hell-fire; but to a famine of the word, a removing of the candlestick; that, being pinched with want, they may learn not to loathe the heavenly manna; which God threatens actually to accomplish unless they repent, and that according to the tenor of the covenant, Psal. 89:31, 32. And what else mean these words in the objection, "Whom I love?"—where repentance is put in as a necessary midst for removing of God's rebuke and quarrel. I cheerfully yield it. But assuredly there is a vast difference betwixt God's removing of his rebuke and quarrel, and his taking off the obligation to eternal wrath; unless it be that God cannot rebuke but as a judge. In that scripture it is plain the exhortation is to repentance; and

the argument used to enforce it, is very plain to our purpose, viz. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, unless they repent; but ye are they whom I love: therefore unless you repent, be sure I will rebuke and chasten you. As to that, 1 John 1:9. that he writes to believers, is plain, as we shall hear more afterwards; and it receives the same answer, viz. That they are to confess in order to the removal of temporary wrath. It is evident, that David's case, Psal. 32 is thus to be understood, of the removal of temporary strokes or chastisements. The words are, NaSathaGna V on Chattathi.\* The word Nasa properly signifies levavit, to take off, or ease people of burdens; and so David says, ver. 4, "Thy hand was heavy on me." The lifting off that heavy hand, which was but the hand of a father, is then the forgiving of sin, or lifting it off. Gna V on is rendered iniquity, according to the proper signification of the word; for it denotes the crookedness and vitiosity of the action: but it must be expounded of punishment, metonymically, as it is frequently used. So the old translation reads it, Thou forgavest the punishment, &c. Amesins reads it, Sustulisti pœnam peccati mei. And so it must needs be understood, whatever way it be translated: for God never takes away the crookedness or vitiosity of sin, for that were to make it no sin; but he takes away the punishment of it. Now, this we heard before was God's hand that was heavy on him; yet the hand of a father, not of a judge. Compare Psal. 25:18. "Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Then, says Mr. Rutherford,\* sin here is pardoned only according to the present pain and grief of body and soul that was on David.

OBJECT. 2. Nathan tells David, upon his confession, and taking with guilt, that his sin was pardoned, or put away, 2 Sam. 12:13. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; and yet, ver. 9, 11, 12, 14. he threatens him with temporal strokes. Now, this putting away of sin, must he either as to the obligation to eternal or to temporal wrath. It cannot be the latter, because we see plainly he lies under the same: therefore the first must be said. Now, let it be marked, when it is said to be put away, even after his confession, and taking with the guilt; therefore he was actually liable to eternal wrath before his confession; and so believers lying under unrepented of sin, are actually liable to eternal punishment. ANSW. In the first place, It cannot be denied, but that these words are the words of

Nathan, declaring by the Spirit what God had done for David; and so they are not a formal pardon, but an intimation of pardon. Now, there is a great difference betwixt these two. But if the conclusion be valid, it must be drawn from the formal forgiveness of sin after confession, which doth not at all appear here; and not from the intimation of it at that time: for a man may be freed in foro Dei from guilt, and yet not have it intimated to him, till some time after, and particularly till he be in the exercise of repentance; yet is he not therefore liable to eternal wrath before the Lord till that time. In the next place, It comes to be considered, in what sense David's sin is said to be put away. In respect simply of the actual obligation to eternal wrath, say the objectors. Giving, though not granting it to be so, it remains still, that here is the intimation of pardon only. And truly David's conscience being now awake, and accusing him of these gross abominations of murder and adultery, it was no wonder if he lost his sight of his interest in Christ and his justification. This being supposed, such an intimation of pardon was most seasonable, that he might have somewhat to keep him from desponding. And this intimation made by the ministry of Nathan, with some measure of the Spirit's light illustrating this, though but, as it were, with a dawning light, and some secret underpropping, was sufficient for this; though a greater influence of the Spirit was necessary in order to the full establishment of his heart in this truth which the Prophet told him. This then being supposed, we may thence judge his sin to have been pardoned before. So Luke 7:48. Christ saith to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven." Of this woman it is said, that "she washed Christ's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head." After this Christ tells her, that "her sins are forgiven." But this is nothing else than an intimation of the pardon granted before her washing Christ's feet with her tears, &c. as is evident from ver. 47. But of this more afterwards. Hemmingius\* speaking of David in this case, tells us, there were in him horrible terrors, and extreme fears; for he did fear everlasting punishment: but hearing this voice of the Prophet by the commandment of God, "Thou shalt not die, the Lord hath put away thy sin," he turneth again unto the Lord, and repenteth; he hateth his sin, he fleeth unto mercy by faith. Ye see in what order the learned man placeth David's pardon and repentance; and how he supposeth him under fear of everlasting punishment. But, if I mistake not, acute Beza will not grant so much: for, says he, "When David and

Peter fell so beastly, yet there is no doubt but they lamented and sorrowed, till they felt the working of their generation and sanctification: but being in their temptation, they stayed themselves upon the anchor of the testimony which the Spirit of God brought into their conscience; which caused them not to doubt, (notwithstanding their fall), but that they were the children of God, and that their fault was forgiven them." Thirdly, But why must it needs be understood of putting away his sin touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and not with respect to temporary and and fatherly displeasure and chastisements? Because, say they, he still lies under temporary wrath. Let us hear holy and learned Mr. Rutherford's judgment in this case. Having laid down this assertion, Sins of youth already pardoned as touching the obligation to eternal wrath, may so rise against the child of God, as he hath need to ask forgiveness of them, as touching the removing of present wrath, sense of the want of God's presence, of the influence of his love, the cloud of sadness and deadness, &c.; he adds, enlarging on the same, "We may well say, that God pardoneth sin, when he removeth temporary wrath. So 2. Sam. 12:13. Nathan saith to David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." Why? "Thou shalt not die." This is meant of temporal death especially, as the context cleareth, ver. 10. "The sword shall not depart from thine house;" and ver. 14. "The child born unto thee shall surely die." Then the Lord's putting away of David's sin, was in loosing him from the sword, in his own person, not in his house and children." And herein do I cheerfully acquiesce. We say then, that this putting away of David's sin respects temporary wrath, though David be yet threatened with it. Now, in that temporary wrath which believers lay themselves open to by their sins, there are several particular strokes; but none of them any way for the satisfying of justice, but for correcting the offender, the terror of others, &c. And therefore the executive pardon here is capable of degrees, and may be remitted or intended, as the Lord sees meet. So that the alleviating of the chastisement, or relaxation of the fatherly punishment due to David for his murder and adultery, is that which is holden forth in these words, The Lord also hath put away thy sin;" not excluding, but rather including the other. And thus David's case herein was as of a man who by the law is punishable by death, but is only actually punished with banishment. To this purpose the worthy author just now named, explains it, and I think has proven it. I add, that it further appears, if we consider



and compare ver. 5. with the text. While the thing is kept in thesi, David himself pronounceth the sentence on the guilty person, not knowing as yet on whose head it would alight: "The man that hath done this, shall surely die." Now, when Nathan tells him flatly, that he was the man, he found, that by his own sentence he was condemned to death; and he knowing that sentence to be according to the law of God in the case of the murderer and adulterer, it may well be supposed, that he concluded, that if men would not execute the sentence, God himself would do it. Wherefore it answers aptly to the sentence passed against himself by him, and exalts the mercy of of God towards him: "He shall die," said he. "Thou shalt not die," says Nathan. Consider also the antithesis, ver. 13, 14, "Thou shalt not die. Howbeit—the child shall die; not an eternal, but a temporal death. There was great reason for both. The text tells us expressly the reason why the child should die; even because David by that deed had given great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. Wherefore the Lord (to speak so) behoved to vindicate the glory of his holy name, shewing that sin was displeasing to him in whomsoever it be found. The other is not without great reason likewise: for God had promised to him, 2 Sam. 7:12. that his seed, viz. Solomon, who was not yet begotten, should sit in his throne, and build the Lord's house; therefore he must not die; it was inconsistent with the faithfulness of God. That the Lord's putting away of sin, should be thus expounded of the relaxation of temporal punishment, needs not seem strange: for so it is used elsewhere in the scriptures, Neh. 9:17, 18, 19. "But thou art (or wast) a God ready to pardon." How? Thou "forsookest them not in the wilderness." Yet who knows not what strokes those people met with in the wilderness? But herein was pardoning mercy; the Lord forsook them not, he did not cast off his care of them, as a people peculiar to himself. We may see this yet more plainly Num. 14 where let it be considered, what the Lord threatens that people with. It is death in the wilderness; "I will smite them with the pestilence," &c. ver. 12. "If thou shalt kill all this people, as one man," says Moses, ver. 15. "Moses in his prayer asks forgiveness for them;" "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people," ver. 19; he prevails, "And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word." But mark what follows: "Because they have tempted me these ten times surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers." Now, what is their pardon they get, but the relaxation we speak of? They are freed from

death, but are kept out of the land of Canaan, for their sin so pardoned. And David himself tells us of this way of the Lord's dealing with him, Psal. 119:18. "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death." The same way is that to be understood, Psal. 99:8. "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions." Compare Psal. 106:43, 44. "They were brought low for their iniquity; nevertheless he regarded their affliction," &c.

OBJECT. 3. If believers lying under unrepented of sin be not liable actually to eternal wrath, what need is there of Christ's intercession? Yet John, 1 Epist. 2:1. when he is directing believers what course to take for the pardon of their sin, he tells them of "an Advocate with the father" whom they are to employ; but what needs he an advocate, who is not liable to the lash of the law? To this I answer, 1. The object of Christ's intercession is confined within too narrow limits, if it be supposed only to be employed for the obtaining of the pardon of sin. Christ prayed for Peter, that his "faith might not fail." See John 14 per totum. He intercedes always for his people, in whatever case they be; and I think it will not be denied, but that the benefits we enjoy, most of them come by Christ's intercession. 2. The pardon of sin, as it denotes the taking away of an actual obligation to temporary wrath, either in a total removal of the same, or a relaxation thereof, is not such a small thing as to be so overlooked. God's deserting of the soul, shooting his arrows against them, are not easy to the godly; and that they have Christ to employ for the removal of these, is no small ground of comfort 2. There is great fallacy in that which is said, that a man not liable to eternal wrath needs not an advocate. If it be meant of liableness thereto in actu primo, it is true. But who denies that they are so liable? If they mean it of liableness thereto in actu secundo, it is false; for advocates use not to be employed for reversing a sentence of death, but to hinder it from passing. And upon this ground I say, that this doctrine is very far from invalidating the necessity of Christ's intercession; yea, it is indeed founded on the intercession of Christ: Rom. 8:34. "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died;—who also maketh intercession for us." And, if I mistake not, this scripture used against us, affords us a solid argument against the doctrine of our adversaries in this point. Which ye may take thus: Those who have always an Advocate at the right hand of the Father, who hath

undertaken their defence, and never fails to gain his point, their cause cannot go wrong in heaven; but whenever an accusation comes in against them, he will undertake their cause, so that it cannot come to a sentence against them; which is the only thing that can make them actually liable to wrath: but if believers sin, they have such an Advocate: Ergo. And it is worthy of our consideration, that our Advocate is called "Jesus Christ the righteous, "But he is not (says Zanohius\*) a just advocate who defends an unjust cause: but Christ defends our cause, because he is our Advocate, and he is a just Advocate. John therefore teaches, that our cause which Christ defends, is just." So he. Now, where lies the justice of the cause?— in our repentance? No; in that Christ became liable for us, and hath paid the debt, and satisfied justice; and we are now one with him. And if our cause be just, how can it go to a sentence against us, though it never be executed? A just judge will no more pass a sentence against one that has a just cause, than he will execute it. And truly it seems, that those who will have such a sentence to pass against a believer in the court of heaven, though they believe it will never be executed, do not deeply consider Christ's sitting continually at the Father's right hand, and exhibiting the merits of his death and sufferings: for if this be, how can any accusation that comes in against them proceed so far? For, as one says well, he interrupts the accusation, and strikes in for us, Heb. 7:25. because he hath not only died for us, and risen for us, but he follows the business to the utmost. If he does not thus effectually stop sentence passing against us, it must either be because he cannot, or because he will not. The first is more than absurd; if the latter be said, it is like it will be alleged that it is because we do not employ him, and so the oil must come from earth to anoint the wheels of his compassion towards those persons, for whom he poured out his blood while they were yet enemies. And if his intercession in this case depends open our motion, why not in other cases also? And so we shall never exercise faith nor repentance more: but these are undeniably the fruits of his intercession, as well as freedom from condemnation; for we cannot employ him but by faith. If any shall say, that if Christ's intercession do stop the sentence of eternal wrath's passing, why does it not hinder the believer's actual liableness to temporary strokes? I answer, The reason is obvious; because temporary strokes to believers are merely correctory, and, according to God's dispensation, cannot be wanted, Is. 27:6; but eternal wrath is not so. And

I think it is no solecism to say, that as the taking off of temporal strokes in due time, so the laying them on in due season, is a fruit of Christ's intercession.

OBJECT. ult. This doctrine opens a gap to licentiousness and carnal security, and therefore cannot be of God. ANSW. I take notice, that the Apostle hath the same objected to him against this doctrine, Rom. 6:15. and therefore I say, with him, God forbid, &c. But, 1. In such sins as so waste the conscience that they blind men as to their state, there is no place for this objection; for then the man looks on himself de facto as liable to eternal wrath; but de jure he cannot so look on himself. And why should this seem strange? for "will a man speak wickedly for God?" 2. Is not the same objection to be retorted on the adversaries who side not with Arminians, &c.? does not their doctrine upon the same ground lie open to this calumny? for, according to them, the punishment shall never be executed. If a man had the privilege that he should never be actually liable to capital punishment, then you will say, that man may do what he pleaseth without control, I say, on the other hand, if a man be so privileged, as that although ten thousand sentences of death pass upon him, yet they shall never be executed, upon the same ground he may do what he pleaseth: for, at most, there is but magis and minus betwixt them, quæ non variant speciem; and so they shall both be licentious doctrines, though the one more than the other. 3. I suppose it can scarcely be denied, but that temporal strokes, or the fear of them, may be curbs to our licentious humours suo quodam modo; though, without restraining grace, the fear of ten thousand hells will not be sufficient to hold in a man from the pursuit of his lusts. But why may not fear of death help to keep the church from murmuring at cross dispensations in life, Lam. 3:39. and the fear of a whale's belly the second time make Jonah to go to Nineveh? That which truly seems to be the ground of this objection, is, the not considering what is the extent and power of God's fatherly displeasure to which believers are made actually liable by their sins. The pondering of this aright would silence such objectors. Temporal strokes, the effects of God's fatherly displeasure, are not confined to strokes upon our bodies, or crosses in our outward estate; though indeed sicknesses of several sorts, poverty, losses, &c. yea and death, are not very light things, but such, as the prospect of them may make a stout heart to stagger. But

these strokes reach the soul likewise; and strokes upon the soul are very heavy. They may all come under the general name of desertion; which spreads itself into innumerable branches, such as, want of communion with God, a wounded spirit, yea the arrows of the Almighty driven into the soul, and their poison drinking up the spirit, &c. I add, the Lord's suffering men to fall into one sin, and that sometimes a very gross sin or sins, for a correction of them because of former miscarriages; as David's security was punished with his being suffered to fall into murder and adultery; Peter's self-confidence, with denying his master. All these the godly make themselves actually liable to by unrepented of sin. And it is well worth our noticing, that here is something in the obligation to temporary wrath, that is more to be feared than hell, if so be that sin be the greatest evil; which I hope no serious soul will deny. I thus think, and thus will ever preach. It is more bitter to sin against Christ, than to suffer the torments of hell, said Chrysostom.\* Anselm said, that if on the one side were presented unto him the evil of sin, and on the other side, the torments of hell, he would rather choose to fall into hell, than to fall into sin. Now, I refer it to the judgment of any godly, if, these and the like things considered, the doctrine we maintain be chargeable justly with opening a gap to licentiousness? I shall not dispute here, whether or not the temporary wrath which is inflicted on the godly, be the same essentially with that which is poured out upon the damned. But sure I am David calls those strokes that had been upon him, "the pains of hell," Psal 116:3. Job speaks very terribly of them, Job 6:4. "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me," &c. Heman gives the same name to what was upon him that the Psalmist gives to what comes on reprobates, Psal. 88:16. compared with Psal. 58:9. The word in both places is Charon; only the godly man Heman hath it in the plural number. Lastly, We say this doctrine gives true gospel liberty; which perhaps the contrary doth not; and it is our duty to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;" which if we will hear Zacharias in his song, Luke 1:74. is, "that we, being delivered from all our enemies, might serve him without fear. And if we would know what enemies we are delivered from, the apostle tells us, the law is one of them, as it curseth and condemneth the sinner, Gal. 3:13. And as we answer Arminians, Papists, and other enemies of Christian assurance, when they object, That it is a pillar of security; so I positively affirm, that this doctrine is so far from being justly chargeable

therewith, that it is a most strong inducement to gospel obedience, and a strick walk with God; I mean, to a gospel spirit. So that I fear not to say with Dr Preston,\* he that hath the strongest faith, he that believeth in the greatest degree the promise of pardon and remission of sins, hath the holiest heart and the holiest life. And I think it is worthy of our observation, that Paul never groaned more deeply under the body of death, than in the midst of the discourse of a believer's being dead to the law, and freed from condemnation: Rom. 7:24. compared with chap. 7:1, &c. and 8:1. The scripture is very plain in teaching us, that it was Christ's design in bringing his people from under the law, that they might be employed in new obedience, Rom 7:4, 6. And surely it doth not fail. Nothing hath greater influence on gospel obedience than love; love is a strong cord to draw souls to a holy walk, 2 Cor. 5:14. "For the love of Christ [whether ye understand it subjectively or objectively, it is all one to the purpose] constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead;" i. e. legally dead, as is clear from the antithesis. Yet it cannot be meant of the actual execution of the sentence upon us; therefore only of this actual liableness to death. And indeed this is the very force of the Apostle's argument, how can that love but constrain us, seeing by him we have been freed from the obligation to eternal wrath, in which respect we were dead? dead juridically, says Mr. Pool. We were all as dead condemned persons, because he died in our stead. But more of this afterwards. I shall conclude with that saying of Mr. Merriton in his sermon of Christ's humiliation, "Sin is done away by this blood [of Christ], as it binds over to wrath and punishment. Sin may remain, but it shall not condemn, if the channel of Christ's blood runs through thy soul, thou hast shut the gulf as to condemnation."

## QUESTION. II

### WHETHER OR NOT ALL SINS, PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME, ARE PARDONED TOGETHER AND AT ONCE?

THIS question hath much affinity with the former; and what is already said, may contribute to clear our way in answer to this. I mind not here to consider the doctrine of the deluded Antinomians, who assert, that men are justified and actually pardoned from all eternity; and so not only before they believe, but before they are born; not distinguishing between active and passive justification. The former, being an imminent act in God, and a constant will to pardon such persons as he hath chosen to everlasting life, is no doubt from eternity, and complete from that date. But the latter a transient act, exercised not only about, but terminated on the creature living and believing, whereby he is actually pardoned, and judicially declared righteous, while he stands trembling before the tribunal of God; and so cannot be from eternity.

Their doctrine in this is flatly opposite to the Scriptures; which declare all men once and by nature to be children of wrath, and under condemnation, and unpardoned; and truly overturns both law and gospel at one blow; the law, in that the case being so as they pretend, there is no need of it to accuse, convince, condemn, and to stop every mouth, and to make all the world guilty before God. And no better friends are they to the gospel, which proclaims salvation to lost sinners. Yet none greater pretenders to the purity of the gospel than they; none seem to cry up free grace more, which nevertheless in very deed they labour to hide, while they set off the law altogether, without which a man shall never have a right taste of the grace of God. They cry down the law and a legal walk; which is, no doubt, the bane of many professors; but plucking up the law out of the conscience in the matter of justification, and a sinner's acceptance with God, they root it out of the heart in the matter of sanctification. So true is it, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.*

But had more care been taken of preserving pure and entire the doctrine of free grace, it would no doubt have prevented the delusion of many

simple and well-meaning people, and cut off the occasion of crying down good works, and the study of holiness, under pretence of sacrificing all to free grace, from others led merely by their own licentious humours. And therefore, if I mistake not, the greatest noise that Antinomianism hath made in the church in these later centuries, hath been after a deluge of superstition; formality, and ignorance of the doctrine of the gospel, had overwhelmed the church, and sermons sounded rather like Seneca's morals, than Paul's doctrine of Christ crucified, and the riches of God's grace. So was it in the time of the reformation from Popery; so in the time of Britain's struggling with and wading out from Prelacy and Arminianism, &c. How dangerous is it to set up morality instead of the power of godliness, and life of faith? to turn the covenant of grace into a bastard covenant of works; and to mix the law with the gospel, which is indeed accounted by the Spirit of God another gospel, the preacher whereof is devoted to a curse? Gal. 1:6, 8.

And indeed nothing is more incident to men than this; for it is as natural to them to seek to go to heaven by the covenant of works, as it is for fishes to swim, or birds to fly; we being naturally disposed to apprehend God as a great lord and master, and ourselves as his servants, who must work for wages. And so it comes to pass, they consider God absolutely, forgetting Christ the way to the Father; and this while their consciences remain in darkness, without any illumination: for indeed, if the conscience were awakened, the sight of Majesty would dazzle our eyes. Wherefore Luther,\* on Psal. 130 saith, "Often and willingly do I inclinate this, that you should shut your eyes and your ears, and say, You know no God out of Christ." On the other hand, until the conscience is indeed enlightened, and the soul sees what a holy God it hath to do with, how hard is it to attain suitable apprehensions of the riches of his grace? And therefore the woful remains of corruption whereby we are inclined to measure God's ways by our own, start that question, concerning the privileges of the saints, "How can these things be?" and, with Peter, in a fit cry out, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." But to the question.

In this point the orthodox themselves do not agree; which is the more to be lamented, and the rather to be considered and seriously weighed, that it is not a mere speculation, but a very practical point, and cannot but



have great influence on the frame of the spirit, whatsoever way the judgment goes. This may be absolutely said of the wrong side of this controversy, But not without some qualification concerning the right; seeing experience testifieth, that although the truth in its own nature is apt to have influence upon the heart for a holy walk, yet it hath not that actually at all times; truth known, without the blowings of the Spirit, being as wild-fire, giving light, but not heat. To which part of the controversy do this aptitude to influence the heart to the love of Christ, and the study of a holy walk, belong? The determination thereof were to determine the doubt; which we leave to its proper place.

In those points which are the most weighty in the matter of the pardon of sin, the orthodox do agree: As, 1. That God firmly purposing from all eternity to pardon the sins of the elect, laid them wholly on Jesus Christ. 2. That the Lord Jesus hath fully satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all his elect, so as he hath left nothing of the price to be paid by them. 3. That, upon these grounds, all the sins of believers are virtually pardoned. 4. That no believer shall ever be damned, that is, sent into the place of torment, for any sin; but shall certainly and infallibly be saved. 5. Lastly, That, upon the soul's union with Christ by faith, when God pardons one sin, he pardons all sins actually which are committed, commonly called all sins past and present. Only they differ in their sentiments touching the pardon of sin yet not committed.

The question then is this, Whether or not all the sins of a believer, past, present, and to come, are actually pardoned upon the soul's first believing on Christ? or, Whether their sins to come are only virtually pardoned, and not actually till such time as they renew their faith and repentance in order to the pardon thereof? Some simply assert the former; others the latter.

According to what hath been said upon the former question, I assert, That all the sins of an elect soul, past, present, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, touching the actual obligation to eternal wrath, upon his first believing in the Lord Jesus, and justification before God; so that in no moment of time there, after he can be supposed to be actually liable to eternal wrath. And in this sense I embrace the opinion of those that stand for pardon of all sins simul et semel. I think I need not insist much in

proving this assertion, so long as the arguments before adduced stand in force: for if the sins of believers, even while unrepented of, do not make them actually liable to eternal punishment, this position stands good; unless there be any found to say, that they are pardoned always as soon as committed; or, with the Antinomians, that they are pardoned from all eternity. But I shall adduce these following arguments for proof of what is asserted.

ARGUMENT I. The Lord promiseth not to remember his people's sins, Is. 43:25. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Now, how are they not remembered, if they be at any time, after they are brought within the covenant, unpardoned, and the poor souls laid under a sentence of eternal death for them? If this be not to remember sins, nothing is. It is certain, that remembering cannot be properly attributed to God; but God is then said to remember sins, when he does that which men do when they remember the faults of others. And who will not say, that a judge remembers a malefactor's crime, when he hath passed the sentence of death on him; or a bankrupt's debt, when he obligeth him to pay the same by a judicial sentence? Say not, that remembrance of sin is sometimes put for the punishment of it, therefore it must be so understood in this matter: for though I will not deny but it is so taken in the scripture; yet to fasten that upon the promises of pardon, touching the obligation to eternal wrath, is dangerous; in regard that then ye must assert, that what evil is inflicted on the elect unconverted, is laid on them by way of vindictive justice, and for satisfaction; which is too much positively to determine. It clearly follows, in regard the not remembering of sin is a privilege which is new, and supposeth that God remembered their sin before; not only does he promise not to remember them, but to remember them no more; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12. Which confirms what was before said of the Lord's remembering the sins of the elect unconverted; and further plainly lets us see, that God will alter his former course and way of dealing with them in respect of their sins. So much does that NO MORE import evidently; as Job 34:32. "If I have done iniquity, I will do NO MORE." Ezek. 21 ult. "Thou shalt be NO MORE remembered." Now, what was God's way of dealing with them before they were brought into covenant? It was not to send them to hell for their sins; but it was not to pardon them, but to let

them lie under the sentence of eternal wrath, ay and until they made application to Christ by faith, and repented them of their sins likewise, as some say; on what grounds we shall see afterwards. And where is there any alteration of the Lord's way of dealing with them, if their sins remain still unpardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, till they again believe and repent? It is still, I hope, the same faith and the same repentance. There is no doubt, but there is a vast difference betwixt the Lord's way of dealing with the elect unconverted and converted, considered in bulk, even by this way of our adversaries. But as to the precise point of the pardon of sins, of which alone we now speak, there is no difference at all left. Yet this promise holds out a quite contrary course, as is declared. Further, the scripture speaking of the pardon of sin, extends it to all sin, without distinction, Ezek. 36:25. Ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. That this is a promise of justification, and pardon of sin, in the removal of the guilt of it, is plain, as the following promise is of sanctification. And so Sedgwick, no friend to this doctrine, understands it. And on the text, indeed, if that be not a promise of pardon, there is none there. It will perhaps be said, that this promise secures the believer of the pardon of all his sins sooner or later, but not together and at once. But pray let it be considered, that the text tells us expressly, that it shall be then when he "sprinkles clean water on them, gives them a new heart, takes away the stoney heart," &c.; which is undeniably then when they are first brought into Christ. If you say, it respects only sins that are committed; I answer, Non distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit. But then future sins are not comprehended here: and what have they then to lippen to for the pardon of these sins? It must surely be a great strait that will drive men to exclude hence the pardon of future sins; and if they will suffer them to be included, I say again, the text tells us when this cleansing shall be. The Apostle Paul delivers the same doctrine, Col. 2:13. "quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; where we see all trespasses simply were forgiven them when they were quickened with Christ.\* Upon this text saith a judicious commentator, But that we are quickened to eternal life, is evident from this, that all sins are forgiven on which our eternal death did depend. Now, I say, it is as evident that our death depended on all our sins, past, present, and to come; for it was all these that were the cause of Christ's death. And this the subsequent verse doth

confirm. I shall only add that scripture, Num. 23:21. "He beholdeth not iniquity, neither does he see perverseness in Israel;" thus read and cited by Amesius upon this head. Upon which he saith, "Because justification hath left no place to condemnation;" and tells us, that future sins are pardoned in the subject, or person sinning. It is true, he calls this pardon of future sins but a virtual pardon: but, if I mistake not, it is the very same thing that we assert.

ARGUMENT II. Let us take a view of the sacraments, and see how they favour this full remission at once. The pardon of sin is at least among the first of the benefits of the covenant, sealed by the sacraments; and surely, if the sacraments seal the pardon of all sins, past, present, and to come, they are all pardoned; for God sets not his seal but to a truth. Again, a seal presupposeth a deed done; for a thing must be before the being of it can be confirmed. This is so evident, that I cannot think how it can be denied with any colour of reason. The stress of the argument lies then in the proof of that, That the sacraments seal the pardon of sins, past, present, and to come. That they seal the pardon of sin, I mean in the lawful use of them, or when they are conferred on believers, I think none will deny amongst the orthodox; they who acknowledge them at all to be seals, will acknowledge this likewise. That they seal the pardon of all sins, past, present, and to come, the Scripture teacheth us, 1 Pet. 3:21. "Baptism now saveth us." There are many opinions about the efficacy of the sacraments, and how baptism is said to save us, which I shall not now meddle with; but take for granted, what is proven by the learned among Protestant divines, That the efficacy of the sacraments doth consist in effectual oblation and application. So then baptism saveth us from sin, in so far as it seals our salvation therefrom: but if we be for one moment under the guilt of it, where is our salvation from it? for one sin is damning as well as a thousand. Therefore all must be pardoned at once. And learned Rutherford doubts not to say,\* that Christ communicates to believers at first such a remission as he hath obtained; but he hath, saith he, obtained the remission of all sin: therefore such a remission doth he communicate to us: And addeth, that there is no reason why he should communicate to us the purchased remission by halves. Further, Mark tells us, (chap. 1:4.), that "John baptized for the remission of sins;" and Peter calls those pricked at the heart to be "baptized for the remission of

sins," Acts 2:38. But will any exclude from this future sins? Surely so their comfort would have been exceeding lame; knowing that immediately after they would run into a new score, and then they are just where they were before; their baptism having not sealed the remission of these, but only of sins committed before or in baptism. And so this sacrament should rather be administered to the party when a-dying, than when new-born. But if future sins be included here, as certainly they are, then the remission of them is sealed, and consequently is before; for they are not called to be baptized in order to obtain a remission, (the scripture knoweth no such doctrine); but in order to their getting the remission obtained, sealed, in testimony of the remission of sins, as Piscator expounds it. The same may be said of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. So then baptism seals unto worthy receivers (as also does the other sacrament) full freedom from eternal punishments, in the pardon of all sin, in that respect, together and at once. And so Ursin,\* after he hath shewed that the outward baptism is a seal of the inward, tells us, that so is sin abolished in baptism, that we are freed from the guilt of sin, God's wrath, and eternal punishment. To the same purpose says Zanchius, Indwelling sin actually remains, but is taken away as to the guilt. And baptism is ordained for that end, that we may be freed from all guilt of punishment due to sin. The thing signified, says Beza, and verily represented, is the aspersion or sprinkling of the death and passion of Jesus, in remission of sins.

If it be said, That the sacraments do indeed seal the pardon of future sins, but that is only conditionally; whereas the remission of sins committed is sealed absolutely: I answer, This distinction is to be rejected. For a seal, as a seal, doth absolutely confirm the thing sealed, especially where the benefit made over is a free gift, as the pardon of sin is. Were there a thousand conditions in a bargain, the seal confirms the same absolutely. So, if we will make any thing of conditional sealing, it must be the sealing of some conditional promise of the pardon of sin, and that to a believer, touching the obligation to eternal wrath: which is a mere begging of the question; for we know of no such promise in the Bible. But this is not the sealing of a remission. When a king pardons a traitor, and formally gives it under his hand and seal, the pardon is then sealed; but not when he writes an obligation, and seals it, wherein he obligeth himself to pardon

him for whatsoever he may afterwards do treasonably, upon condition he do so and so. Here the obligation, which is conditional, is only sealed; not a remission. But we have heard, that the scripture holds forth baptism as a seal of the remission of sin; of remission actually conferred, not merely promised, as a thing to come. So teacheth Wendelin, in answer to the Popish objection, Infants are baptized for the remission of sins; Ergo, Sins are pardoned by baptism in the Popish sense. He answers, "I deny the consequence. The reason is, Because to be baptized for the remission of sins, is by baptism to be confirmed of the remission of sin. So of old, adult persons were baptized by the Apostles for the remission of sins, which by faith they had received before baptism. So John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, Mark 1:4. who nevertheless baptized none but those who had before professed repentance, and believed the gospel." It is in vain to talk of the conditional sealing of the remission of sin: for the sacraments are seals of the covenant; but the covenant must be made ere it be sealed: unless we will say, that God sets his seal to a blank, which no wise man will do. Now, faith is that which enters the soul into covenant; and then, and not till then, do the sacraments, though before received, seal the covenant. So that, although an elect infant be baptized, or an adult person partake of the sacrament of the supper, being unregenerate, the sacraments seal no saving benefit to them any manner of way; unless you either say, that the unregenerate, and such as have no saving good from God, are in covenant with God, or that God sets his seal to a blank; both which are most absurd. We speak not now of an external federal relation; for no saving benefits depend thereon. And what else is the meaning of that so frequently inculcated by the generality of Protestant divines, for ought I can learn, that the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the time of its administration? We heard before wherein the efficacy of it doth consist. It seems then, it doth not always effectually seal any saving benefit at that time; and what is the reason of that, but that the party hath nothing of that nature to be sealed? The Lord does indeed call all men that hear the gospel, to believe; and tells them, that if they will believe, they shall be justified, pardoned, &c. But this is an offer of the covenant, and not the covenant itself, to which the seals are appended; otherwise every one to whom the gospel offer comes, ought not to be debarred from, but invited, encouraged, and pressed to receive the sacraments, as seals appointed of

God to confirm them in the belief of the Lord's willingness to help them; that, being so persuaded, they might embrace the gospel offer, and so the heavenly pearls should be cast before dogs and swine. But the sacraments are confirming, not converting ordinances; appointed for friends, not for foes\*. Moreover, as in civil contracts, some things are ipso facto disponded and given over by the one party to the other, and some things are promised to be given at such or such times, one seal serves for both; yet this seal confirms the former, as actually made over to the party for the present time; the latter, as to be given him at such a time: so it is in the covenant of grace. There are some things actually made over in proesenti to the believer, such as justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification begun; there are other things promised to be given at such times as God sees meet afterwards, such as, progressive sanctification, final victory over sin, &c. Of the former kind is the pardon of sin, as hath been already said. And there is no promise in the Bible for the remission of sin in the sense pleaded for, made to a justified person; no more than there is of formal justification, reconciliation with God, and adoption. So that there must needs be a difference betwixt a sealing the pardon of sin, and a sealing the promises of the covenant; though one seal serves for both. From all which it appears, that there is no conditional sealing of the pardon of sin, either before or after the soul is brought to Christ; but seeing, upon our first believing in Christ, the sacraments seal to us remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, absolutely, all are together and at once pardoned. And so Calvin teacheth.\* "Baptism (says he) bringeth three things to our faith. This is the first which the Lord setteth out unto us, that it should be a token and proof of our cleansing; or (to express my mind better) it is like to a certain sealed charter, whereby he confirmeth unto us, that all our sins are so defaced, cancelled, and blotted out, that they may never come into his sight, nor be rehearsed, nor be imputed. For he willeth, that all they that believe, should be baptized into forgiveness of sins." And again a little after. "Neither is it to be thought, that baptism is applied only to the time past. —But thus we ought to think, that at what time soever we be baptized, we are at once washed and cleansed for all our life. Therefore, so oft as we fall, we most go back to the remembrance of baptism; and there with we must arm our mind, that it may be always certain and assured of the forgiveness of sin."

ARGUMENT. III. If a believer, at his first entrance into covenant with God, and union with Jesus Christ, be reputed in law to have fully satisfied the law, for all sins, past, present, and to come; then he is actually absolved from the guilt of the same. The connection is evident: for if the law be satisfied, it can demand no more; when the payment and satisfaction is made, and sustained in law, before the bar of God, as the payment and satisfaction of such a person, what can hinder the absolution, or the getting up of the discharge? But so it is, that an elect person, upon his union with Jesus Christ by faith, is reputed in the court of heaven, to have actually, though not personally, satisfied the law for all his sins, past, present, and to come; Ergo, Then they are altogether and at once discharged. The assumption appears true; because Christ and the believer are but one person in law, as the cautioner and principal debtor, the advocate and his client, the husband and wife; yea much more than any of these, in so far as our union with Christ is a more strait union than any of those among men. So the Lord Jesus Christ having fully satisfied for all sins, and the believer being one with him, it is true, that they have suffered and satisfied in him; and the judgment of God, being according to truth, doth surely go this way.\* "in virtue of this conjunction, (says Beza), and spiritual marriage by faith, he taketh all our miseries upon himself, and we do receive all his treasures of him." So teacheth Zanchius: "For (says he) by our incorporation with Christ, his whole passion becomes ours, because we are made one flesh and blood; and by the passion of Christ, all punishment due to sin is taken away." Luther delivers the same, in these words: "Thus he (to wit, Christ) happily making an exchange with us, took on our sinful person, and gifted to us his innocent and victorious person. Herewith we being arrayed and clothed, are freed from the curse of the law, because Christ himself willingly became a curse for us." And truly the scripture speaks of Christ and Adam, as if there had never been any other men in the world but they, they being the two public persons, in which are all mankind. Now, as Jesus the second Adam entered into the same covenant that the first Adam did, (for Christ purchased heaven and glory for his people, according to the strictest terms of the covenant of works); so by him was done for the elect whatsoever the first Adam had undone for all mankind. Wherefore the case stands thus: that like as whatsoever the first Adam did, or befel him, is reckoned as done by, and to have befallen all



mankind; so whatsoever the second Adam did, or befel him, as head of his people, is reckoned to their account. So then as in Adam they sinned, eating of the tree, so in Christ they suffered hanging on the tree; as in the first Adam they broke the law, in the second Adam they repaired the breach thereof. And as it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Adam by natural generation, we are reputed to have sinned in him; so it is then, and not till then, that we become the children of Christ by faith and regeneration, we are reputed to have suffered in him. Mr. Gibbons, in his sermon intitled, "The nature of justification opened," (it should have been said overturned), is much piqued at this doctrine; and tells us, it is the fundamental mistake of the Antinomians, to think, that a believer is righteous in the sight of God with the self-same active and passive righteousness wherewith Christ was righteous; as though believers suffered in Christ, and obeyed in Christ, and were as righteous in God's esteem as Christ himself, having his personal righteousness made personally theirs by imputation. But we need not wonder to hear this from one who tells us, that the covenant of works is not fully executed; that it is not abrogated, but is in part executed on believers, yet dispensed with by superinducing a new covenant of grace over it; and that the threatenings of the law are no more predictions of the event, than "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," in the command;\* that the terms on which sinners are justified, are, first, Faith. People would expect a secondly here; but that were too barefaced. Therefore says he, Then this faith hath two daughters that inseparably attend her, 1. Repentance. 2. Newness of life. Surely he understands this in the matter of justification, not of sanctification; for we suppose he speaks sense, and to the purpose in hand. Further, that God accepteth of, imputeth unto sinners faith in Jesus Christ as their righteousness; which faith justifies formaliter et ratione sui, as it is covenant-keeping, &c. Surely this learned man knew other adversaries to him of better credit than Antinomians; but he seems to dissemble it, to make his doctrine take place the more easily. It is well known, that is the doctrine taught by the body of Protestant divines, That the imputed righteousness of Christ is our righteousness before God; and that faith doth no way justify us but instrumentally or correlatively; that all our righteousness for justification is without us. And till their arguments against the Arminian way of justification by faith be overturned, his doctrine cannot have place. He invidiously talks of

Christ's personal righteousness made personally theirs, and believers being as righteous in God's esteem as Christ himself. We disclaim all pretences to the righteousness of Christ as the second person in the glorious Trinity, commonly called his essential righteousness; but we know no righteousness else upon which we can venture our souls, but the righteousness of Christ as our Redeemer, resulting from his perfect active and passive obedience; and fear not to say with the Apostle, 1 John 3:7, that "he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous; not in regard of quantity, but verity; there being a finite application of an infinite righteousness, not in respect of the full value of it, but in so far as our necessity craves it. Righteousness considered formally with respect to the rule of righteousness simply, is not capable of degrees, though it be in respect of the subject of it; one righteous person being infinitely more noble than another; the excellency of the agent or patient giving value to the obedience, active or passive. But it is evident, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us merely under the former notion, as it denotes a conformity to the rule of righteousness. Now, I pray you consider what the law, which is the rule of righteousness, doth require; even to love the Lord with all the heart, and with all the soul. But there is no possibility of going beyond that; and if the person come not up to it, he is not at all righteous; and it is nothing else but conformity to the law that denominates a person under a law, righteous. Wherefore degrees of comparison here are unreasonable. But we need not marvel to hear them speak of degrees of righteousness, or conformity to the law, who bring forth a new rule of righteousness, besides that which was given at first, as this learned man does. I had always thought, that as there is but one God, and he unchangeable, so there had been but one rule of righteousness, and that unchangeable; and that that had been fully expressed in the first covenant its commands contained in the decalogue. But now we are taught otherwise: Righteousness (says he) is a conformity to the law; he that fulfils the law, is righteous in the eye of the law. Now, the law of the new covenant runs thus, "He that believeth, shall not perish;" so that a believer keeps and fulfils this law, and therefore faith is imputed to him for righteousness. This is a new sort of a law indeed, where there is no commandment at all. But I think it is God that fulfils this law, and not the believer: for the accomplishment or fulfilling of it is in the salvation of the believer; which the scripture tells us is not of ourselves, but is the work of

God alone. But let us consider it in form of a law, thus, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved;" and let us suppose the rule of righteousness to be here found. I say, that this requires either perfect believing, or not. If it require perfect faith, then the judgment of God is not according to truth, in pronouncing men righteous according to this law; for no man in this life is perfect in faith: If it require not perfect faith, then all the unbelief and doubtings in a man's heart, where there is anything of faith, are no sins against this law of grace; which is absurd: yea and so they are no sins at all; for, as hath been already proven, believers are dead to the law of works. Moreover, believing, or faith, being in several degrees in several persons, one is more righteous than another, or more conformed to the law than another; and the least measure of true faith being a fulfilling of this law, any further degree of it must be a work of supererogation, the law being more than fulfilled; all which are absurd. In fine, this doctrine makes the gospel to overturn the law, and maketh Christ the end of the law for destruction, not for consummation, for "righteousness, to every one that believeth; because the righteousness of the law must be put out of doors, before this new righteousness can be brought in. But Christ hath plainly told us, that heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than one jot or tittle of the law. And how does it reflect upon the justice, purity, and holiness of God, to accept us as righteous in his sight formally on the account of a righteousness which is as filthy rags? for such is our faith formaliter et ratione sui.

I think, indeed, this author does rationally yoke these two together, viz. a believer's being righteous in the sight of God with the self-same righteousness wherewith Christ (as Redeemer, head, and representative of his) is righteous; and a believer's suffering and obeying in Christ; for these indeed se mutuo ponunt et tollunt; and this obligeth those that acknowledge the immediate imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, to acknowledge also our being reputed, upon our union with him, to have suffered in him for all sins, past, present, and to come; which being granted, they must needs yield the pardon of the same, in the sense pleaded for. But why should a believer suffering in Christ be thought such a gross point of Antinomianism? That we sinned in Adam, I suppose he will not deny; and if so in the first Adam, why may we not be said to have suffered in Christ the second Adam, who was no less a public person in

his suffering, than the first in his sinning. The Apostle Eph. 2:6. tells us, that believers were raised up in him; which must needs suppose that they died in him. But he is very plain in this point, Gal. 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ." Hereby he proves, that he was dead to the law through the law, for the law had crucified him with Christ: wherefore it had no more to require of him, than the law of a land of a malefactor hanged for his crime. This scripture hath led Luther\* into that fundamental mistake of the Antinomians: "For (says he) I am crucified and dead with Christ through faith." And that none may mistake his meaning, he tells us, that the Apostle doth not speak here of con-crucifixion of intimation or example, but of that sublime con-crucifixion, where Christ alone doth all, but the believer is crucified with him through faith. Fergusson tells us, that the threatening of death, Gen. 2:17. is fulfilled in the elect; so that they die, and yet their lives are spared; for they are reckoned in law to have died, when Christ their surety died for them. Zanchius favours this doctrine much: for he says, that whatsoever was done to our head Christ, that is partly done to his whole body, and so to each member already; and partly to be done. Beza is in this point Antinomian in grain; "Although thou (says he) hast satisfied for the pain of thy sins in the person of Jesus Christ, and that thou art also clothed with his righteousness, &c." And Rutherford,\* though a great adversary to the Antinomians, as is well known by his learned writings against them, hath yet fallen into this fundamental mistake of theirs: "for (says he) Christ's dying and satisfying, is ours; he dying in our stead and place, and we dying in him legally, (not physically); and so are we not only by his satisfaction, which is made ours, and by faith applied to us, negatively freed from hell; but positively righteous." The Apostle teacheth believers so to think of themselves. Rom. 6:10, 11. "For in that he died, he died unto sin (i. e. for sin) once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God and Christ, en Christo, &c. Where we see plainly that believers are called to reckon or conclude themselves to be dead unto sin; that is, for sin, as is plain from the 10th verse, otherwise they do not reckon concerning themselves as they do concerning Christ. The Apostle taketh it for granted, that believers have all laid down this conclusion, or have made this reckoning, "That Christ died to sin," that is, suffered for it: here is another conclusion he would have them to make, "Likewise reckon ye also," viz.

that ye are dead to sin, and this by way of syllogistical deduction from the former, Houto kai humeis logizesthe; where the medium is our union with Christ, sealed in baptism, ver. 4. "For if Christ died to sin, then we being one with him," died to it also, viz. in his person, as the text hath it, in Christ. Whereas indeed our dying to sin in point of sanctification, is in our own person, not in the person of Jesus Christ, as is manifest. From what is said it appears, that a believer is reputed to have satisfied for all sins, past, present and to come, at his union with Christ by faith; and consequently that all his sins are then pardoned simul et semel.

If any shall say, That although we be reputed thus to have satisfied the law for all sins past, present, and to come; yet it no more follows that we have the pardon of them in our own persons, than that we are glorified in our own persons at our first believing in Christ; for both are the fruits of the same purchase: I answer, That this is to confound our absolute and relative state, and to make them go on alike by degrees: which is absurd. But pray you let it be considered, that there are two things in Christ's obedience to the law as the representative of his people; First, The payment of a debt; Secondly, A purchase of some positive benefits. The debt being paid, and the payment of it for such a person being sustained in law, the discharge cannot be kept up; but justice ipso facto looseth the man from the obligation, as is manifest. But as to these other blessings, there is no such necessity of their being made immediately forthcoming unto them; only they have immediately a right to them all given them; and thus especially when the payer or purchaser consents to the delay of giving up these things to those for whom they are purchased; as it is in this case. This we see plainly in the way of human contracts. As when a man pays his debt to the creditor, and purchaseth a piece of ground from him; the very paying of the money in justice looseth him from his former bond or obligation, and gives him a right to the land; but does not put him actually in possession thereof at that very time.

ARGUMENT IV. The Scripture plainly holds out unto us, that the Lord, in dealing with believers, considereth them as in Christ Jesus, and not as they are in themselves; and it cannot be otherwise, seeing the union made up betwixt Christ and a soul by faith, is a lasting, even an everlasting union; so that after their union with Christ, at the first moment of

believing, they never more stand before God on their own bottom, otherwise God should be to them, even as to others, "a consuming fire." But if we account a believer to lie one moment under unpardoned sin, he must be considered abstractedly from Christ, and dealt with judicially as he is in himself; or if otherwise, it reflects no small dishonour on the Mediator, the person who is one with him, being condemned by the law. And the truth is, that a person being once united to Christ by faith, whatever is chargeable on that person must be laid to the charge of Christ, and he is answerable for it; and the same may be exacted of him, as the debt contracted by the wife is chargeable on the husband; but "by once offering up of himself he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." To this purpose speaks holy John Careless\* in his letter to William Tymes: "He hath clothed us in all his merits, and taken to himself all our sin; so that if any should be now condemned for the same, it must needs be Jesus Christ, who hath taken them upon him. But indeed he hath made satisfaction for them to the uttermost; so that, for his sake, they shall never be imputed to us if they were a thousand times more than they be." Thus he; and that most truly, because the elect person being once united to Christ, the Lord Jesus is reputed to have taken on all his sins in particular, whether past, present, or to come; so that now, if any person be reputed guilty, or actually liable to eternal wrath, it must be Christ himself, who is legally the sinner in point of guilt, though the fault was never transferred on him; therefore, if the sin be unpardoned for the least moment, it must be to him, and not to us; for though they be ours by commission, yet he hath undertaken and bound himself to answer for them. Among men there are two sorts of sureties. Some become sureties for others, so as the creditor hath still a right to crave the principal debtor, who, notwithstanding of the suretiship, remains still liable: in which case, if the principal party fail to pay after diligence used for the same, the creditor falls on the surety. Some do so become sureties for others, that the principal debtor is so ipso relieved and discharged; there being no hopes at all of payment from the principal. This last way Christ is surety for his people, and not the first way: for the Lord knowing that it was utterly impossible for man to satisfy by himself, must needs be supposed to make no other bargain; but "laying help upon one that is mighty," he simply passeth the sinner in his own person, and takes Christ for all; who says to the Father, "If you take

me let these go their way. And so, as it is said, Isa. 53:7. Niggas Vehu Nagnanch, He (to wit, the Father) exacted, and he (to wit, Christ) answered; or he was answered, viz. by Christ. So Rabbi David\* judgeth the word in Niphil should be expounded. A godly writer tells us, that God laid all on him, that he might be sure of satisfaction; protesting, that he would not deal with us, nor so much as expect any payment from us. Wherefore in law Christ is the sinner, and the believer goes free; and if so, then the sin, if it be at all unpardoned, it must be to him, and not to us. None will stumble at this, who consider matters duly. Luther doubts not to say, Christ was a sinner, and that there was none a greater sinner than he; and that whatsoever sins we do commit, or shall in time to come, commit, they are as proper to Christ, as if he himself had committed them. "In sum (says he) sin must become Christ's proper sin or we perish." Rivet defends Illyricus against Bellarmine, in that he says, Christ might most truly be called the sinner. Bellarmine (says he) contends, that Christ may attribute our sins unto himself; and that truly, as I believe, for he cannot lie; therefore he might also truly call himself the sinner, while he sustained our person; who nevertheless was in himself innocent. What blasphemy and impiety is here? The same is taught by Hemmingius, Taunovius, Witsius, Rutherford, and Bridge.\* The Apostle puts it out of doubt, that it is Christ who speaks to the Father Psal. 40 see Heb. 10 and in the 12th verse of that Psal. he calls the sins the burden whereof he bears, his iniquities. And it cannot be denied, but that he was made sin; which is more than to be a sinner, in so far as the abstract signifies somewhat more exquisite than the concrete, if we will believe the learned Rivit, loco supra citato. From all which I conclude, that seeing Christ is made the sinner in law, and the Lord passeth the man thus, upon Christ's undertaking the charge, all sins, past, present, and to come, are together and at once pardoned, viz. as soon as the soul is one with Christ by faith.

ARGUMENT. V. The love of God, called the love of complacency, is as God himself, unchangeable; "for whom he once loves, he loves to the end;" and "nothing can separate them from it." Though the emanations of it towards believers may be stopt for a time in great measure, yet that love as it is in God still remains, quoad affectum, as they say, though not quoad effectum. The due consideration of this, which is not controverted amongst the orthodox, and is plainly proven by them against the patrons

of the saints falling away, will necessitate the asserting of the pardon of all sins, simul et semel; so as the believer is never, after his union with Christ, by any sin, for one moment actually liable to eternal wrath. For that liableness to God's wrath, and the unchangeableness of God's love, are incompatible. Which I prove thus. For a sinner to be liable in actu secundo to eternal death, is nothing else but to be under a sentence of eternal death as a sinner; that is to say, the law condemns him as such, though the sentence never be executed. Now, what is the law of God, but a transcript of the holy nature of God? so that God himself is surely set against those whom the law is against; otherwise God is changeable, or the law is not a true copy of his nature; both which are more than absurd. It comes in effect to this, that God approves whom the law disaproves; that is, God hates the man, hath no delight in him at all; seeing he that is guilty of one, is guilty of all: and yet at the same time he loves him, and delights in him; which is a flat contradiction. If any shall say, that the sinner may be hated of God as he is in himself, yet beloved as united to Christ, it is granted; but it makes nothing to the purpose: for while we speak of a believer as he is in himself, it is merely a notion of our minds by precision; but really and indeed he is ever in Christ, and the Lord's judgment is according to truth; so he never deals with a believer, but as he is indeed in Christ, as was said before. And if to adjudge a person to eternal wrath be not to hate him, I confess I understand not what can be made of God's hatred against a person; for it is certain it is no passion in him, as it is in us. Rutherford tells us,\* that there is no reason why God should communicate the purchased remission by halves, (per partes), unless he loved and hated also the self-same person from eternity; which is inconsistent. So saith Piscator, God hates them whose sins he hath not pardoned; and this, while he teacheth, that, by the forgiveness of sin, which we seek in the Lord's prayer, is meant the sense of pardon. There is one thing, I foresee, will readily be said against this, to invalidate the argument; that is, that the Lord Jesus Christ was condemned by the law, yet still beloved of God; and therefore they are not inconsistent. To this I answer, There is in sin the fault, and the guilt arising therefrom: the latter, not the former, was transferred on Christ; but an unpardoned sinner lies under. Hence ariseth a vast difference betwixt the law's condemning of Christ, and its condemning us. While the law condemns a sinner, who is formally such and in himself, it declares him to be sinful,



and opposite to God; which is the formal notion under which he is hated of God; and therefore it adjudgeth him to eternal wrath. But here Christ is innocent; only the punishment is exacted of him, seeing he came in the room of condemned sinners, and undertook voluntarily to satisfy for them: wherefore God cannot but delight in him, seeing there was no sinful evil in him, only a penal evil is inflicted on him. But the law, finding one sin in the sinner uncovered with the righteousness of Christ, leaves him in no other case than it did Adam guilty of the first, viz. condemned, and one whom God had no delight in.

ARGUMENT VI. If all sins, past, present, and to come, be not pardoned at once, when the soul is united to Christ by faith; then a believer at one and the same time is adjudged to eternal death. That he is adjudged to eternal life, in so far as he is a believer, the scripture plainly teacheth; "for he that believeth, hath everlasting life:" and that he is adjudged to eternal death upon the account of sins not yet pardoned, though committed, is no less evident; seeing, according to this doctrine, sin is not pardoned in respect of the obligation to eternal wrath, till he renew the acts of faith and repentance; which is nothing else, than that he is actually bound over thereto. And so the man is legally dead and legally alive at one and the same time. Whoso shall reconcile these, erit mihi magnus Apollo. But I shall stand no more on this; but conclude with the following argument.

ARGUMENT VII. ult. This doctrine, teaching the pardon of all sins together and at once, upon the soul's believing at first on Christ, hath the advantage of the other, in two respects.

I. In that it is most adapted to the grand design of the gospel; which is, to exalt the riches of the free grace of God in Jesus Christ. For, first, who sees not the grace of God far more exalted in giving out a full and complete remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, together and at once; than in giving out remission by halves; as the giving up of a bond wholly and at once, speaks out more favour than now and then particular receipts and discharges. Let none say, that it is too much boldness for us, thus to lay down methods and rules for God's exalting his grace; and if this were true, then he should sanctify us wholly at our union with Christ, as well as pardon all sins, past, present, and to come. We say, that we do not take upon us to lay down or propose rules that way; but

understanding the exalting of grace to be the great design of the gospel, we may well be allowed to consider what doth most contribute thereto. And whatever other way the Lord might, in his boundless wisdom, have fallen upon, for bringing about that end, I confidently aver, That none in the world can devise a way how grace might have been more exalted than it is by this way laid down in the gospel. And with the same confidence I say, that the gradual sanctification of believers doth more exalt the riches of grace, than if God had made believers perfectly holy at the first moment of believing, as I shall afterwards make appear. So sweetly doth the perfect pardon of sin, and the imperfect sanctification of believers, contribute to the grand design of the gospel. Secondly, It doth also exalt the grace of God more, that the sinner being once united to Christ by faith, hath a free and full remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, than that the pardon of future sins should be suspended on the acts of our believing and repenting.

II. It is most adapted to excite believers to the serious practice of godliness, to a holy and strict gospel-walk. Which appears, first, In that it doth natively fill the heart with love to God, the mainspring of gospel obedience, and the most powerful incentive to a tender walk. It is true, the man who apprehends sins past and present forgiven, cannot but love much; but he who apprehends sins, past, present, and to come, to be forgiven, must love more. Here then are two debtors to the grace of God; I think I may well propose our Lord's question, Luke 7:42. "Which of them will love him most?" and will acquiesce in Simon's answer, seeing Christ approved it, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most," Ver. 43. Secondly, As this doctrine furnishes the children of God best, with love to constrain them, and cords of a man to draw them;\* so it doth remove the fear of eternal wrath, which keeps the soul in bondage, fills the heart with confusion, dashes and mars us in our access to God, and looks like slavery rather than the glorious liberty of sons. But the doctrine of the pardon of future sins only upon after repentance, &c. cherisheth this fear; so as men must be continually under it, in regard they are continually sinning; and though a man be in this moment perfectly freed from an actual obligation to eternal wrath, yet the very next moment he is again brought under it: so that in very deed it is a perfect rack to the conscience, and would effectually prove so were it as firmly believed as is

pretended. It is needless to distinguish here betwixt greater and lesser sins: for sin as sin lays the soul under God's wrath, where it is in a capacity of actual obligation thereto, as was said before. Whatever influence the soul's apprehension of its liableness to eternal wrath, under sin till it be repented of, may be supposed to have, I think it is plain, that one great end of Christ's death was to deliver us, that we might serve him without fear of what the law or vindictive justice of God may do to us. Luther, who was a man very much exercised with conflicts of conscience, is very plain this way; "Wherefore, (says he), if sin torment thee, if death terrify thee, think it is but a vain spectre, and an illusion of the devil, as certainly it is. For in very deed there is no more sin, no more curse, no more death, no devil; because Christ hath overcome and abolished all these. There is no defect in the thing, but in our belief; for it is difficult for reason to believe these so inestimable benefits." And elsewhere: "Hence (says he) it follows, that, in respect of the conscience, we are altogether free from the law; therefore that schoolmaster ought not to be troublesome to it with his terrors, threats, and captivity." And again, "We ought, without the conscience, to make a God of it, (the law); but within the conscience, it is a devil," &c. And a little after, "Let him (Christ) alone reign in righteousness, security, joy, and life; that the conscience being glad, may sleep in Christ, without any sense of law, sin, and death." These expressions are somewhat unusual; but the matter is heavenly and sublime, and the very marrow of the life of faith, and savours much of Paul's elevated spirit, while treating of the doctrine of free grace, or rather of the Spirit of Christ. Agreeably to this doth Calvin teach:\* "The law (says he) hath no place in the consciences of the faithful before the judgment-seat of God. The second part (of Christian liberty) is, that consciences obey the law, not as compelled by the necessity of the law, but being free from the yoke of the law itself, of their own accord they obey the will of God. For because they abide in perpetual terrors, so long as they be under the dominion of the law, they shall never be, with cheerful readiness, framed to the obedience of God, unless they first have this liberty given them. On the other side, if being delivered from this severe exacting of the law, they hear that they be called with fatherly gentleness, they will with great cheerfulness answer his call." So Beza; "Forasmuch (says he) as Jesus Christ bath, by one infinite obedience, made satisfaction to the infinite Majesty of God, it followeth, that my iniquities can no more fray

nor trouble me; my accounts being assuredly erased by the precious blood of Christ."

Now, I shall consider the objections against this doctrine; and shall handle them in the same order as Sedgwick hath them gathered together. That learned man delivereth them not as his; but tells us after all, that his own judgment inclines to that opinion, That all the sins past of a believer are (at once) forgiven, and all his future sins are remitted unto him upon renewed acts of believing and repenting, for Christ's sake.

OBJECT. 1. Heb. 8:12. "Their iniquities I will remember no more." "Not to remember iniquity any more," doth in common sense suppose, that that iniquity was before; for if it never was, it cannot be said to be remembered at all. So that passage, Jer. 31:34. "I will forgive their iniquity;" and Jer. 33:8. "I will pardon all their iniquities," do suppose an iniquity or offence committed; for if it be not yet committed, how can it properly be said to be forgiven? So Is. 43:25. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions; but debts which were never as yet made, may not be entered into the book, and therefore cannot be said to be blotted out.

ANSW. I have already shown, in what sense the Lord saith, he will remember their sins no more; which is no way infringed by this objection, and doth very well agree with the scripture dialect. But as for that criticism upon the word remember, that in common sense it supposeth that the thing was before; I say it is weak, to say no worse of it: for the most, sensible mere man that ever was in the world since the fall, and inspired by the holy Ghost too, useth the word of that which only was to be, Eccl. 11:8. "Let him remember the days of darkness, for they SHALL BE many." And what will ye say to find it used of a thing that never so much as was to be? So David useth it concerning Judas, Psal. 109:16. "Because he remembered not to show mercy." A learned critic tells us,\* that, in the holy language, to remember, does not necessarily presuppose any precedent knowledge which was forgot, and afterwards comes into mind; but as we see, says he, it is taken simply for the knowledge of any thing, and speaking of the thing known. Now, when it is applied to God, it is certain the existence of the thing, and his knowledge of it, cannot be separated, for the least moment. The learned Gentleman Leigh tells as, that the Hebrew word signifies to make mention of a thing. And I think it

is to be observed, that the Apostle, in translating it, useth not a compound, but a simple word, *ou me mnestho eti*; which may very well be so translated, as well as the verbal is in almost all the places of the new Testament. In the Greek, *mnemoneue*, which signifies to remember, *memini*, *recordor*, 2 Tim. 2:8. Rev. 18:5. Luke. 17:32, &c. So the Septuagint use it, Exod. 13:3. And one tells us, it answers to the Hebrew word *zachar*; and yet we find it used of a thing that was to come, to wit, the departure out of Egypt, which was long after Joseph's death; but by faith Joseph remembered it, *emnemoneuse*, Heb. 11:22. But why should men go so strictly to work about the notation of the word? for if so it be, it is certain God can no more be said properly to remember a thing than to forget it. And as unhappy are the adversaries in their criticism on the words *pardoning* and *forgiving* their importing the actual commission of sin. The apostle tells us, 1 Tim. 3:16. that "Christ was justified in the spirit," viz. absolved from the guilt of the elects' sins which he had voluntarily taken upon him and satisfied for; yet some of these were not then committed, nor are they to this day, notwithstanding he was justified in respect of them. 2 Kings. 5:18. "In this thing" (says Naaman) "the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon, &c. Upon this there is a question proposed, Whether or not Naaman deprecates and seeks that to be forgiven which he did before his conversion, or that which he was to do after his conversion? Wendelin tells us,\* that some modern interpreters embrace the first; but mostly all others the latter; which he himself holds likewise. And of that judgment, he says, are the Chaldee, Greek interpreters, Jerome, Pagniu, Luther, Vatablus, Munster, Junius, and Tremellius; the French, Italian, and Spanish translators. However it be, I remark, for the purpose in hand, that many learned men are not so fond upon the pretended import of the word *pardon*, but that sometimes, for their part, they will suffer it to respect sin not yet committed. And I would challenge any man to give me a solid answer and reason, why sin may not be forgiven before it be committed, as well as satisfied for at the dearest rate before the actors be in *rerum natura*. I think the first may at least as easily be as the latter, of which no true Christian will doubt; and I would leave it to the judgment of any unbiassed person, whether or not the exacting of satisfaction for sins not only not yet committed, but even the actors of which are not yet

in being, seems to be more liable to inconveniences, than the pardon of sins, though not yet committed, yet satisfied for, the person now even at the time living and believing in him who died for the ungodly? Wherefore it is strange, that Bishop Downhame's gravity permits him to be so wanton on this point, as to tell us, that this cannot be, unless we make God like the Pope, who forehand forgave sins to come. Will his Lordship allow the Pope to take money aforehand for sins to come, and not allow him to give people what they have bought with their money? But no more of this. If we did not too much measure God's way's by man's ways, perhaps there would be less difficulty in this matter. Only we know, that, as to him with whom we have to do, all is present before his eyes; there is neither time past nor time to come with him. No better is that which they would make of the word blotting out. If the future sins of believers were not in God's debt-book, how came justice to exact payment of the Lord Jesus Christ for them? Scripture tells us, that "in the volume of God's book it was written concerning Christ, that he came to do the will of the Father. What was that will, but that he should lay down his life for his sheep, or die for the sins of the elect? If Christ's sufferings were written in that book, it is reasonable to suppose the cause of them might be found there also. But if things must needs actually be before they be put in God's book, David has been in a great mistake, while he tells us, that all his members were written in God's book, when as yet THERE WAS NONE OF THEM.

OBJECT. 2. Other scriptures purposely speaking of the forgiveness of sins have a restrainedness unto sins committed, and look only at them, Jer. 33:8, whereby they have sinned,—have transgressed. Mark, have sinned, and have transgressed, respecting the sins past, not what they shall commit, Ezek. 18:22. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. 1 John 2:1. If any man sin; as if sin must be committed before he make intercession for the pardon of it. So in the Old Testament there was no sacrifice for any future sin.

ANSWER As for the first two scriptures, that they have a respect to past sins, I do not deny; but that they respect these only is said, not proven. If they be restrained to past sins, what comes of present sins, the second member of this tripartite division, very little, if at all, used, for anything

that I have yet learned, by any but those of late? others that went before, being content with the phrase of pardon of sin, simply, or all sin, universally, as the scripture speaks. "It hath been (says Isaac Ambrose) commonly said by some of our best divines, that justification is transacted in our first union and incorporation into Christ; at which time it is conceived, that the pardon of all sin is sealed to the believer at once." If then it be restrained, I say, to sins past, then this assertion is false, That all sins, past, and present, are forgiven at once; which the adversaries themselves do hold true. But these clauses, have sinned, and have transgressed, are plainly set down, not to distinguish their past and present, from their future sins; that would have been but small comfort to a man with a deceitful heart, that is ever sinning; but to press the sense of their sins upon their consciences, and to hold them before their eyes, that they might be the more affected therewith, and see the grace of God in Christ more. If we must consider that, Ezek. 18:22. all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned; pray take in likewise the following clause, In the righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Here are sins that he hath committed; and righteousness that he hath done. If the sins that he hath committed be exclusive, in point of remission, of the sins he shall commit; then his righteousness that he hath done, which must be understood, in a gospel sense, of the righteousness of Christ received by faith, must, by virtue of the antithesis, be exclusive of the righteousness he shall do, in point of pardon, or legal life. And so the doctrine of obtaining the pardon of future sins by the renewed acts of faith and repentance, falls to the ground: their life being appropriated to the righteousness they have done, as much as the not mentioning of their sins is to those that they have committed. Let no man tell me here, that the Lord is speaking to them in the tenor of the covenant of works, and according to the law, I acknowledge, that the phrase of doing righteousness, looks like the legal dispensation of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament. But the law strictly so called, or the covenant of works, knows nothing of repentance and turning from sin, nor of the pardon of sin, here mentioned. Nay, though a man under the influence of the covenant of works could turn from sin indeed, that covenant would not allow his former sins not to be mentioned. As for that place, 1 John 2:1. it makes, nothing against us, in regard the Apostle is there speaking of believers who have an Advocate with the Father, and

are actually pardoned as to the obligation to eternal wrath, but do fall under God's fatherly displeasure by their after sins, for removal of which they must employ the Advocate. But take it as ye will, there is no necessity of the actual commission of sin before intercession can be made anent it, no more than before satisfaction be made for it. But this was spoken to at large already. As to what is said of the sacrifices under the Old Testament, we are sure of two things; First, That they were types of the true sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as suffering for sinners; Secondly, That the sacrifice of Christ was for all sins, past, present, and to come; and therefore the believing Jews who were taught the mystery of Christ behoved to understand it so.

OBJECT. 3. Those qualifications which God himself makes with respect to the forgiveness of sins do necessarily suppose a precedent commission of them: 2 Chron. 7:14. "If my people—shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face," &c. 1 John 1:9. "If we confess," &c. Prov. 28:13. "He that confesseth and for saketh shall find mercy." Acts 3:19. "Repent ye,—that your sins may be blotted out." Doth God put us to humble our hearts to pray for the pardon of sins not yet committed? Would he have us to confess and forsake those sins? Wherefore, if these things be required for forgiveness, and yet respect only sins that are past, as indeed they do, all are not pardoned at once.

ANSWER. Somewhat of this nature I have met with before in the first objection against the first question. I think it strange, that men, when they hear the pardon of sin spoken of in any place of scripture do presently fancy to themselves, that is the taking off the obligation to eternal wrath. As for that 2 Chron. 7:14. it relates to the taking off of temporary strokes from the people, as is evident from the text. "I will forgive their sin." How? "I will heal their land." What is the disease? The shutting up of heaven that there is no rain, &c. So Rutherford\* expounds it. And that forgiveness they might have, and no doubt some had, and yet lie under God's wrath for ever. But suppose it did relate to the pardon of sin in the sense pleaded for, there are more conditional qualifications here, than the adversaries themselves will readily require as absolutely necessary. There is prayer made in the temple, ver. 14, 15. which I hope they will not say was, even under the Old Testament, necessary simply for



the pardon of sin. The second scripture alleged I have already spoken to, and may afterwards speak to it further. The last of them will also be considered afterwards. Wherefore I leave them for the time. As for that, "He that confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy;" it seems to be that which hath most weight for that which is pleaded; but yet the weakness of it, we hope, will appear. That the argument then may be the more closely answered, I shall reduce it into this form. The soul's humbling of itself, confessing, forsaking, and turning from sin, respect only sins past, and cannot be where sin is not actually committed; but these qualifications mentioned, are necessarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of sin: Ergo. No sin can be pardoned till it be committed, and so all is not pardoned at once. I distinguish the major, The soul's humiliaation, confessing, and forsaking, &c. considered and taken explicitly, respect only sins past, and cannot be where sin is not actually committed; I grant: considered virtually, they respect only sins past, &c. I deny; for so they reach to future sins also. Apply this distinction to the minor: These qualifications are necessarily required to the obtaining of the pardon of sin, if they be taken explicitly, I deny; and so will our antagonists, so long as that remains true, "Who can understand his errors?" That they are requisite as considered virtually, transeat. But what can be made of that against us? Nothing at all in the point in hand: for this virtual humbling, confessing, &c. takes in future sins as well as past sins, and present, which we know not: for a man who is truly humbled for one sin, is virtually humbled for all, past, present, and to come; seeing he is humbled for it, confesseth, forsaketh, and turns from it as sin; for a qua tali ad omne valet consequentia. Will our adversaries deny, that a believer's future sins are virtually pardoned upon his first entry into the state of justification? If they be virtually pardoned, why not virtually confessed and forsaken, especially seeing they make confession, &c. so necessary antecedently to pardon. And truly this may as well be said of future sins, as of those sins which we neither know, nor yet shall ever after know in time; for as to us *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*. Thus I think the weakness of this argument doth sufficiently appear. I shall not further meddle with the assumption here; but in what sense we understand repentance to relate to the pardon of sin, will afterwards be declared.

OBJECT. 4. If all sins, past, present, and to come, are forgiven at once unto believers, then no believer is to pray unto God for the forgiveness of any sin which he commits, after he is once brought into Christ; yet Jesus Christ doth teach even believers to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," Matth. 6:12; Luke 11:4. To this may be added for confirmation, that the children of God do accordingly pray daily for the pardon of sin, as may be seen every where in the lives of the saints.

ANSWER. 1. Our Lord here teacheth believers to pray for the sense of pardon, and manifestation of the same to their own souls; and that prayer suits believers very well, though all their sins, past, present, and to come, are already pardoned before the Lord in the sense pleaded for. And though it may be hard to find where pardon is used precisely for the manifestation thereof, yet he is a great stranger in the scripture who knows not, that therein things are frequently said to be or be done, when the same is only manifested. We find the Apostle tells us, that "Abraham was justified by works,"\* not formally, but manifestatively; his justification which he had long before, being then plainly evidenced. But as for those who are of opinion, that there is no pardon mentioned in the scriptures, but what respects the obligation to eternal wrath, there needs to be no great difficulty in finding such a place as may convince them, that pardon is used sometimes for the sense or manifestation of pardon precisely and only; and which may rationally convince any man, that pardon is not always taken for the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath, formally considered; Matth. 6:14. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Not unlike to this is that, Luke 6:37. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." We may see plainly here, that our forgiveness is required as previous to God's forgiveness; and the following verse tells us, that there can be no hope of forgiveness, so long as we do not forgive others. Mark, to whom he speaks; even to believers, who may call God Father; yet, under a temptation, may be led away with a revengeful spirit against those who have done them wrong; but till they lay it down, God will not forgive them. Now, will any man who is orthodox, suspend our formal remission of sin at the hand of God, on our remission of offences done to us, as previous to God's formal act of removing the obligation to eternal wrath? This the Papists would indeed have to establish our justification by works. But the scripture teacheth us,

that God's forgiving us formally considered, is the cause of our forgiving others; and so must go before it, as the cause before the effect. A judicious interpreter\* tells us, that our remission is posterior to the divine remission; as Christ teacheth in the parable of the king and the servants, Matth. 18; for the king forgave first, the servant behoved to forgive after: "I forgave thee all that debt, shouldst thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant?" And a little after, pursuing the cause against the Papists, he will not so much as yield it to be a cause of remission sine qua non. Bayn speaks very pithily to the same purpose: 'Our forgiving (says he) followeth, and doth not go before forgiveness (divine): for none can forgive his brother, that doth not love his brother, none can love his brother truly, that loveth not God; none can love God, but those that are first loved of him, and have their sins covered by him. And this forgiveness of God is an action of his simul et semel.'" And afterwards he concludes; "When the scripture therefore bids us forgive that we may be forgiven, it meaneth the sense, that we may feel sealed to our spirits of God's pardon." Now if it be not a formal remission touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and yet all pardon have respect to that obligation, it must needs be understood of the manifestation of that pardon. Seeing then the scripture mentioned is an argument to enforce the duty enjoined in the petition, it is very reasonable, that we understand the petition the same way; as we said before, that we are here taught to pray for the sense of pardon, not for a formal pardon, as it respects eternal wrath. And we prove it by the argument used already, thus: the forgiveness mentioned in this petition is posterior to our forgiving others; but it is the manifestation of forgiveness, not the formal pardon, that is posterior to our forgiveness: Ergo. The assumption is proven already. I prove the proposition: First, We seek this remission as a benefit we yet want, but speak of our remission as a duty we in the present do. Secondly, How can we seek of God, that he would forgive us as we forgive others, if we have not done it, or are doing it? Surely that were to pray for the shutting up of God's bowels of mercy on us, rather than the opening of them; "For if we forgive not men, God will not forgive us?" ver. 15. Thirdly, That these words, "as we forgive them that trespass against us, are an argument, though not to move God to forgive, yet to move us to believe that God will forgive us, I think will not be denied by any sober person. But if it be such an argument, then the soul must feel itself

endued with this qualification, ere it can certainly determine that God will forgive its sin; and the confidence of hearing cannot be in greater degree than the feeling of that qualification. Fourthly, That it is so to be understood, appears from the parallel place, Luke. 11:4. "Forgive us—for we also forgive; kai gar hemeis aphiemen. Picator expounds forgiveness in the petition, plainly of the manifestation of pardon. "Christ (says he) by devine remission\* in this place understands the sense of it in our minds, which is the sense of faith; signifying, that it cannot be that we by faith can feel the divine remission, unless we be conscious to ourselves of our remission whereby we have forgiven others." That we pray here then for the sense of pardon, is evident from what is said; and so far I acquiece in it: but I mean not to say, that pardon is taken here or elsewhere only for the manifestation of pardon. But it seems no less evident to me, that, upon what is said, they that understand it only of the manifestation of pardon, may hold their ground against those who acknowledge no pardon but what respects the obligation to eternal wrath. But in regard that a soul may have the sense of pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath continuing with him, and that he is still obliged daily to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," in respect of which he can only pray in such a case for the continuance of it; and seeing the words are apt to beget in us a conception of a formal pardon, and that the scripture teaches us another sort of a formal pardon than what respects God's eternal wrath; I do not judge, that the sense of pardon is all that we are taught to pray for in this petition. Therefore,

2. I answer, We pray here also for a formal pardon. For understanding of which, let us remember the distinction formerly made betwixt pardon of sin as it relates to the obligation whereby the sinner is bound over to eternal wrath, and that which respects the obligation whereby the soul is bound over to temporary strokes. That pardon of sin is in scripture used in the last sense, hath been already proven, and it is very commonly so taken. I shall adduce some other instances. 2 Kings. 24:4. "And also for the innocent blood which he shed, which the Lord would not pardon." Jer. 5:1. "Run, through the streets of Jerusalem, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it." Would not the Lord pardon the bloodshed by Manasseh (to them that were involved in the guilt with him) as to the obligation to

eternal wrath? Manasseh himself was pardoned in that sense, and doubtless God passed no such peremptory sentence on the rest that were involved in his guilt. But the context plainly tells us, it is meant of temporary strokes that came upon the Jews by the hands of their enemies. Is that the gospel offer to pardon Jerusalem as to the obligation to eternal wrath, if there were found but a few among them\* that sought the truth? No, sure; though the Lord averts temporal strokes on that account many times. The believing and repenting people of God still under temporary strokes complain, Lam. 3:42. saying, "We have transgressed, and have rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned." But will God hold his people under obligation to eternal wrath, though believing, repenting, confessing, and forsaking? Is. 40:2. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins;" not in a way of vindictive justice, surely, but of temporary strokes from fatherly displeasure. I say then, that in this petition we are taught to pray daily for the pardon of sin, as it respects temporary strokes, and fatherly displeasure; but no otherwise, even no more than that God would justify us, and adopt us, &c. which are done already perfectly. And that this is the formal pardon which we are commanded to seek, is plain from that we are directed to go to a father for it. To conclude: we are taught there to pray for the sense of pardon as touching the obligation to eternal wrath, and for a formal pardon respecting temporary strokes; or, if you please, call it only that formal forgiveness just now mentioned, so that ye include the other in it, as a certain species in the general kind. For the confirmation of the objection, what the practice of the saints is de facto, is not the question; but what it ought be de jure, or in point of right. When the children of God have lost sight of their interest in Christ, what wonder is it that they pray as those who have no part in him? But such a practice is grounded on a mistake, and therefore is not warrantable. But that their prayers are actually sometimes for the removal of temporary anger, when they pray for pardon of sin, though some may understand them otherwise, is evident: As when David, Psal. 25. "Lifting up his soul to God," ver. 1; "trusting in him," ver. 2; "waiting on him all the day," ver. 5; recalling to mind former experiences of God's loving kindness, ver. 6; and conscious to himself of those acts; yet prays, ver. 7. "that the Lord would not remember the sins of his youth:" can it be supposed, that he thought

they were unpardoned as to the guilt of eternal wrath still? Or did the church think so, Psal. 79:8. when she prays, "O remember not against us former sins?" It is plain both aim at the guilt of temporary strokes, that may be brought on after they are, by their pardon, put out of hazard of eternal wrath. I shall conclude this answer with what Mr. Rutherford\* says: "Our deliverance from misery is twofold, as our misery is. First, There is a guilt of sin, or our obligation to eternal wrath; the other misery is the blot of internal guilt of sin. In regard of the former, we are freely and perfectly justified, and pardoned at once from all sins in our person and state. Through the sense of this, and in regard of deliverance from temporal judgments, and doubtings, and fears of eternal wrath, every day, while we seek daily bread, we desire that our sins may be forgiven."

OBJECT. 5. It is possible, that a believing person may fall into such a sin or sins of scandal, for which he may be justly cast out from the visible church; and, upon his neglect or practice of repentance, he stands bound or loosed from his sin, not only in earth, but also in heaven; for so Christ himself delivers it to us in Matth. 18:18. But this cannot possibly be, if all sins be already pardoned in heaven; for then they are always loosed, and never bound in heaven.

ANSWER. That it is possible a believer may fall into such sins, for which he may be justly so treated by the church; and that what the church does that way in that case is ratified in heaven, I doubt not. But that such a person is bound over, upon his contumacy, either in heaven or earth, to eternal wrath, or loosed upon his repentance therefrom, I do utterly refuse: and till that be proven, the argument is of no force. I will not here enter upon an inquiry into the nature of excommunication. But the screwing it up so high in the case supposed, is so far from confirming the hypothesis of adversaries, that it doth exceedingly weaken it: for by this the sin of a believer may be loosed in heaven, and yet bound on the earth, and the church in her duty still as to that person. Put the case, (which may very well supposed), that the excommunicate believer, thinking himself (though wrongously) lesed by the sentence of excommunication, goes over seas into a far country, where there is no church at all, and is there touched with the sense of his sin, renews his faith and repentance, and sues for a pardon, or the removal of the obligation to eternal wrath;

he cannot but have it, even according to the principles of our adversaries: yet still he is bound on earth; and if so, bound in heaven too, as we heard just now: and so his sin is both pardoned and unpardoned in heaven at one and the self-same time—pardoned, because he has repented; unpardoned, because he still lies under the sentence. And if this binding of a believer's sin on earth and in heaven respect the obligation to eternal wrath, it seems to me natively to follow, that a believer in a state of excommunication is in a state of condemnation. For, as one says\* well, "If there were any sin remaining, a man is still in the state of condemnation." How powerful is truth! If we turn over but another leaf before that in which this argument is applauded as Achillean indeed by the learned man, we shall find him telling us, that if God did yet hold you guilty, ye could not say, that ye have peace with God; for God is not at peace with you, nor are ye at peace with him, while enmity continues between you; and so it doth while any sin remains unpardoned. And after he hath told us there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, he adds, "And verily, if all condemnation be removed, all sin is pardoned; if any one sin remained unpardoned, then condemnation would still be in force upon us for that one sin." But if we shall understand this binding and loosing of a believer's sin with respect to temporary anger or temporal judgments, the matter is plain, and the absurdity is evited: for though the man in such a case may, by the renewing of his faith and repentance, recover the sense of his pardon touching the obligation to eternal wrath; yet, till he be loosed on earth, he is not loosed in heaven from the temporary judgment he was laid under; but still he feels the weight of God's fatherly displeasure, having no access to the communion of the church; which is no doubt a very heavy band to a tender heart, and will make such an one go with a bowed down back.

OBJECT. 6. If all sins, past, present, and to come, are forgiven at once, then a justified person, in the midst of the grossest sins, may rejoice in God, as much as when he humbles his soul, repents, and seeks his face.

ANSWER. This objection is justly raised against Antinomians, who deny a believer's liableness, either to eternal wrath or temporary strokes for sin. But it can, with no colour or shadow of reason, be brought against us, who are taught, that the frowns of our dearest Father are bitter as death.

See more above.

OBJECT. 7. Forgiveness of sin is a judicial act in God, as the contrary act of condemning is. Now, the judge neither condemns nor forgives offences which are not extant.

ANSWER. This objection is of a piece with the first, and does truly strike at the root of the doctrine of the gospel, and quite overturns the satisfaction of Christ; and is as unadvisedly objected here by the adversaries, as some do object that logical maxim, *Non-entis nulla sunt accidentia*. It is dangerous to endeavour to regulate the procedure of the omniscient judge, according to the order of human policy. It was a judicial act in God, "for sin to condemn sin in the flesh"\* of Christ; but wo to us that live now, if it was only sin that was extant which was thus condemned.

OBJECT. 8. ult. The continual work of Christ in heaven as our intercessor, 1 John 2:1. and the daily suing out of pardon in his name, seems to carry much in it for the acquiring of daily pardon.

ANSWER. It does so for pardon; that is, the taking off of temporary strokes. And that we might be sure of what we sue daily for, he left that comfortable word with his people before he ascended into heaven, "I go to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God." But of this before.

I conclude with that of the Apostle, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

### QUESTION. III



## **WHETHER OR NOT REPENTANCE BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO THE OBTAINING OF THE PARDON OF SIN?**

HAVING, in the former questions, had so frequent occasion to speak of repentance and its relation to the pardon of sin, I shall endeavour to clear what I have hinted at before in this matter. I do not now speak of the repentance that may be found in Cain and Judas, arising merely from the sense of God's wrath, which is called legal repentance; but of the true gospel repentance, which is a saving grace, and acceptable to God. Laying aside the Popish and Arminian necessity of it, and the conditional necessity thereof urged by others; not needing to consider them particularly, seeing a fortiori they will be overturned, if it can be proven, that the pardon of sin is prior to repentance; I shall lay down some concessions touching this matter, then our assertion confirmed with arguments, and objections answered.

CONCESS. 1. Repentance is necessary *necessitate præcepti*. It is a commanded duty, and ought to be preached by the ministers, and practised both by them and hearers of the gospel. And whoso make no conscience thereof, plainly appear to me to know neither Moses nor Christ, law nor gospel.

CONCESS. 2. It is necessary also *necessitate medii*. It is a holy mean appointed of God, or a means necessary to be gone through in order to the attaining of eternal life.

CONCESS. 3. Faith and repentance, as they are ordinarily linked together in preaching, so they cannot be separated in practice. And though we may, and must distinguish them, yet they must not be divided. And whatsoever precedency is here, it is rather in order of nature, than order of time. The graces of the Spirit being given together and at once, yet much depends on the distinct uptaking of the native order of those graces.

CONCESS. 4. As pardon denotes a relation to temporal strokes, as hath been above explained, repentance is a necessary mean in order to the obtaining of it; that is, the removal of temporal strokes. The reason of this is obvious: for the Lord's design in inflicting such strokes, is the believer's

repentance, humiliation, and amendment, &c. So that when the Lord hath inflicted temporary strokes on a believer for his sins, they are not taken away till he repent and amend, and so answer the design of God in inflicting them.\* It is true, they may be changed as to the species of them; and when one sort prevails not, the Lord brings on another. But still there is a continuance of them till they prove effectual. I do not say, that presently the sin is pardoned, or the stroke removed upon repentance. Scripture and experience tell us the contrary. David, though repenting, yet lies under the effects of God's fatherly displeasure; it is a while ere his broken bones be cured. The Lord will not, upon every repentance of a sinner, pass by the ordinary course of nature. Men may be cast into diseases for their sins, and repent while God's hand is upon them, and may recover, but by degrees. Besides, some temporary strokes of God upon believers, are of that nature that they cannot be taken off without a miracle; as the death of David's child, &c. And there is great reason for this: for God, in inflicting of temporary strokes on believers, has other designs besides that of the amendment of the party; as the vindication of his own honour, that others may fear, and the like.

CONCESS. 5. Repentance also is necessary in order to the attaining of the sense of the pardon of sin, as it relates to eternal wrath; as the tree must be known by its fruits. Repentance is a fruit of faith; and where there is no repentance, it cannot be supposed that assurance can be had. Yet this concession I understand so as, that although a clear discerning of repentance in a believer is necessary unto a firm assurance which fully quiets the heart, yet the believer may, without that, attain unto such an assurance, as is that of an adherence unto the truth of that proposition, "My sins are pardoned;" of which perhaps we may hear more afterwards. These things being yielded,

I assert, with Rutherford,\* That in regard of our obligation to eternal wrath, and all the punishments of sin according to the order of justice by the law of God, faith in Christ is the only means and way to get out of our bondage and misery. And I wish this way of speaking of faith as a mean were more generally received. If it were so, it might be of good use to bury the debates about the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and the instrumentality of faith in our justification, and might tend to give us

distinct uptakings of the true nature of the second covenant. "I had rather," says Durham, "call it [faith,] the mean by which it, [Christ's righteousness,] is apprehended." So then repentance is not required as a mean in order to the obtaining of the pardon of sin, touching the obligation to eternal wrath. In a word, gospel repentance doth not go before, but comes after remission of sin, in the order of nature.

ARG. I. The first and immediate effect of saving faith, is union with the Lord Jesus Christ: for the formal act of faith as justifying, is the receiving of Christ, by which the soul is joined unto him. The union betwixt Christ and believers may be considered, as with respect to us, actively and passively; as we are said to join ourselves, and to be joined to the Lord: in respect of the latter, the Spirit, on God's part, apprehending us; and in respect of the former, faith on our part apprehending him, makes up the blessed union, as the immediate result thereof. Moreover, it is evident we can have no saving benefit from Christ by faith, without communion with him; which communion supposeth, and is grounded upon union with him. So Parson,\* speaking of the effects of faith, tells us, that first there is union with Christ. "What can," says he, "more necessarily and immediately follow upon the offer, on God's part, in the gospel, of Christ to be ours, and our receiving him by faith, than union to his person? This I take to be the fruit of the first consummate vital act of the quickened soul, and then is the marriage-knot tied." Now, if union with Christ be the immediate effect of faith, repentance must either go before faith, or it must come after remission of sins. The former cannot be said, seeing the repentance in question is pleasing to God; but "without faith it is impossible to please God." The Lord himself tells us, that without him we can do nothing: *choris emu; extra me*, says Grotius; *seorsim a me*, says Beza. Now, we are still without Christ, till by faith we be united to him, Eph. 3:17. Wherefore true repentance cannot go before faith. It remains then, that it comes after remission of sin. For how can it be conceived, that the soul is united to Christ, but that sin is also immediately pardoned? Seeing by virtue of this union the soul hath a perfect righteousness to present unto God, it cannot but *eo ipso* be justified and pardoned. If anything shall be supposed to intervene betwixt union with Christ and justification, we shall have a man righteous and unrighteous, condemned and not condemned at once; condemned, because, ex

hypothesi, he is not justified, nor his sins pardoned; not condemned, because he is "in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8:1.

ARGUMENT II. We may clearly perceive this doctrine from the parable of the two debtors, Luke 7 where the conclusion of the whole is in ver. 47. "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but," &c. The occasion of this parable is told us, vers: 37, 38, 39. A woman who was a sinner comes to Christ, washes his feet with tears, wipes them with her hair, kisseth his feet, &c. The Pharisee having known what a profane wretch this woman was some time, but being ignorant of the change wrought on her, and the favour she had obtained with God, thinks with himself, that Christ cannot be a Prophet, in regard he admitted such a profane person to treat him so; which he supposeth he would not have done, had he known what sort of a woman she was. The scope of the parable is, to convince the Pharisee, that this woman was not such a one as he took her to be; but that she was a pardoned sinner, and one who, notwithstanding her former course of life, had now obtained favour with God; and therefore there was no ground for the Pharisee's inference, that Christ was not a Prophet, and he was mistaken in thinking Christ knew not what she was. To prove that this woman was such a one as is said, he makes use of the parable of two debtors; the one whereof owed five hundred, the other fifty pence, both to the same creditor; and both are forgiven; then proposes the question, "Which of the two will love most?" Simon answers, "He to whom most is forgiven." Wherefore the conclusion of the point is, That seeing those love most to whom most is forgiven, and it is evident this woman loves most, which is manifest by those her expressions of love, and her tears, most is forgiven to her, she is a pardoned sinner. And thus our divines against the Papists unanimously understand this love as the effect or consequent of her forgiveness. See Calvin,\* instead of all, handling this place at large against the patrons of the merit of works. Hence I argue thus: Our love to God follows upon, and is a fruit of remission of sin; but our repentance proceeds from love to God, and so in order of nature is posterior thereto: Ergo, Repentance follows remission of sin. Both the premises are evident from this parable, especially the proposition. To confirm the assumption, we are told, 1 John 4:19. "We loved him, because he first loved us." God's love to us is always antecedent to ours towards him. Now, these presuppose

remission: for how can God delight in those whom his law condemns? He hates those whose sins he hath not pardoned, as we heard before: or how can we love God while he is our enemy, which he is still so long as our sins are not pardoned? This is plainly taught us, Hos. 14:4. "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." Upon which Zanchius thus comments: "He says not, in the first place, I will love them, then I will heal their rebellions; but first I will heal; then, I will love." He teacheth then, that God loves none with that love whereof we speak, but after the forgiveness of their sins through Christ; and that those whose sins are not pardoned, are hated of God. For there can be no love, says Hemmingius, no obedience, except mercy and reconciliation, for the Mediator's sake, be first apprehended. We heard before Bayn telling us there can none love God, but those that are first loved of him, and have their sins covered with him.

A godly and learned divine hath an exception here; which is this. Repentance may be considered as it doth not only follow pardon, but also the intimation thereof; so it is a melting of heart, and a self-loathing that floweth from felt love. This is the melting of heart spoken of in that woman. But repentance, as it is a work of sanctifying grace, arising from the sense of bypast sin, and hope of future mercy, goeth along with faith, for the attaining of the hoped-for remission.

Contra. 1. That it is granted, this woman's repentance followed her pardon, is well; but that it followed the intimation thereof, is not proven; yea the contrary seems pretty clear, if we consult the place: for after she had expressed her penitency, as the Evangelist tells us, her pardon is intimated, ver. 48. "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven:" and adds, ver. ult, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace;" which is a manifest check to her doubts and fears, creates a calm in her troubled soul; and tells us plainly, that she came to him in trouble, fear, and anxiety. So far was she from the intimation of pardon. And no wonder it was so; for it is but the Lord's ordinary way to use a hard wedge for knotty timber. She was a sinner, a harlot, says Piscator, and, it seems, but very lately converted; they who knew her before, not having as yet discerned the change. If it be said, that intimation was made, not so much for her who had the sense of pardon before, as for those who sat at meat with

Christ; the contrary of that appears, in that the same was convincingly concluded as to them in the preceding verse. As for what is said of her repentance flowing from felt love, it is true in some sense. For God's love may be felt two ways; first, materially and objectively; secondly, formally or subjectively. The first way no doubt she felt it; for God's pardoning love was the effectual cause of her love to God, and repentance in her heart, according to that, "With loving-kindness have I drawn thee:"\* for God's love worketh its like in our souls, independently on our knowledge thereof; as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, though we know not whence it cometh, nor whether it goeth. Did not our hearts burn within us, (say the disciples), while he talked with us, &c.? and yet they knew not till afterwards who it was that spoke to them: so might she feel God's love, yet not formally and subjectively, as is clear from the necessity of the intimation spoken of before; for had she known that indeed, the power whereof she felt, it would have created peace, and quelled the storm of conscience in her.

2. That there is another kind of repentance, than this of that woman's, which goes along with faith for the attaining of remission, I must needs refuse till it be proven. I confess I can see no such repentance in the Scripture as is her described. The repentance we now treat of, respects the soul's union with Christ, at the first conversion of the soul to God; and so the worthy author tells us in these words: "We say, that repentance understood in the last sense, is simply necessary for the obtaining of the pardon of sin; so that without it no unreconciled sinner can expect peace with God." And yet this repentance is said to be a work of sanctifying grace. Now, that a work of sanctifying grace should, in order of nature, go before the pardon of sin, I think will be hard to reconcile to that which is generally the doctrine of orthodox divines, that justification goes before sanctification;\* that the state of the soul must first be changed, and the tree be first made good, before it can bring forth good fruit, or a work of sanctifying grace; or that our persons must be first accepted, ere our works can be acceptable. But sure it is, while sin is unpardoned our persons are not accepted.

ARGUMENT III. Hence then it further appears, that true repentance follows the pardon of sin, and therefore cannot be a mean to attain it. For

if good works do not go before, but follow our justification, as is generally maintained by Protestant divines, with whom you will seldom miss, on that head, the famous saying of Augustine, *Bona opera non præcedunt justificandum, sed sequuntur justificatum*; repentance must needs follow the pardon of sin, or it must be denied to be a good work; the contrary whereof we have heard, in that it is said to be a work of sanctifying grace: and it surely implies good works, if it be such as our Catechism, according to the Scripture, describes it, viz. "a turning from sin unto God," &c. We cannot but take notice how much Socinus and his fellows labour for the precedency of repentance to the remission of sin, *hoc velut et magno mercentur*. But repentance and conversion (says Socinus) go before the blotting out of sin, Acts 3:19. For justification (says Sohlichtingius) neither begins without faith and repentance, nor does it last without the fruits and effects of faith and repentance. I know, that the learned men who plead for repentance as necessary to the attaining of the pardon of sin, do with their souls abhor Socinus' design therein; but why should we yield anything to the common enemy without necessity? In his treatise of justification, he lays hold on this their doctrine to inveigle them in a contradiction: "There is another extreme (says he\*) received commonly, not without the great undoing of souls, that is, that our good works do nothing at all pertain to our justification, but as they are effects of the same. (Here is the venom of the Anti-Socinian doctrine). Whence it follows, that seeing it is certain we are justified by faith, it must needs come to pass, that they be of opinion, that a man is justified even before he doth any good, though afterwards he shall do. Which is contrary to the whole Scripture; which, to pass other things, doth plainly testify, that the remission of our sins doth not consist nor exist without repentance; and seeing it is most true, and they themselves acknowledge that, and confess that our justification is no other indeed than remission of our sins," &c. Hoornbeek answers to this: "We confess, says he, that our good works pertain not to justification antecedently and causally, but are the effects of justification itself." This is the very thing we plead. But as for that which the same learned man adds in answer to that of Socinus, viz. That repentance is required in the subject, which may be partaker of remission, but is not therefore requisite to God's justifying as it denotes his action absolving a man; but well indeed as it denotes its termination, and the sense of it passively in the faithful soul; it does indeed confirm

me in the doctrine I plead for, while I see the miserable strait those are brought into by this objection, who hold the precedency of repentance to the remission of sin. For I think it is clear, Socinus is not speaking of justification as it is an action of God precisely, not terminated upon the creature; for thus justification goes before faith as well as repentance, it being in that sense from eternity; nor yet is he speaking of the sense of it in the soul; but of justification, properly so called, terminated on the creature. And unless we make the termination of justification in the faithful soul, and the sense of it, all one, I confess I cannot divine what is the difference betwixt justification as it denotes an action of God absolving a man, and as it denotes the termination of it on the soul; only they are different ways of conceiving one and the same thing even as calefaction, as it is referred to the fire, is termed an action, and as referred to the water, is called passion. For an action of God absolving a man, (unless you understand it of the decree of absolution, which is not in question), is a transient act; and it will be very hard to shew a difference betwixt a transient act, and an act terminated on an extrinsic object. I like much better what that learned author delivers afterwards. "So justification (says he) is considered either on God's part, or on our part, terminated in us, and its subject. The first is in the eternal decree of God destined for us; in the promises from the first age of the world, and in the gospel, offered; by Christ, merited; by his resurrection, confirmed and ratified; hitherto actively. But it is considered passively, as applied to and terminated on the soul, by faith. And this way the grace of remission is more clearly seen, as it comes to men, not only having merited nothing of good, but yet being (consistentibus) in guilt and wickedness: In the meantime, with the grace of justification, endued also with that of sanctification, whereby, for the time to come, they from the heart do live, not unto wickedness, but unto God and Christ." This doth indeed dash Socinus' doctrine in the head and heart. The Assembly, in their Larger Catechism,\* tells us, that in sanctification the seeds of repentance unto life are put into the heart. Whereby it is manifest, that repentance doth not go before justification, and consequently that it cannot be a mean to attain the pardon of sin.

If any shall say, that repentance is properly and solely an evangelic work, and therefore is not to be put in the same class with other works following



justification, and commanded by the law: I answer, That according to the doctrine of the gospel, it is plain, that faith as it receives Christ, is opposed, in the matter of justification, to all works whatsoever: and so does not only exclude repentance, but itself as a work, as Protestant divines teach against the patrons of the righteousness of works. But this is not to be yielded, that repentance is in such sort an evangelic work, as if it were not at all commanded by the law; for the law of the Lord is perfect, and contains the whole duty of man. It is true as was said above, the law knows no place for repentance, how it may be accepted as the gospel doth; it promiseth no strength wherewith it may be performed, as the gospel does. But as, supposing the revelation of Christ, and the offer of him in the gospel, the law obligeth us to believe; so supposing the rational creature to have sinned, the law obligeth him to turn from sin unto God, that is, to repent; otherwise the impenitency of the devils were no sin; which I think none will adventure to say. So then it is true, that expressly and absolutely the law does not call for repentance, yet virtually and hypothetically it doth. But why are any works called evangelic, but because they are done by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ manifested in the gospel, and under the influence of the covenant of grace? Whereas legal works are done by the power of nature, and under the influence of the covenant of works; and in this sense any work of sanctifying grace is as much an evangelic work, as repentance is. But, upon the whole, let the fore-mentioned author, in his confutation of Socinianism,\* answer for me. "Now, (says he), in that he (viz. Socinus) placeth evangelic works before justification, in that he is contrary to Scripture and reason; to the scripture, Rom. 4:5. and 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 11:6. That opinion is contrary to reason; because, seeing faith is the beginning of all good works, without which no man can please God, or perform any thing acceptable to him, and by it as soon as it is present, we are justified, good works cannot go before justification, as they cannot go before faith, but only follow." The like he hath again elsewhere, telling us, that God absolves men *choris ergon*, without works, without previous piety. It ought not to be said, that, by this doctrine, faith itself as an evangelic work is to be cast behind justification likewise; for faith, being the principle of all, must needs be excepted, in regard it is that which unites the soul to Christ. The forecited author tells us how we are to understand this. "A man (says he) is justified before he hath done any good, that is,

good following on faith; who when he believes is justified." But the description formerly given of an evangelic work, leaves no room at all for this exception; and truly the name of a work should be far from the matter of our justification before God. Though it should be said, that repentance is not considered here as a work, but as a quality, it will not take off the force of the argument, which concludes against the very being of repentance before pardon, in order of nature at least.

ARGUMENT IV. If we consider the promises of repentance in the covenant, we shall find they come in the same order that we plead for. Ezek. 36. After the Lord had told them of remission of sin, ver. 25. "From all your idols will I cleanse you;" he promiseth repentance, ver. 31. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways," &c. So Ezek. 16:60, 61, 62, 63. "I will remember my covenant with thee—Then thou shalt remember thy ways—And I will establish my covenant with thee, that thou mayest remember, and be confounded," &c. Hos. 14:4. "I will heal their backsliding." Ver. 8. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" Is. 44:22. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." This is the native order of these things; and why should we strive to disturb and confound the same? for this doctrine of the precedency of repentance to pardon calls for the quite contrary order. If it be said, these promises respect a repentance they should be stirred up to after their pardon; but that does not hinder but that there may be a sort of repentance going before pardon: I answer, (besides what is already said on this head), That there is a sort of legal repentance that goes before pardon, I do not deny, which belongs to conviction, and may be in Judas and Cain, and was in those elect ones, Acts 2:37. when they were "pricked at the heart;" whom yet the Apostle calls to true repentance, ver. 38. And this I judge to be necessary by God's appointment, at least in the ordinary way, in the course of God's ordinary dispensation: those persons being first killed by the law whom he minds to revive by the gospel. But this goes before faith; and cannot, but in a very large sense, be reckoned a mean in order to the attaining of remission of sins; seeing it is *toto genere* different from any special and saving work of the Spirit. But the question is of gospel repentance which is theologically good: and if there be any such different from that which is here promised, I would know where it is promised; for

no other appears in those places, but what follows pardon. If it be not promised at all, it is not at all, otherwise the covenant is defective: which is absurd. If you say, it is included in the new heart; I shall on the same grounds infer the necessity of all the graces of the Spirit, as well as of repentance, patience, chastity, &c.; which no man holding justification by faith alone, ever said were necessary in order to the attaining of pardon. But let it be so; the new state of cleanness by way of pardon is set before; "I will cleanse you;" also, "I will give you a new heart." But we stand not on the order of words. The apostle plainly tells us, that the ungodly are the objects of justification, Rom. 4:5. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, &c. Is the repenting sinner the man who worketh not? is he the ungodly whom God justifieth? "Who can think (says Hoornbeek)\* that the ungodly is said by Paul to be justified, because after justification he remains ungodly, and not because he had been ungodly; and in the very act of justification, he could no otherwise be considered than in himself ungodly? though with his justification he be endued with the grace of God, whereby he shall afterwards live godly: but this neither before nor in justification; for God absolves a man even *choris ergon*, without previous piety."

ARGUMENT. V. Though the patrons of the doctrine of the necessity of repentance in order to the obtaining of the pardon of sin, do not aim at any encroachment on the doctrine of free pardon; yet, with all deference to those learned men, I conceive, that such doctrine is injurious to the grace of God, and doth much darken the free pardon offered in the gospel, in regard the pardon is promised immediately to those that believe,\* Acts 10:43. "Through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." But they require, that believers bring something with them, if they would obtain it, even that they bring repentance along with them. I think Dr. Preston says well, when he tells us, "It is a fault to think God's pardons are not free, and that you must bring something in your hand. The very end (says he) of thy going to Christ, is to get thy hardness of heart and deadness of spirit removed, to be healed and enlivened." And it is truly strange to think from what airt repentance should come to people, while as yet their sins are unpardoned, and God is their enemy. What need is their of those ways? Why go we not by faith to a reconciled God, to get repentance; but must

seek repentance wherewith we may go to an unreconciled God, who is a consuming fire? If I mistake not, that is not the way of the gospel. It is a reasonable admonition that one gives us to this purpose, "When you go to mourn for sin, begin aloft with Christ; and do not always think to begin below with sin, and so to come up to Christ; but begin aloft with Christ, and fall down upon your sin." "Papists (says Dr. Preston) tell of escaping damnation, and of getting into heaven. But Scripture gives other motives (to good works). Thou art in Christ, and Christ is thine; consider what he hath done for thee, what thou hast by him, what thou hadst been without him, and thus stir up thyself to do for him what he requireth." Let them that will, repent that Christ may do for them; I shall desire always to believe what Christ hath done for me, that I may repent; not doubting but that the being instructed therein is the plain way to smiting on the thigh, and saying, What have I done? So says a godly writer, "First of all, God's favour is apprehended, and remission of sin believed; then upon that cometh alteration of life and conversation." Upon the whole' we may see that the gospel teaches us to come empty-handed to the market of free grace, for remission of sin and God's favour. But he comes not empty, who brings repentance along with him. If any shall say, that if we screw up matters so high in this point, we must cast faith as well as repentance, in the matter of attaining pardon; for that is still something we bring with us. I shall answer; For the safety of God's grace, let the work faith, the inherent quality faith, go, and be made to stand aback, while the sinner stands before God's tribunal to be justified; that the empty-handed, taking faith, may alone have place. Hath not the Lord made it to be only of faith, that it might be of grace, while faith comes with an empty hand, and receives all? There is a vast difference betwixt faith and repentance in this matter, even as much as betwixt giving and receiving: for there is no grace of the Spirit that hath more of the nature of giving than repentance, in so far as it is a turning of the whole man from sin unto God; and upon that head it ought to be banished far from the soul's justification, and to have no part nor lot in the matter of attaining free pardon. And seeing this doctrine doth so well agree with the natural religion that is in all men, whereby they, when they come to God to obtain a favour, would always be sure of some qualification in themselves fitting them for the receipt of it; let us take heed, that it turn not the covenant of grace into a bastard covenant of works. The covenant of works says, Do this; the

covenant of grace says so too. Where is the difference then? Why, the covenant of works says, Do this, and thou shalt live, viz. in God's favour, wherein life lies.\* But the covenant of grace saith, Live thou, and do this. Now, this doctrine says, Repent, and thy sins shall be pardoned; which is indeed, Do this, and thou shalt live. It requires not perfect obedience indeed; but if we resolve it, we find it to be this, Turn from sin sincerely unto God, though thou caust not perfectly, and thou shalt live in God's favour. Now, we know magis et minus non variant speciem. I have almost lost sight of faith its relation to the pardon of sin: and no great wonder; seeing another thing is set betwixt them, which seems to take the right hand of faith; for they will not say repentance goes before faith, and yet they will not allow it to come after remission of sin. So then it must go betwixt them, and therefore is the nearest mean: and whichsoever of two means be in themselves the more noble, yet, in relation to the common end, it is highly reasonable to prefer the immediate and nearest mean to the mediate and remote; whereby it comes to pass, that, in the matter of the pardon of sin, repentance most be the more noble mean. Again, I say, I believe and desire to go immediately to Christ for pardon: but dost thou repent of thy sins, thy faith cannot obtain pardon without repentance? Well then, still repentance is preferable to faith here: for without it faith can do nothing; but with it, it proves effectual; now, Propter quod unumquodque est tale, illud ipsum est magis tale. But this I am confident is not the doctrine of the gospel. Let us take a watchword from holy and learned Rutherford: "We would beware (says he) of Mr. Baxter's\* order of setting repentance and works of new obedience before justification; which is indeed a new covenant of works."

ARGUMENT VI. ult. If repentance be a mean necessary in order to the obtaining of pardon, then unless a man be assured of the truth and reality of his repentance, he cannot without sin embrace the offered pardon; the very embracing of it is a sin unto him; which is very absurd. I prove the connection: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin: that is, says acute Beza, all that is done in doubt of conscience, whether it please God or not, and so consequently whether God commanded it or not, is but sin. And the context makes it plain, that the apostle means it of the faith of God's command. Now, how can that be of faith, and how can that be but sin, when the person doubts of God's command obliging him in particular to

believe and lay hold upon the offered pardon? He is persuaded, that he dare not embrace the pardon or believe it, unless he be a true penitent; for God offers it to none immediately, but to true penitents, ex hypothesi; and yet no wonder that he very much doubts whether he be such a one or not, and is most ready to conclude he is not. So that till he be persuaded of the truth of his repentance, he cannot in faith embrace the offered pardon. When God makes his offers of pardon only to such as are so and so qualified, how can he be excused from presumption that adventures on the embracing of them, not discerning himself to be thus qualified? When the Lord covers his table in the gospel, but invites none but such as are qualified with true repentance, he that doubteth, is damned if he eat. But the gospel requires no such thing, as that a man must know his repentance to be true before he embrace the offered pardon; but simply calls all that will come, to come and take of the water of life freely. We may easily perceive how injurious this is to souls under exercise, how it natively tends to keep them long in the place of the breaking forth of children. For although the person apprehends God's anger gone out against him, and hears of the free pardon offered in the gospel; yet still it appears to him forbidden fruit, unless he be conscious to himself of the truth of his repentance; seeing true repentance is a mean absolutely necessary in order to the obtaining of the pardon of sin. And while they cannot see the truth of their repentance, the offers of the gospel and promises of pardon, while they hear them, do but torment them the more, while they persuade themselves, that none but true penitents can have access unto them; which ere they can lay hold on, they must redd the marches betwixt legal and gospel repentance, and must have it made out to their consciences, that their repentance hath all the discriminating characters that distinguish it from the repentance of Judas, and from that sorrow for sin which proceeds merely from the force of an enlightened conscience. And seeing true repentance proceeds from love to God, as we heard before, they must love God, not only while they apprehend him their enemy, but even while he is their enemy in very deed; being a judge to them, under whose condemnatory sentence they lie, their sins being unpardoned. Whatever the soul in this case actually does, it is plain from what is said, that, acting according to this principle, they are obliged to suspend the embracing of pardon till they know they repent. But I suppose, that when a sinner is sufficiently made to see his absolute need

of Christ, and of gospel grace, he does then embrace Christ by faith, which makes up a happy union betwixt Christ and him; whereupon follows the absolvitory sentence; and that independently on his consciousness either of his own acts towards God, or of God's actions towards him. In the meantime, this false persuasion, while stuck to, mars their peace and comfort. The plain gospel way, so far as I understand it, is, That a soul being by the law, brought to a sense of the absolute and indispensable need of Christ, (for till then a soul will never be content with the gospel way of salvation,) hath an offer of Christ, and of the pardon of sin freely made unto it, without any respect to any inherent qualification; and thereupon cordially takes both according to the offer, embraceth Christ and his pardoning grace; or consents to take Christ, by which he becomes his: whereupon he is immediately justified and pardoned, without any more ado: and hence' natively flows true repentance; which being discerned by them, confirms to them the pardon of sin more and more. I said more and more; in regard that this truth we now plead for being believed, supposing the soul conscious of its own act of reception, it is even then, at the soul's first embracing of Christ, sufficient in suo genere to assure him of the pardon of his sins. And no farther goes the consciousness of true repentance: for, in respect of both, the supervenient testimony of the Spirit is necessary to remove all doubts, and to set the soul in perfect peace. For let the medium be, either the receiving of Christ and the pardon offered, or repentance, the illustration of both premises and conclusion by the Spirit is necessary, in order to the full quiet of the heart. And I think I may add, that faith is a more firm and steady ground of assurance of the pardon of sin, quad nos, than repentance; in regard it is easier known. And hence it is, that divines use to give advice to Christians perplexed with doubts and fears as to their state, when they can discern no evidences of grace in themselves, to lay by the inquiry, and, as if they had never believed in Christ, repented of their sins, &c.\* to exercise a direct act of accepting of Christ offered in the gospel, and then to reflect on that act in order to their quietness. If any shall endeavour to retort this argument, and say, that if it hold, then as to faith, which is a necessary mean to pardon, we must in like manner be assured of the reality thereof, or it is sin for us to embrace the pardon: I answer, It follows by no means. There are two ways of embracing a pardon. First, A pardon may be embraced in the way of presumption;

which overleaps Christ himself, and grasps at his benefits, and particularly remission of sin. This no doubt is a sin; for God offers no pardon in that way. Secondly, A pardon is embraced by faith; which receives Christ, and in him and with him the pardon of sin. This cannot be sin, whether we be conscious of the reality and uprightness of our act or not; though it is not so in regard of repentance. The reason is, There is a vast difference betwixt faith and repentance in this matter. The last of these is required as a qualification in the party distinct from the receiving of the pardon; or it is required as a mids, through which a sould must go before it can win at the pardon: and therefore, if faith should lay hold on pardon, not knowing it hath come by this mids quad nos, we come not at it in God's way; and consequently it is sin to embrace it so, viz. not having known, antecedently to our taking it, that we do repent. But faith is not a qualification previously required to the embracing of the pardon; but, as it is considered here, is the very act of receiving it, Acts 26:18, "That they may receive forgiveness of sins." Wherefore the previous knowledge thereof in us cannot be necessary in order to the embracing of the pardon; unless you say, that a man must know he receives forgiveness before he receive it; which is absurd. To conclude, suppose, that the way to deal with soul in order to their salvation, is, to labour by all means to conclude them under the law; that is, to hold out unto them their miserable state by nature, so as they may clearly see themselves lying under the curse, no ways able to help themselves; whence they shall feel an absolute need of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, when they are brought that length by the blessing of God, to propose unto them Christ with his free pardon: which he is to be commanded in God's name to accept, without any more ado about any thing to qualify him for a pardon. "Wherefore," says Luther,\* "when I see a man sufficiently broken, to be oppressed with the law, terrified with sin, and to thirst after comfort; then is it time that I remove out of his sight the law and active righteousness, and propose, by the gospel, passive righteousness; which, Moses with his law being excluded, does exhibit the promise concerning Christ, who came for the afflicted and sinners."

OBJECT. 1. The command of repentance is prefixed to the obtaining of pardon, and preventing of wrath, and that by way of certification, that if it be not, remission is not to be expected, Acts 3:19. "Repent, that your sins



may be blotted out;" which doth imply, that without this the blotting out of sin is not to be expected. See also Acts 2:38. and 8:22.

ANSWER. How little weight is to be laid upon the prefixing of the command to the obtaining of pardon, will appear in the examination of the places of Scripture adduced. As for that of preventing wrath, I cheerfully yield, we cannot be saved unless we repent and obey, as we cannot be pardoned unless we believe. For the better understanding of the Scriptures alleged, I am content to borrow light from the learned man that hath this objection; who, while he defends faith alone to be the condition of the covenant of grace, proposeth an objection against himself, viz. As these places (which he had adduced for confirmation of that assertion, that faith alone is the condition of the covenant) do propose faith, so other places do propose repentance, as Acts 2:38. &c. He answers to this, That if that objection hold, repentance and works would be equalled with it. "We therefore" says he, "take it thus: Where repentance is proposed, there the whole way of turning to God more generally is proposed." And herein he follows Calvin, who speaks thus: "And truly I am not ignorant, that under the name of repentance, is comprehended, the whole turning to God, whereof faith is not the least part." I presume, that in these places alleged, faith is not once named, but repentance is proposed: Ergo, The whole way of turning to God more generally is proposed. And if the prefixing thereof to the promise of pardon do sufficiently evince, that it is previously required to forgiveness, then faith, repentance, and works are in the same balance, or repentance and works are equalled with faith: for who can deny, that new obedience is comprehended under the whole turning unto God? So Hemmingius citing that of Jeremiah,\* "Let every man return from his evil ways, and I will forgive your iniquity and your sins," tells us, "That here is a commandment, and a promise. The commandment is, that the ungodly do return: the promise is of reconciliation. Hereupon it is gathered, that repentance is a conversion of man unto God; in the which conversion he doth depart from evil, believe the promise, and studieth to lead a new life according to the will of God." Now, unless that our whole turning to God more generally be a mean of remission of sin, which I hope will not be said by the objector, these Scriptures alleged prove nothing to the purpose. But let us take a particular view of them. As to that Acts 3:19.

"Repent,—that your sins may be blotted out;" though I should grant, that the repentance here exhorted to is repentance strictly so called, and that God offers pardon here, and requires repentance; it will not therefore follow, that it is required antecedently to the obtaining of pardon. "Wherefore, when God offereth forgiveness of sins," says Calvin, "he likewise useth to require repentance on our part; secretly declaring, that his mercy ought to be to men a cause of their repentance. Again, "repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," Acts 3:19. where yet it is to be noted, that this condition is not so annexed, as though our repentance were a foundation to deserve pardon; but rather (because the Lord hath determined to have mercy upon men, to this end that they should repent) he teacheth men whether they shall travail if they will obtain grace." But indeed I very much doubt, if the repentance here spoken of, be meant, either in whole or in part, of true gospel repentance; in regard we find conversion is also exhorted unto in the very next word, which I suppose may take in true repentance. Wherefore I rather incline to expound it simply of a change of the mind from one opinion to another, from worse to better. It is well known, that the people of the Jews had very unsound notions concerning their Messiah, his nature and offices; they looked for one who should make a great figure in the world, restore the kingdom to Israel, and deliver them from the Roman yoke. This prejudicated opinion remaining with them, the doctrine of the gospel could have no access unto their hearts: for the preaching of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block; they expected far other things of their Messiah than that he should be crucified, &c. The apostle therefore calls them to lay aside this prejudice, and be converted. This very well agrees with the context: for Peter having told them how they had crucified him whom God now had glorified, he shews them, how it came to pass they did so, ver. 17; Through ignorance ye did it. For (as Paul says) had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Wherefore, ver. 18. he removes their mistake, telling them, that, by the writings of the prophets, the Messiah was to suffer the very things that they had inflicted on Jesus of Nazareth. Whence he brings in that exhortation, ver. 19. Repent therefore, &c. "Then be no more under the power of that dangerous mistake, but change your mind, and turn to the Lord," &c. But understand repentance here what way you please, this Scripture makes nothing for what it is alleged: for it is evident that the

blotting out of sin here respecteth, not the time of repentance, but the time of refreshment. Wherefore, as Mr. Rutherford answers, "The words should bear, that sins were not pardoned until the time of refreshment,\* that is, till the day of eternal happiness, and rest from our labours of this life; in which day sins are only blotted out declaratively, saith Diodati." The world to come, says Tainovius, whose beginning is at the last judgment, is called by Luke very elegantly, as his manner is, Anapsuxis, because it denotes refreshment, which is done, and comes to them who are weakened by heat, through refrigeration; as ye may see in some who are in a swoon, when ye pour cold water on them. So Calvin, Beza, Piscator, and Aretius, understand it. Wherefore the remission here spoken of is not the formal forgiveness that is in question; but is an open declaration of the same at the day of judgment. And hereunto the emphasis of the Greek word rendered blotting out doth best agree: for it signifies (says Zanchius) so perfectly to blot out a thing, that there remains behind no vestige of it. As little does that place, Acts 2:38, Repent, and be baptized—for the remission of sins, help their cause: for who sees not, that the command of being baptized is prefixed to the promise, as well as the command to repent? Must it then follow, that baptism is a necessary mean in order to the obtaining of the remission of sin? The argument is of alike force for both. But, moreover, where is there a promise here? Mention is indeed made of remission, but not by way of promise. Nay, there is nothing here of a formal reception of forgiveness. For, as Piscator\* well observes, these words, for the remission of sins, do not depend upon the word repent, but upon that be baptized. And the plain sense of the words is, that they should be baptized in testimony of remission of sin, not to obtain remission of sin through this mean or instrument, because faith alone is the mean or instrument whereby we apprehend remission of sins in the gospel. If you say, Is there no promise of the pardon of sin to be found here? I answer, The formal forgiveness of sin is comprehended in ver. 39. The promise is to you, &c. Now, what promise? the promise of the Spirit, ver. 17. And of salvation, ver. 21. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved first of all; which pre-supposeth faith; for how can they call on him on whom they have not believed? Now, it is plain, that the apostle exhorts them to repent, from this ground, that the promise is to them, as the particle for imports. And though the 39th verse comes last, yet, in order of nature, it

is first, as the premises go before the conclusion. And thus I think, we have the plain meaning of the apostle in these words, q. d.:—"Ye are pricked at the heart; but do not despond, in regard the saving and special gifts of God are in your offer, and promised to you upon your acceptance thereof: therefore do ye wholly turn to God by faith, repentance, and new obedience; and, for your confirmation in the remission of your sins, receive baptism as the seal of the covenant." As to that Acts 8:22. we say, that the command to pray is prefixed to what he says of remission, as well as the command to repent; yet must it not be hence concluded, that prayer must needs go before forgiveness. But here, as before, we say repentance is put for the whole turning to God.

**OBJECTION 2.** The connection betwixt repentance and pardon is peremptorily enforced, Luke 13:2, 3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Prov. 28:13. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy."

**ANSWER.** All this is what we deny not. There is no doubt a connection betwixt repentance and pardon. But the question is rather about the annexing of the one to the other, Whether repentance be annexed to pardon, or pardon to repentance? We say, the former is true, and there is nothing here to prove the contrary. Yea, the first of these Scriptures cited, doth not so much as hold out a connection betwixt repentance and pardon, but only betwixt non-repenting and perishing. And there is a vast difference betwixt these two; for the former cannot be lawfully inferred from the latter; as will appear, if duly considered. Let the argument be this, "Except ye repent, ye shall perish;" Ergo, if ye do repent, ye shall live. The consequent is true; but the consequence is naught.\* It is as that, Our ill works will damn us, Ergo, Our good works will save us; or as if we should say, If ye do not pray to God, ye shall perish, Ergo, If ye do, ye shall live. We see here the consequent is false, and so is the consequence: for *bonum non nisi ex integra causa, malum ex quolibet defectu*. Non-repentance simply, and of itself, is sufficient to make us perish; but who will say, that simple repentance of itself is sufficient to save us, even in the way of means? As to that other Scripture, Prov. 28:13. I say with Mr. Rutherford, that the Holy Ghost there is not upon order, as if penitent confession, forsaking all sin, must go before forgiveness; but the Lord

designs the persons pardoned, that they must be such as forsake their sins. Now, there is great reason for this; because men who hide their sins, and forsake them not, will yet pretend to share of pardon; who therefore have great need to be undeceived. And truly, seeing, as the apostle speaks, "Confession is made with the mouth unto salvation," Rom. 10:10. and, with respect to open and scandalous sins, it must be understood of confession before men; I see not how the necessary precedence of it unto pardon can be avouched: for who will say, that a formal pardon cannot be had, but these things must be before it?

OBJECTION 3. The Scripture grounds the causes of people's ruin on their not repenting, as in Lev. 26. Amos 4. Ezek. 18. Rev. 16 and many such places; where this, They repented not, is given as the cause of God's continued quarrel with them.

ANSWER. If we will understand this according to what was said above, that by repenting in such places where it is simply proposed without faith, is meant the whole turning to God, the argument is of no weight. But it seems here to be urged as taken for repentance strictly so called. And let it be so, the consequence is naught. Every thing that people's ruin is grounded on, the contrary is not therefore a previous mean to pardon; as is evident to any that will consider, Hos. 4. Swearing, lying, &c. are made the grounds of that people's ruin; yet I hope the reverend use of God's name, and speaking truth, must not therefore be reckoned the means of pardon. Many such places might be alleged. But perhaps it will be said, none of these things had been their ruin, if they had repented. But what is that to say, but that none of these things would have been their ruin, if they had turned from them unto God, embracing the contrary virtues? So it is still the same thing as before these contrary virtues are made by this way the means of pardon. But if the argument be good, it is believing that is the mean: for the Scripture expressly tells us, that men are condemned because they have not believed, John 3:18. and Christ calls believing the work of God, John 6:29. and John calls it his command (1 John 3:23.) by way of eminency.

OBJECTION 4. ult. In the promises of the covenant, remission of sin is subjoined to the exercise of repentance, as necessarily antecedent; so that without it there is no access to any promise of pardon. Lev. 26:40, 41, 42.

"If they confess their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant:" which doth pre-suppose confession, and the exercise of repentance, and the humbling of the heart, to go before the application of the covenant. And lest it should be thought a legal covenant, it is expressly said to be the covenant with Abraham, which cannot be denied to be of grace. 1 Kings 8:47. Solomon expressly covenanteth for pardon on these terms; and 2 Chron. 7:13, 14. the Lord doth expressly assent to these articles. It may be confirmed from 1 John 1:9. which supposeth that there is no engagement, to speak so, upon God's faithfulness to pardon any sinner, but him who repenteth.

ANSWER. I have already proven the contrary of this in the fourth argument; having produced several promises where there is no vestige of any such order, but of the contrary. If there be no access to the promise of pardon without repentance, it is we ourselves that bolt the door; and therefore let us blame ourselves, and those who advise us to find any good qualification in ourselves, before we embrace the free pardon. But if God's hand be at the work, the pardon shall find access to us, and our hearts shall be opened to receive it; and being received, it shall, by its supernatural efficacy, melt and thaw the heart into true repentance, though we know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes; but are busy in preparing the room for it, while we neglect to open the door to let it in. As for the covenant itself, it is our consent that brings us within the bond of it. The Lord offers to be our God in Christ; we by faith consent to take him so. Call it the condition, mids, or what you please; I hope you will not say, I dare not give this consent until I repent; for this consenting or believing is my necessary and indispensable duty, whatever state I be in. But you will say, I dare not embrace the pardon till I repent. If you mean de facto, it is my weakness; if de jure, how strange is this? I may not embrace what is lesser; and yet may, and must what is infinitely greater and better; for God himself is better than ten thousand pardons. But I am persuaded, that when I find my soul content to take God in Christ to be my God, and do actually consent to that gracious offer, that the promise of pardon is absolute to me, Ezek. 36:25: for eo ipso that God is my God, his free pardon is mine, and it can be no presumption in me to embrace what is mine own. God holds it forth to me in the covenant, I by faith lay hold on it; there is nothing here that intervenes, so that it is still absolute;

and if absolute, how can it be said there is no access to it without repentance? As for these Scriptures, Lev. 26:40. &c.; 1 Kings 8:47; 2 Chron. 7:13; I grant they pre-suppose repentance, &c.; but they touch not the point in hand, in regard they respect the pardon of sin, as it is the removal of temporary strokes, as I have already shown, and will be manifest to such as view the places: for who sees not, that the multitude of those things there required, is very unlike the simplicity of the gospel offer—Believe, and thou shalt be saved? It is clear that the people are considered there in a national capacity, and under national strokes for national sins; for removal, repentance of the same kind is required. And though, in such a general repentance of a people, they that believe are spiritually and theologically serious, and, with a removal of common calamity from off the society whereof they are members, get God's countenance to shine on their souls; yet the generality are never evangelically penitent. But moral seriousness in such a case, according to the Lord's way of dealing with nations, is a mean to get these temporal strokes removed; as may be seen in the case of the Ninevites, and many a time in the case of the Jews. What though this covenant be a covenant of grace? the covenant of grace has undeniably temporary strokes threatened in it; and it is generally allowed, that there is a twofold being in this covenant; the one external, the other internal. The one gives people to share of the outward blessings of the covenant, the other makes them partakers of special and saving blessings. And thus one and the same person may be under the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; in the former, in respect of his soul's state, with God's curse upon him; under the latter, externally partaking of the external privileges, protections, deliverances, &c. given to the visible church. So then we may plainly see what it is for God to remember his covenant. When the captive, broken, and afflicted Israelites confess their sins, humble themselves, &c. God removes the temporary strokes they lie under. And this is applicable to particular persons, in respect of the spiritual and saving federal relation to God; for so it is in the inward and special administration of the covenant: but then it respects such as are justified and sanctified, but none other, as these promises and prayers concern Israel separated from among all other people, 1 Kings 8:53. As to that Scripture, 1 John 1:9. "If we confess," &c. the author himself tells us afterwards, that John is there writing to believers, and puts himself in the

roll. And there is no doubt but it is so: for he writes to his children, and that their joy might be full; and speaks of God as faithful, in respect of his promises to them; and just to forgive, in respect of the merits of Christ imputed to them. And, as Case tells us,\* he asserts the doctrine of actual sin in the justified against the Simonians, Gnostics, and other heretics of that age; of whom he shews, out of Augustine, that they taught, that there was no sin but unbelief; that to the justified all things were clean, however they live; that a just man does not so much as commit a small sin; and upon this they could not but teach, that the justified were not to confess sins. Against these then the apostle sets himself here, and teacheth the justified to confess their sins. Whence it appears, that this doth not at all concern the point in hand; the question being of the means necessary in order to justification, and the pardon of sin at first; betwixt which and the subsequent pardons, I have proven above that there is a vast difference.

## QUESTION. IV

### WHERE HATH SIN ITS LODGING-PLACE IN THE REGENERATE?

"GOD made man upright, but he found out many inventions." He was a glorious creature, as he dropt from the forming finger of God, all whose works are perfect. It was man's glory, that he was created after the image of God. It was God's will he should be created mutably so. Of his mutability there can be no controversy. Sad experience teacheth us, that man is not now perfect; but, on the contrary, a mass of sin, and lump of hell, the noble kind being affected with diabolic contagion, which he voluntarily received. Whereby it comes to pass, that all is infected. The understanding, which formerly was a sun of light in this little world, is not only overclouded, but utterly darkened, as to any saving uptaking of spiritual things. The will, which before was the Lord's deputy-governor there, endued with principles of true loyalty to its Supreme Master, is



now turned traitor, and utterly perverse: having forsaken its allegiance to the great King, gathers in the rents of the crown to itself, and in very deed, with sacrilegious audacity, attempts to occupy the throne of the Highest. call it no more Naomi, but Marah; no more will, but lust; for we have dealt bitterly with ourselves. The affections, formerly subject to right reason, having lost their master, go up and down roving as lawless miscreants; set themselves on lawful objects excessively, and unlawful objects are their desire. Neither conscience nor memory can do their work. And the body with its members is made slave to this unruly beast; which also is made to serve the polluted piece of clay, which wants not a miserable influence on the more noble part of man.

But grace makes a change, and sets right the disjointed members, though not perfectly; for the saint's complete deliverance cometh not till the pins of this tabernacle of the body be loosed. The body of death remains till the death of the body. Then shall they be made perfect in holiness. But now they groan under the burden of indwelling sin, and, with Paul, cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" That sin doth remain in the regenerate, is evident from Scripture and experience, against deluded perfectionists. Where it remains, is the question. The Dominican monks,\* and some others, were of opinion, that though original sin remains after baptism, yet it is only in the inferior part of the soul, as they speak, or in the sensitive part; but not in the mind and will. Some have been of opinion that it remained only in the body, and that it was nothing else but desire of meat, &c. or sensual pleasures. No wonder these things entered into the minds of men, who were left to grow vain in their imaginations, without a due sense of the remaining corruption of nature. But I find some express themselves in this matter to this purpose, viz. That sin which is left in the regenerate, dwelleth in the body properly so called, and is as an enemy beat out of the town or stronghold, and lodging in the outworks, and as it were about the walls; from whence it makes its sallies, and infests the soul. Which I suppose we may soon find contrary to Scripture, reason, and experience.

ARGUMENT I. The Scripture plainly holds forth sin dwelling in the heart: Jer. 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" There is an unfathomable depth of wickedness

therein, which none can search out unto perfection. Our Lord tells us, that the heart is the spring and source of all evil, Mark 7:21, "For from within, out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, &c. So Matth. 12:34, he brings a general reason to prove that the Pharisees being evil could not speak good things: "For" says he, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." These places are manifestly general, and agree both to good and bad. Is there not deceit and desperate wickedness even in the hearts of the regenerate? Have any such perfectly known their own hearts? Do not evil words proceed out of their mouth? This then is from the abundance of the heart. Hereunto add the necessary qualification requisite in those who shall have access to God in duties, "That they know every one the plague of his own heart," 1 Kings 8:38. Not without reason doth the wise man call for "keeping of the heart with all diligence,"\* that we may set double guards on it. It plainly tells us that the heart is a deceitful thing, and bent to turn aside after crooked ways. Say not, that all the hazard is from the influence which the body hath on it; for the heart can go astray in such things wherein it is not capable of being influenced by the body, as will appear afterwards. But indeed if that were so, we should rather have been directed to keep the body with all diligence. But it is plain, the greatest hazard is from the heart; as Moses teacheth in that parallel place, Deut. 4:9, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently," &c. Mr. Gray speaks feelingly, and no less truly, concerning the heart: "I think," says he, "such is the desperate deceitfulness of our hearts, that if all the saints since Adam's days, and who shall be to the end of the world, had but one heart to guide, they would misguide it."

ARGUMENT II. The Spirit of God calls the regenerate to carry on the work of renovation in their souls, minds, and wills; which evidently holds forth, that there is much of the old man remaining there still, even in their souls, and that in the most noble faculties thereof: Rom. 12:2, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;" where it is clear the apostle is speaking to regenerate persons. Eph. 4:23, he calls those who had learned Christ, yet to be "renewed in the spirit of their minds." And the apostle speaking of himself, 2 Cor. 4:16. tells us, that "the inward man is renewed day by day." If any shall say, that by the renewing of the inward man, is meant the strengthening of the soul to bear afflictions; I grant the

same without any prejudice to what we assert; for it supposeth a culpable weakness, in regard of which the soul hath need to be renewed. The apostle, Col. 3:10, teacheth the same doctrine; "And have put on the new man, which is renewed; kai endusamenoι ton neon, ton anakainoumenon; where I pray you take notice of the apostle's changing of the tense, "Ye have put on the new man which is renewed;" he speaks of the renovation in the present tense, denoting the continuance of the action. And that it relates to the mind is no less clear; for this new man is expressly said to be "renewed in knowledge." Hereunto add the apostle's prayer for the believing Thessalonians, 1 Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And how frequently doth the Scripture discover the particular evils that are to be found in the soul as their proper place? as we may see in the apostle's prayer for the believing Ephesians, chap. 1:17, &c. So Col. 1:9, 10. How frequently does the Lord reprove his disciples for the relics of unbelief in them? The apostle confesseth, in the name of all believers, the great remains of darkness that are yet on their minds, 1 Cor. 13:12. But to recount such places as teach that sin is yet remaining in the mind and will, were an endless labour.

ARGUMENT III. There are many members of the body of death, which the godly groan under, that are purely spiritual; whereof the body can be no receptacle; and must needs remain in the soul, even in the mind and will; such as, Atheism, ignorance, hatred of God, unbelief, want of love to God, &c. That these and the like cannot be said to lodge in the body, is evident: for, 1. Some of these sins are mere privations; as, ignorance of, and want of love to God, &c.; privations, I say, of rectitude, that ought to be, not in the act, (for there is no act, but a cessation from action); but in the power, which is nothing else than the soul, mind, and affections; unless you will say that the body is capable to love God, which is most absurd. And no less absurd is it to assert the same anent the sensitive part of the soul, as they call it. 2. How can these sins be said to lodge there, where there cannot be so much as an imagination of their objects; as in hatred of God. The body is not capable thereof; in regard God is not

the object of the fancy, but of the mind; so that we can have no imagination of him; he being infinitely removed from matter; and therefore as far from the imagination, as colours from hearing, sounds from the taste, or the most abstract notions from the soul of a beast. 3. Moreover, there are some sins founded on reflection, which the body is not capable of; as, pride, and lifting up of the soul, upon the account of its perceiving in itself ideas of the most sublime things, far removed from the knowledge of others. How such can be said to be driven out into the body, I persuade myself no man can show with any colour of reason; yet pride is not the least of the members of the body of death.

ARGUMENT IV. If the remains of original sin in the regenerate be not in the soul, but whatever remains of it be driven to the body; then original sin is quite razed out in regeneration, not only *ut non imputetur*, but *ut non sit*; it hath no more a being in the saints: and so there is no sin the regenerate are chargeable with but actual sin; and so all the children of God have been under a miserable mistake, while they confessed and bewailed their original corruption. All which is contrary to the Scriptures, and the sentiments of orthodox divines. I prove the connection: for if the remains of natural corruption lodge not in the soul, it hath no lodging in the man at all. The reason is, because the body, considered as contradistinct to the soul, is not *subjectum capax*; for the body as such is subject to no law; now, "where there is no law, there can be no transgression;" and if the body as such were subject to a law, then all bodies should be so; I mean of a moral law. If you say, the body is not considered here simply as a body, but as a constituent part of the man; I answer, That indeed the whole *suppositum* is under the law. But the formal reason of a man's being subjectible to a law, is rationality, which is the only thing that makes him capable to be directed by a law. So that, although sin may be from the body occasionally, as madness from the distemperature of the brain; and may be also in it terminatively, as whoredom, drunkenness, &c.; yet formally it is in the soul; which, against the law, complies with the temptation, which in some cases the body may have a deep share in; and the soul useth the members of the body for fulfilling the desires of sin, to which it is incited by the body. Whatever power we grant unto the body for stirring up the soul to sin, and whatever we say of that incitation considered simply as an action of the body; we

judge it highly agreeable to reason, that the inciting to sin which is by the body, as it ariseth from a view of the object, is, at least interpretatively, an imperate act of the soul, which takes fire upon the first view of the species of the external object presented by the eyes, ears, &c.; and consequently follows that act of the soul, though the motion of the blood and spirits, thus commanded by the soul, adds fuel to the fire. For whence, I pray you, is the motion of the blood and spirits in the body inciting to sin, but from the soul, which, upon a view of the object, judgeth the same to be fit for it to enjoy *hic et nunc*; and so wills it with a sort of velleity at least; whereupon natively follow such motions in the body? This is evident from this, that when the practical judgment goes a contrary way, these motions in the body follow it in the same: though indeed, when once the devil is raised thus in the blood and spirits, the soul cannot easily lay him; because the will hath but a politic, not a despotic power over the fancy once set upon an object; as is too evident from experience. Had Achan, when he saw the Babylonish garment, and wedge of gold, judged they had been devils appearing in shape of bodies, doubtless quite contrary motions tending to aversation would have arisen in him. So that I think it is clear, that incitation to sin by the body, follows the conception of lust in the soul; and that the body is only the midwife helping to bring forth the unhappy birth.

From what is said it appears, that even actual sin is not formally in the body, but in the soul: for though the body may contribute something thereto in *genere entis*, yet the soul only gives all in *genere moris*. From thence is the anomia of the action. Now, if it be driven to the body, as is alleged, it surely stirs there; that is, original sin there breaks forth into action; which cannot be said, as we have already declared. And therefore we may safely thence conclude, it is not there; for where it is, there it will bring forth its unhappy births.

One thing more I add: That if the patrons of this opinion be of the judgment, that the soul doth not always think, by this argument they shall be obliged to say, that regenerate infants have no sin in them at all; nor godly persons adult, when they sleep, and do not dream: for sin is put out of the soul, they say, and the body is at rest.

ARGUMENT. V. If in regeneration indwelling sin be driven out of the

soul into the body, then it is in the body, either in more or less, or in equal measure, as before conversion. In greater measure it cannot be, or then the renewing in the whole man falls to the ground; yea, the body is the worse of regeneration, and is so far from having old things done away, that they are increased to a greater height; which to reconcile to the privilege which the bodies of believers have in their union with Christ, and being the temples of the Holy Ghost, is impossible. If it be said, it is there in lesser measure than before; let them shew how that can be. Surely, according to their principles, sin properly had part of its lodging in the body before conversion. Now, what room it had in the soul, it has lost according to them. Wherefore it cannot be in less measure there than before; unless you say, that it had less before conversion in the soul, than it had in the body. But experience flies in the face of this assertion: for those that are converted before they come to maturity, when they do come to years, find tenfold more difficulty in guiding their bodies, than they had before their conversion. If the last be said, then the body is nothing the better of regenerating grace; which is inconsistent with the union with Christ. If you say, that we just now confessed the body may be in a worse case after regeneration than before, wherefore much more equally evil with what it was before, I answer, That I ever denied the body to be a subject capable formally either of moral goodness or evil; and therefore in that respect it neither can be better nor worse. But otherwise, we must distinguish the state of the body with respect to nature, and with respect to grace. With respect to nature, and in itself, it may be indeed in a worse case, as was said; in so far as, by the power of nature grown up, it is more hard to be tamed and holden in than before. But in respect of grace conferred on the soul, when it is at its worst, it is in better case than when it was in its best natural state, the soul being graceless; as one is in a better case when he hath drunk in the precepts of sobriety, and has a faithful tutor, than when he was a child; though now both have more ado than formerly. This will more clearly appear, if we consider how the body is partaker of regenerating grace. Grace is not, nor cannot be formally and subjectively in the body, but objectively and reductively. It is not by way of inherence in it, but in respect of usefulness it is for it; for grace makes no change in the body, but in respect that the members of the body are thereby better employed than before, as the apostle teacheth, 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 6:13. So then grace in the soul is the guide and

tutor of the body, though the body be not formally gracious; even as the eye which sees alone, serves the whole body for light; for if the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light.

ARGUMENT VI. ult. The experience of the godly testifies, that sin is not so driven out of the soul as is pretended: for "who is so holy,\* that he does not find much darkness in his understanding? great self-love in his will? that all his faculties do frequently go astray from what is true, just, and good?" &c. says Zanchius. Although the godly have much ado with their bodies, yet I conceive that the hardest work of all is with the heart. Nothing is more ordinary with exercised souls, than complaints of the deceitfulness of the heart; which they believe, though it wanted a corrupt body, or a devil to tempt, yet would prove a tempter and a devil to itself. Who finds not, when the body lies quite by from troubling, sufficient matter of exercise from a hard and dead heart? Who does not discern in themselves a root of Atheism, blasphemy, hatred of God, &c. all which are the kindly fruits of old Adam, springing from the cursed ground of the heart? And I doubt not, but if I could have access to the closet-doors of some such as stickle for this banishment of sin into the outworks, but I should hear them confess sin's lodging in the prime faculties of their souls, though in conference they refuse it.

One thing more I must add: That seeing distempers having their seat in the body are to be cured, not by the word, but by physical applications, when ministers have done their work in converting souls, they ought to turn them over into the hands of skilful physicians, the proper object of whose art is the body, as curable of distempers. But enough of this.

OBJECTION 1. The apostle (Rom. 7) teacheth us that sin dwells only in the body; ver. 24. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" ver. 23. speaking of indwelling sin, he tells us, he "finds a law in his members;" and ver. 18. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, (i. e. the body), there dwells no good thing."

ANSWER. Vehemency of affection, whether of love or hatred, produceth several designations to the thing beloved or hated, the more to express the vehemency of the mind for or against the object. So was it with the apostle in the matter of indwelling sin, which was a most grievous burden

to him. Wherefore sometimes he calls it sin by way of eminency, as being the great master-devil, Rom 5:12; sometimes lust, Rom. 7:7. to express the vehemency of its activity, Gal. 5:17; sometimes he speaks of it as an officious troublesome guest, Rom. 7:17, 20; sometimes he calls it a man, and an old man, Eph. 4:22. because of its antiquity, and subtilty, and strength. It is old indeed, yea the elder brother, though made to serve the younger. Here he calls it a body, and a body of death. The meaning is, says Piscator,\* "Who shall deliver me from this death, which as a sort of body, or thing subsisting by itself, exerceth its power in me, and miserably vexeth me? But by death metonymically he understands indwelling sin." And indeed this very well agrees with the scope of the apostle; and chap. 6:6. he had called it a body. But why he should call his own body, which he knew was the temple of the Holy Ghost, a body of death, I see not. On good reason doth he call indwelling sin a body, in regard that as a body hath many members, so hath indwelling sin. It is not one simple lust, but a compound of all iniquity, and the seed and spawn of all unrighteousness. It is a complete body; it wants not one member: for as a believer hath every grace in the root and habit, so hath he every sin the same way dwelling in him; for let grace once be withdrawn there shall be a compliance with any temptation. And well might he call it a body of death, as being in its own nature a deadly thing, as loathsome as carrion, and devoted to death or destruction, being already nailed to the cross of Christ, Gal. 5:24. from which it was not to come down till it had breathed out its last. As to what the apostle says of his members, Piscator doth indeed understand it properly of the members of his body,\* in which sin exerts its strength; yet doth not dream that the seat of sin is only or mainly in the body. And so we may understand it without prejudice to our cause; for it is plain sin may exert its strength there where it hath not its proper place of abode. Others think, that by members he means every faculty of soul and body; and so they will have the word taken, Rom. 6:13. James 4:1. If this be admitted, it weakens the cause of our adversaries. But I suppose the apostle here distinguishes two opposite parties in and from himself. The one he calls the inner man; the other he must be supposed to call the outer man. Let us see then what he means by those men which he speaks of. That he does not thereby understand the soul and the body, is clear to me upon these three accounts: 1. Because the inner man, in the act of sin, still stands out



against the outer man; so that the inner man is blameless, ver. 20. But this cannot be said of the soul. 2. In the outer man there dwells no good thing, ver. 18; which to understand of the body, I shall afterwards shew to be absurd. I add, 3. That, as I said before, the outer and the inner man are really distinct from the man himself. Though they both be ours, yet they are not ourselves; which is plain, if ye consider, that, through the whole of this discourse, the man himself is holden forth as tossed betwixt these two; sometimes led by the one, sometimes by the other: the man himself is the prey; they are the two combatants that fight for the mastery over him; and accordingly the strongest party carries away the poor captive. According to the inner man, he delights in the law of God; which gives us to understand, that, according to the outer man, he is averse to it. Whence it is evident, these two are distinct from himself, and therefore cannot be his soul and body. Moreover, these two are elsewhere called by the apostle the new and old man; whereof the one is said to be put on, the other to be of the man himself. But though they be distinct really from the man himself, yet are they not divided or separated from him; both of them are in him, and diffused through the man, according to the capacity of each part. Whence it plainly appears, that these men are nothing else but grace and corruption, as the apostle teacheth, ver. 20.—"Sin that dwelleth in me." And hence we may easily perceive what he means by the members he speaks of. Why, even as the several graces of the Spirit are the members of the inner and new man, Eph. 4:24. so the several particular lusts of the heart are the members of the old and outer man; which members the apostle calls us to mortify, Col. 3:5. Now, in these members of his he finds a law; that is, activity, power and efficacy; for "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. 5:17. "As laws," says Flavel,\* "by virtue of their annexed rewards and punishments, have a mighty power and efficacy; so sin, indwelling sin, that root of all our trouble and sorrow, hath a mighty efficacy upon us." And by this law indwelling sin brings the soul into captivity to itself, the man being made captive to that law of sin which is in his members. Where we must take notice, that the apostle does not refer that being in his members to sin; if so indeed, this exposition would be ridiculous; but the words in the original plainly refer it to the law, to *nomo tes hamartias to onti*, holding forth the power and efficacy of original sin, which sets its several members on work. But to proceed: That the apostle calls his body his flesh, is false. For, 1. No good

thing dwells in his flesh; but the Holy Spirit dwells in his body. 2. Will any say, that the law of sin is served only with the body, and the law of God only with the soul? But the apostle tells us, ver. 25. that with the mind he serves the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin; where he assigns to each part its proper work and service. We say then, that the apostle does not here distinguish the soul from the body, but corrupt nature from grace, and himself as regenerate, from himself so far as he was unregenerate. And so the apostle, Gal. 5:19, &c. while he reckons up the works of the flesh, he placeth among them heresies; which, if any thing, do belong to the soul: and among the works of the Spirit we find temperance; which the body may claim on as good grounds as any good thing else. And it is remarkable, that when the apostle speaks of the state of non-regeneration, while men are totally under the power of corruption, he calls it being in the flesh, Rom. 7:5. not in the body I am sure. And in this way of speaking of corruption the apostle follows Christ himself, in his conference with Nicodemus, about the necessity of regeneration, John 3:6. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh;" not a body in opposition to a soul, but corrupt, and therefore standing in need to be born again. Only, to hold forth the necessity more strongly, he calls it not fleshly, but flesh itself, in the abstract: q. d. It is nothing but a very lump of sin and corruption.

**OBJECTION 2.** Rom. 6:12. "Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body:"\* Ergo, Sin remains only in the body, not in the soul.

**ANSWER.** Some tell us here that by the body is meant, synecdochially, the whole man; as, upon the other hand, the Spirit of God, in the Scripture, under the name of soul, comprehends the body also. But the epithet given by the apostle to the body while he calls it mortal, seems to restrain it to the body properly and strictly taken. Therefore we pass that, and deny the consequence, on good grounds: for it is plain here, the apostle speaks metaphorically of sin's power as a king: but who will say, but a king may reign there where his seat is not? wherever sin remains, it is certain where it hath not lost the reigning power, it reigns through the whole man, soul and body. Shepherd tells us, that here is, 1. Obedience, i. e. the outward acts; 2. Lusts, the inward breathings; 3. Sin itself, where the lusts are seated. "This, therefore," says he, "is the reigning sin, which

hath taken possession of every part." And no doubt sin may work there where it hath not its proper seat, as a king reigns in the remotest parts of his dominions.

OBJECTION 3. ult. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John 3:6. Ergo, There are no remains of sin left in the soul.

ANSWER. The body is, suo quodam modo, born of the Spirit, as well as the soul: for the leaven of grace leavens the whole man; grace makes not a new soul only, but a new creature; "Old things are done away, and behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. 5:17. The body, as well as the spirit, is Christ's, 1 Cor. 6. ult.; yea the bodies of the regenerate are members of Christ; yet are they not wholly renewed. So say we of the soul: the whole soul is cleansed, but not wholly. Were men perfectly born of the Spirit, they should be altogether spirit; but this renovation is carried on by degrees only.

"For," as Luther saith, "we have got the first-fruits of the Spirit; the leaven is hid in the lump; but the lump is not wholly leavened; it is begun to be leavened."

## QUESTION. V

### WHY THE LORD SUFFERETH SIN TO REMAIN IN THE REGENERATE?

WE have seen already, that though there is a great change wrought on the elect in their regeneration yet that change is imperfect; there shall be no perfect delivery from indwelling sin till death; the body of death; though crucified, yet lives till the death of the body: and it is not so driven out to the outworks, but that it remains, and hath its seat in the main hold, in the soul, even in the mind and will. Experience suffereth not gracious souls to doubt of the being of sin in them, while it occasions them so much struggling and wrestling; yea, while they feel the great strength of it, they are many times ready from thence to call in question the being of grace in them, and to put forth that which was Rebekah's question, in another case, "If it be so, why am I thus?"\* And therefore, although we are not to call God to an account of his doings with supercilious boldness, flowing from an obstinate and stubborn heart; yet it may very well be allowed, that we go humbly, and with her inquire of the Lord.

The soul, in regeneration, gets a new nature, though the grace received is not of such efficacy as totally to drive away the old. The regenerate get a real love to God in their hearts, and a real hatred against sin; so that the man would fain leave sin, if it would leave him. And the truth is, that although sin and the soul are inseparable till death, yet sin rather cleaves to the soul than the soul to it. But, alas! though hated, it will not depart; following the man closely, as the shadow doth the body. But could it be lulled asleep, could it be so intoxicated as to leave off action, the child of God might have so much the better occasion to serve God without distraction while in the body. But how can the devil be quiet, when he knows his time is short? How can this old man sleep, while so many and various ensnaring objects still present themselves unto his view? Or how can the flesh be at rest, when it is nailed to a cross? Wherefore sin cannot but both be, and be active in the soul while on this side of time; even till that terrible soldier death come, and thrust his spear into its side, and bring forth its heart-blood.

"But are not two sparrows sold for one farthing? yet one of them cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father; yea, the very hairs of our head are numbered." We must not therefore think, that the children of God are left in this case by a fatal necessity, and that God is here an idle spectator. He hath the hearts of all men in his hand. If the centurion knew that he, being a poor mortal, clothed with a shadow of authority, having rude soldiers under him, could say to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh; faith might well thence draw the conclusion, That, much more, God, the sovereign Lord of all, can say to distempers, whether of body or soul, Go, and they should be gone; Come, and they should immediately be at hand. He raised up the soul when it was dead in sin spiritually; now the living soul is sick, how can any doubt of his power to cure it, and make it every whit whole. Yet the distemper remains with his dearest children, though he be a hater of iniquity, and his people groan to him daily under it. Though he can, yet we see he will not free them from it till death. But whatever be the reason or reasons of this dispensation, we believe, that when once his people have got over Jordan into the heavenly Canaan, they shall say without all reluctancy or doubting, "He hath done all things well."

As when a man hath newly recovered out of a severe fit of sickness, he is then most ready to take care of himself, and will be afraid of the least cold blast, and more narrowly than before inquire into the causes of his distemper, by which he hath so sore smarted; and if he find himself in such circumstances, that he cannot miss but again fall into his old distemper, he will long to be rid of that condition, and seriously think how he comes to be in such pitiful circumstances: even so I think it will be with a thinking soul, after a recovery from a dead frame and disposition of spirit, into which, by his unwatchfulness, the power of corruption within, and the malice of the devil from without, he had before been cast. Contraries set together appear then best in their own colours; therefore the disadvantages of a bad frame can never so well appear, as when they are fresh in the memory of the newly recovered saint, who hath now the candle of the Lord shining on his tabernacle; and consequently the way leading to that bad frame of spirit, never appears so hateful as at such a time. Suppose then the thoughts of a certainty of his falling back to be observant unto him, what thoughts of heart will this

create? It is true, sometimes a child of God, when matters go right with his soul, may be thinking on building tabernacles here, as Peter on the mountain; and, with David, saying, "My mountain standeth sure, I shall not be moved." But this is a piece of the levity of the vain and foolish heart, when men look only above them, without deep consideration of the way of God's dispensation. But I suppose, that when in this case they look about them, through the world, where so many snares are laid for them, amongst which of necessity they must walk: and look also within them, and see what bosom enemies are yet alive, ready to betray them into the hand of the devil; and do take pains to consider what a vile heart yet they have, from whence such mists and fogs are ready to arise, as may again make a thick cloud betwixt them and their Lord, and make them lose sight of the guide of their youth, and captain of their salvation; they will then even stand in need of new comfort, and something from above to establish their hearts. And here I think we may stand, and see a gracious soul joining trembling with mirth, and bemoaning itself thus:—

"O happy hour when the Lord awakened me out of my spiritual sleep! The devil and mine own corruptions had lulled me asleep; though even in the time my heart waked, and I found an inefficacious dissatisfaction with myself, which was not able to rouse me up, but made me sometimes as it were to start in my sleep: but my Beloved left me not, as justly he might, to sleep a perpetual sleep; but knocked at the door of my heart, saying, Open to me, my sister, my spouse: and though I was long a stirring to get up, he stood still, till his head was filled with the dew, and his locks with drops of the night; at last he put in his hand at the hole of the door, gave the rousing knock, spoke to my heart the overcoming word, captivated my soul, so as my bowels moved towards him. I opened to my Beloved; he came in; I supped with him, and he with me. He hath brought me into the banqueting-house, his banner over me is love. O how does my soul love him! my Lord and my God!—But, ah Lord! my soul fails; I have been here before, but a cloud overtook me, darkened the holy place, I lost the light of thy countenance; and, which now pierceth my soul, the very enemies remain in me, who before carried me back into the borders of Egypt, set me down in the land of darkness and shadow of death, and put out my two eyes. Now is sin to me more bitter than death and hell; yet I know assuredly I must again meet with that terrible ghost; and if I live long in

this tabernacle, I shall lose all I now enjoy; my song shall be turned into lamentation and howling, the now smiling countenance shall again be provoked to frown, my wine is mixed with water; corruption will again lift up the head, the sorrowful day of my captivity will, I fear, ere long overtake me, this heart of mine will have me back to where I was before. O to be gone! I see, with a sorrowful heart and weeping eyes, a necessity of sinning, into which we poor mortals have brought ourselves, and the Lord leaves me yet under it. Lord, why are not the cursed Canaanites utterly rooted out?"

I judge, that a man in this case needs not fear his enjoyment to be a delusion, there is so much of an evangelical spirit breathing in it. The sound hatred that appears here against sin, while the soul doth feelingly apprehend it as the greatest of evils, is so far above the sphere of elevated nature, that it is a clear discovery of a renewed nature. A man willing to part with all, so that he might be free of sin, is one made partaker of the divine nature, aspiring to a more accomplished participation of it. This case savours of much real burning love to the Lord Jesus Christ, while the soul hath such an ardent desire of being nearer to him, and would fain be so near him, as to have such communion with him, as might never be interrupted, nor overclouded any more. It is also an evidence, that the soul hath tasted of the sweetness of Christ and fellowship with him, while it is so filled with fear of losing his presence. And many such things may be discerned in it.

Yet I dare not justify the soul through the whole of this case. So true it is, *Nihil est ab omni parte beatum*. I conceive, there may be something here in the mourner which is not allowable, and may justly be new grounds of mourning to him. There seems to appear here a kind of spiritual selfishness, when the soul hath its own spiritual advantage (which is so seemingly at least) so much upon the heart, that it keeps not due respect to the sovereign will of God, to which belongs the free disposal of all good, and particularly of the influences of his grace; so that the creature, as a creature, is indispensably bound to a silent submission, whatever way sovereignty doth cast the balance. When Peter was upon the mount with Christ, "It is good for us to be here, let us make tabernacles," says he; but the verdict of the Spirit of God thereupon is, that he wist not what he

said. Sense is much addicted to self; and though it had specious pretences, yet its language is not always to be heard; for it is certain it is an ill judge of controversies betwixt Christ and the soul. But faith is sure always to decide in Christ's favour. If Christ smile on the soul, faith saith, He doth well; and sense says so too. If he frown, then sense cries out against him; but faith says, He doth all things well; let him desert, afflict, yea, kill the man, faith says, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good; good is the will of the Lord." Faith puts a knife to the throat of self-love, and self-wit, to sacrifice them to the will of God, who is infinitely wise; it teacheth a man to lay his mouth in the dust, and wraps up the will in the will of God. In the hearts of the godly exercised, pride goeth much abroad in vail, though not in dress; it is there transformed into an angel of light, appearing in a shape different from that wherein it doth appear in others. Pride in the hearts of natural men, when Christ comes to them, says, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy name; but pride in the hearts of the godly exercised, when Christ seems to be going away, or they know they will not have always the present measure of communion with him, will not suffer Christ to be master of his own process; though it is certain, that we are obliged to a holy submission, and the potsherd must not quarrel with the potter, but the Lord must have leave to go and come as he pleaseth. Humble-hearted Mary, when Christ says unto her, "Touch me not, Mary, for I am not yet ascended:" though her love would have carried her forward, yet her deniedness to her spiritual self, at Christ's command, makes her hold up her hands. It were good in such a case to learn that lesson.

Moreover, Satan may be working here under ground to blow up the present enjoyment with a fear of distrust. Satan grudgeth the happiness of the people of God, and endeavoureth by all means, seeing he cannot hinder these refreshing influences of the Spirit, and comfortable manifestations, to make them as short-lived as possible, and for this end he goeth about to fill the soul with a distrustful fear, holding before his eyes, the certainty of his backsliding, and of losing the present enjoyment: which breeds in the soul a sinful jealousy of Christ, while the man is either ignorant of, or doth not consider the end and design of God in his dispensation; which Satan is now busy to misrepresent, wrest, and make use of to his great disadvantage: which once taking place, blasts the



comfort of the present enjoyment, mars our thankfulness for what God hath given already. And whereas it is now time for the man to improve his access to God, for more strength against the devil and his own corruption, this fear takes up the man so, as he lets that good occasion slip out of his hands, and so is more easily overcome by the temptation; even as the fear of the battle in a soldier takes away his stomach, that he cannot eat, whereby he is the more unfit for his work. And, in fine, God may hereby be provoked to withdraw, so as they shall be made to say, That which I feared, is come upon me. Probatum est.

For the cure of this jealousy of Christ in the soul, arising from the consideration of his dispensation in leaving sin to be and act in those who wrestle against it, and account it their greatest burden, it is necessary the soul be acquainted with, and seriously consider of the true reason or reasons thereof, in regard we are ready to suspect the worst. A wife observing her husband frequently to curry towards her reservedly, and to wrap up himself from her, though he may be doing so for his own and her good, will yet be ready to suspect, that such carriage flows from his want of love towards her; and will not be satisfied easily, till she know the true reason of his so doing. So is it here. And surely the Lord doth not deal thus with his people, but with great reason; which being known and seriously pondered will make the soul conclude, he doth all things well.

To a soul then in this case several things may be proposed.

I. In the first place, God hath so ordered the matter of the believer's sanctification, that sin is left to be active in their souls while here, for their farther humiliation. They are hereby taught to bear low sails all the days of their lives, and, with "Hezekiah,\* to go softly all their years in the bitterness of their souls." Wherefore we read, that lest Paul should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan is sent to buffet him. And so we find David, after his grievous fall, grows in the grace of humility.

II. Next, This gives the soul many errands to God, stirs him up to the frequent exercise of prayer, and calling on the name of the Lord. The soul feels the continual need of pardon, and therefore must needs be much

lying at God's footstool. The experience of the godly seals the truth of this, while, many times, they feeling the children (grace and corruption) straggling together within them, are made, as Rebekah, to "go and inquire of the Lord." Hence, when they grow remiss in their duty, the Lord sometimes, for their awakening suffers them to fall into some sin or sins grievously wounding the conscience; and so, like a presumptuous, self-willed child falling into the fire, they cry for and value the help of their father more.

III. Yea hereby we are made more watchful and observant of the heart. When the prisoner, having escaped, is retaken, he will be put in more close custody than before. When men find by experience what a bankrupt the heart is, they will learn not to give it credit. We live in a world where there are traps set before, and behind, and on each side, to catch us; we walk amidst many snares, yet are ready to fall secure, and careless, and to let down our watch. It is not amiss then, that we sometimes smart in order to our being kept awake.

IV. Further, as God left the Canaanites in the land to try his people, so he hath left the remains of natural corruption in his people for their exercise and trial; that having listed themselves to war under Christ's banner, they may have whom to fight with, and whom by strength from above they may overcome. God gives his people armour at their conversion; is it reasonable it should lie by them rusting? If the Canaanites were at the first dash utterly expelled the land, many of the graces of the Spirit should be laid by as useless. "Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?" Had we no enemies, or were we put beyond their reach utterly, there should be no occasion for the exercise of the grace of watchfulness. Patience should not have its perfect work; yea faith itself, as being "the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for," should be of no more use. What should become of ordinances? God hath set up a ministry in his church to be for working together with him, to bring down the kingdom of darkness by degrees; he hath set up his word for a light to travellers towards Zion, not being well acquainted with the way; he hath given us his holy sacraments for our confirmation in faith, growth in grace, and comfort through the Spirit: these all might be laid aside, were it not that our sanctification is

carried on by degrees.

V. Moreover, by this dispensation of grace, we are made more and more to feel our need of Christ, and his precious blood for the removal of guilt daily contracted anew, and for strengthening of our souls in our Christian course; so that we must come up out of the wilderness leaning on our Beloved. And we see that our stock is not in our hand; and if it were, that it would quickly be lost. Is not the soul made hereby to bless the Lord, that it is not left to be its own pilot while sailing through the troublesome sea of this world; but that Jesus Christ is his great steersman, by whose conduct he shall come safe to Immanuel's land?

VI. I add, That it may be observed, it is God's ordinary way to bring about great works by degrees; amongst which the sanctification of a sinner deservedly takes place. God could have created the world in a moment, yet he was pleased to take six days for it. As soon as Adam fell, he could have sent Christ to have died; but thousands of years must pass before this great work be accomplished. It is determined to the last days, the time of the world's old age. A dark revelation of this his purpose was made to Adam in the primitive gospel-promise; it was made more manifest to Abraham; revealed yet more clearly to and by Moses, more to the prophets, till John the Baptist at last pointed him out with the finger. He could have brought Israel out of Egypt into Canaan easily in a few days; but it pleased him, that they should wander forty years in the wilderness. So that it is but consonant hereunto, that he exerciseth his people so long in the wilderness of the world, after he hath brought them forth of the spiritual Egyptian bondage. And as it is God's ordinary method to carry on great works by degrees, so to bring them to pass through many difficulties—Joseph must be sold for a slave, and laid in irons in a strange land, before he be advanced; the Israelites must endure hard bondage and grievous affliction in Egypt, before they are brought into the land flowing with milk and honey; yea, the man Christ must first suffer, and then enter into his glory. So that in this dispensation he holds but his ordinary road. Finally,

VII. A learned man\* lays down the whole matter thus:—"While we bear about a mortal body, this domestic tyrant cannot be altogether expelled; —because it is neither expedient for the glory of Christ, nor for our

salvation. For the glory of Christ is so much the more illustrious, as his benefit is the better felt by us, while that enemy doth indeed dwell in us, but by the grace and Spirit of Christ is so repressed and holden captive, that it cannot domineer over us nor destroy us;—yea while we experience in us the grace of Christ so efficacious, that by it he makes us overcomers. Moreover, the glory of Christ becomes more illustrious, while, by reason of indwelling sin, we in very deed feel that we cannot be justified but by the perfect obedience of Christ, which we apprehend by faith. It is also expedient for our salvation, that the enemy abide in us till death, that we may have one to fight with perpetually, and fighting by the grace of Christ may overcome, and by overcoming may gain a greater crown to ourselves," Rev. 3; 2 Tim. 4.

That the consideration of these things may be very useful to a soul exercised with the consideration of this dispensation of providence in the matter of sanctification, as above declared, I think none can deny. To see how God makes such an excellent medicine of such poisonous ingredients, cannot be but very delightful. Yet I doubt, if the principal, if not the only reason, be yet explained; or if those things in this mould and frame be very likely to satisfy the soul, when this puzzling question comes more closely home upon the heart; but that very plausible objections may be raised against the same, to show their invalidity as to the main point in hand.

The great matter is, to find out the reason or reasons why it hath pleased the Lord to leave sin in the elect after conversion, and not to make them perfectly free from the indwelling of it at that very time, as he could certainly have done if it had pleased him. Now, I observe upon the whole of those grounds formerly laid down, which are usually pleaded in this case, That the case under consideration is resolved either into our own advantage, and the quickening of inherent grace, or into the will of God simply; and this by all of them, except the first part of the last ground assigned. As to the last of the two; it is indeed in effect that God would have it so because he would have it so; which I do confess may suffice, and no more can be had in some cases, Rom. 9:18, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy." But I suppose that this case is not of that sort. As to the first; sin now appearing to the soul in its blackest

colours, the creature's advantage being laid in the balance therewith, can have but little weight. As for the three first grounds, they do plainly suppose the question. The fourth seems to go the same way. As for the first part of the last ground, it points out the truth in general. But the explication of it mars all, while it is declared by our proper feeling of the benefits of Christ; which doth indeed hold good considered absolutely, but comparatively understood it doth not. Now, it is plain, that any thing that can be here said satisfyingly, must be by way of comparison. But I think no man can doubt, but that the more free of sin a Christian is, he feels the benefits of Christ the better. The same is to be said of the fifth reason. As to the rest, they do at least come under the disadvantage proposed in the general observation (to say no more upon them) resolving the case as said is.

To all of these grounds the following replies seem not to be unreasonable. You tell me (says the Christian under the supposed exercise) That this is God's design by this dispensation to humble me, to stir me up to call on his name, to make me more watchful, to let me see my need of Christ more. But my pride, slothfulness, unwatchfulness, unsensibleness of my need of Christ, are the great burdens I groan under. That which I would be at, is to have all these rooted out of my heart; and I know God could have done this at first, can do it still, yet he does not: What shall I say? As for faith, hope, &c. it is my soul's trouble, that I have so little of them; I would fain be at the full measure; and I know the graces of the Spirit are inseparable; whoso hath one, hath all. But though the exercise of these graces were inconsistent with the state of perfection that I would fain be at, which nevertheless is not so, (for if I were perfect in this life, or altogether free from sin, I could not but exercise faith, hope, and patience, as the man Christ did; and watchfulness, as Adam did, or at least might have done in paradise); yet I am sure the spirits of just men made perfect above, are at no loss in that they do not, nor need not exercise those graces; neither is the glory of God thereby impaired, but indeed made more illustrious. I desire to value ordinances more than my necessary food, both because they have Christ's stamp upon them, and because in this my weary state I cannot want them. But, Oh! should I not be content, though all the stars were set, and had hid their heads, so that the Sun of Righteousness were risen with perfect healing under his

wings? What though the inns were blocked up, if once the traveller were at his journey's end? But surely, if I were as I would be, I could manage ordinances far more to the glory of my Lord, and to mine own satisfaction, than I can now do at my best. The first and second Adam wanted not sacraments, and made use of them too. And I am persuaded, that if I were free of sin, I would have a far more deep sense of Christ's benefits, and of my need of him, than now I either have or can have. Self-righteousness, that spawn of the old serpent, is one of my greatest burdens, that makes me weary of this longsome night, and long to see the day when I shall be able to sing the song of the redeemed ones, and to give my Lord all and hail the glory, in which my wretched heart now will needs share with him. Though I cannot love him as I ought, nay nor as I would; yet would I be well content to continue in the fight never so long, so that I could but manage it without dishonour to my captain. It is not suffering, but sinning that affrights me. And I cannot but think that ten thousand jewels in my crown are too dear bought at the rate of one sin against my Lord; whereas there is not one sin, but many in my most complete actions now. It is God's ordinary method, I confess, to bring about great works by degrees, and over the belly of many difficulties. And O how early did God begin with me, how many times did he lay siege to my graceless heart, how long did he follow a poor miserable worm nothing, ere I would give consent? What great difficulties did grace break through, what iron gates did it lay by, when at first it shined into my soul? And yet I would cheerfully bear, and go through difficulties, if they were only in the kind of suffering, so that I were free of sin, that evil of all evils.

By all this we may see farther into the nature of the case proposed, and may discover what it is that is at the bottom of all, and what that is which most toucheth them in the quick. The case then terminates in an ardent desire of, and an unfeigned respect unto his glory, who hath brought the soul from darkness to light, and crowned it with loving-kindness and tender mercies; to which glory sin is so opposite. Wherefore I am of opinion, the whole is to be resolved into the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. 1:6. which seems most exactly to answer the point.

I confess, that as none can bear a wounded spirit, so none can cure it but the great physician of souls. "It is he that smiteth, and it is only he that

can bind up; he kills and he makes alive." He is the healer of all the soul's diseases and pains. As exercised soul hath great dexterity in raising objections, and is not easily satisfied; and its doubts and difficulties can no man resolve to its satisfaction, till he who is the great interpreter of the mind of God, and hath the tongue of the learned, take the work in hand, "and speak a word in season to the weary soul," by his Holy Spirit. Yet the Scripture shews that the Spirit teacheth and comforteth by the word: "He shall receive of mine," says Christ, speaking of the Spirit, "and shall shew it unto you," John 16:14; which is more clearly delivered chap. 14:26. "But the Comforter, he shall teach you all things, and shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." So that from the word souls are to be dealt with for their comfort and satisfaction, looking to the Lord Jesus to send his Spirit to render the same effectual.

It plainly appears to such as read the Scriptures with a humble mind, and consider the doctrine therein delivered, and take notice of the Lord's way of dealing with his own, that the grand design of God in the contrivance of the elect's salvation, is, to exalt the riches of the free grace of God in Christ: Rom. 4:16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace." Eph. 2:8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved;—not of works, lest any man should boast." Most plainly does the apostle resolve the whole of man's salvation into this, Eph. 1:3–6. "To the praise of the glory of his grace." I say, not simply to exalt grace, (which is always here to be understood of the free favour of God, or the grace of God without us); for even by the first covenant, the grace of God was exalted, and manifestly appeared in God's condescending to enter into a covenant with Adam, and to require obedience of him by virtue of a covenant, and that with a promise of so great a reward, to which his best works could bear no proportion; when, by virtue of his sovereignty merely, he might have exacted all obedience; here was grace, though, as Bayn\* calls it, a more common and inferior grace: But I say the riches of grace, in respect of which the former was but a small scantling of grace. Thus the apostle holds it forth, Eph. 1:7. "According to the riches of his grace." Chap. 2:4. "But God, who is rich in mercy;" and ver. 7. "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace." This then is clearly the great design of God in the contrivance of man's salvation. Now the heart of a child of God is (if I may so term it) shapen out in breadth and length to this design: for

what is faith but an hearty acquiescing in the way of salvation held forth in the gospel, as suited both to man's necessity, and the divine perfections, and particularly tending unto the manifestation of the riches of grace whereby Christ is made all, and the creature nothing?

Here then I apprehend, we may find the great reason of the Lord's dispensation in the matter of the believer's sanctification, the knowledge and consideration whereof is most likely to give satisfaction to the soul thus exercised. And it is briefly this: The exalting of Christ, and of the free grace of God in him, is the great design and end of the contrivance of man's salvation, as held forth in the gospel; but God's leaving of sin to be, and to be active in the regenerate while they are in this world, yea and keeping of them for a while in that case in the world, does contribute more to the advancement of that design, than the making of them sinless immediately upon their closing with Christ. Therefore may we already not only believe, but see, that in this matter he hath done all things well.

If we consider a person under this exercise before declared, we shall find he is one that is filled with a deep sense of his own vileness, emptiness, and nothingness; and hath high thoughts of Christ, and of free grace; and so he is disposed to welcome whatsoever hath a tendency to the exalting of the same. And forasmuch as the glory of that God who hath done so great things for him lies nearest his heart, and the dishonour done unto him, galls him most: when he sees this way brings more glory to Christ, and exalts grace more than the way he would be at, it may justly be expected, he shall lay his hand upon his mouth, saying, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." It remains then, that we demonstrate the truth of this, That this way does more exalt Christ and free grace than the other; which I hope will be no difficult task.

I. The more sins be pardoned to a believer, grace is the more exalted, Christ hath the more glory; the more items are blotted out of justice's debt-book by the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb, the sinner is the more deep in the debt of free grace: But it is beyond controversy, that in this dispensation more sins are pardoned to a believer than otherwise would have been. Ergo, Let none pretend that free grace might have been as much or more exalted in keeping the believer from sin altogether after conversion, as in pardoning of the same, lest they fall foul upon God's



design in suffering sin to enter into the world, prefer the grace of the first covenant to that of the second, and, in effect, say that God's dispensation is not suitable to his design.

II. The more sin is aggravated by its circumstances, the more is free grace exalted in pardoning it, the more illustrious is the virtue of Christ's blood; for the deeper the stain is, the harder is it to wash out: but by this dispensation, whereby sin is left in the regenerate for a while, free grace hath the glory of pardoning sins more heinous than those committed in the state of ignorance and unbelief. Ergo, Is not the offence of a spouse, child, friend, &c., more grievous than the offence given by a stranger? Friends' wounds pierce most deeply: "for it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it," &c. Psal. 55:12. The godly lie under far more necessary bonds and obligations to duty than others; and it is certain, the more obligations a man lies under to duty, the sin is the greater. Adultery and murder committed by a David, are more heinous in the sight of God, than the same sins committed by a wicked man. This is so manifest, that I need not insist to enumerate those aggravating circumstances that are to be found in the sins of the godly, which by no means can be in those of the wicked. And does not the pardoning of these deep-dyed sins exalt free grace wonderfully? Let men but consult their own experience, and they shall have a clear proof of this. The pardon of any sin does much affect a godly heart with admiration of the riches of grace; but when a man, after a recovery from some sin, after vows and resolutions against it, &c. doth relapse into the same, and yet has his backslidings healed, this augments the admiration of it. Of all sinners backsliders have the greatest difficulty to believe; and upon a received pardon, as they indeed are, so they seem to be, greatest debtors to grace.

III. The more deeply sin appears to be rooted in our natures, the more is the grace of God magnified in rooting it up; the more inveterate the disease seems to be, the more is the cure of it to the honour of the physician: "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind," John 9:32. If a tree were plucked up in an instant, beholders could never so clearly see how fast rooted it was, as when it abides many pulls of a strong hand. Who could have imagined the strength of sin to have been so great in David as afterwards it

appeared, when he had been so often bruised and troubled in spirit, and had arrived at so great mortification? The experience of believers affords to us an example of the same. Many times, after great wrestlings, they seem to themselves to have got great victory over a particular corruption, so that they are ready to think with themselves, that it will never be able to molest them as before; but at length it gets out again, renews the assault, and makes them see how it is, like Nebuchadnezzar's tree,\* fastened in the earth of the heart with a band of iron and brass. Now, it is manifest, that were sin rooted out at the first dash, the fixedness of it in man's nature could never so much appear to beholders, as it may and doth in the way of this dispensation. Ergo,

IV. That which discovers, to the view of all, the creature's emptiness most, doth undeniably exalt grace most; but the emptiness of the creature, and its continual need of supply, is most discovered to the view of all this way: Ergo, I think, the angels themselves, who desire to pry into the mystery of grace, could not but learn a lesson of the creature's frailty and nothingness by Adam's fall, and of the riches of free grace in the way of his recovery; and the daily slips of the saints on the earth may be to them speaking testimonies of the creature's weakness; for we see the apostle thinks it not below their dignity, that they go to school in the church to learn "the manifold wisdom of God," Eph. 3:10. Suppose a weak child be held up on his feet by his father's hands, so that he cannot fall; whether doth his weakness appear so as when he is left to feel his own weight, and so gets several falls? The spirits of just men made perfect, who are now above the clouds, and the confirmed angels, are still creatures; and therefore live and act by a continued dependance on God: but the emptiness of the creature appears not so clearly in their case, as in the state of the saints on earth; whose weakness we not only know, but see with our eyes, while they get so many falls, and give so many ocular demonstrations of their need of grace, and of their own emptiness. So that if the nothingness of the creature proclaim the riches of grace, free grace is most exalted this way.

V. The more cowardly, faint-hearted, and feckless the soldiers are that get the victory over a potent enemy, the more is the valour of the captain discovered, the greater glory redounds to him; but such are the saints in

their Christian warfare: Ergo, When David attempted to take the stronghold of Zion, the Jebusites boasting of the strength of the castle, looking on it as an impregnable fort, told him, that except he took away the blind and the lame, he could not get in there; meaning, that such was the strength of the fort, that the very blind and lame were sufficient to defend it against David and all his men, though others should sit by, looking on and doing nothing: which did mightily commend the stronghold. They are potent enemies, expert, and subtle, whom the Christian is called to encounter with: "For he wrestles not [only] against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."\* In the meantime he is a weak creature, weak naturally as a man, in comparison of them, but yet weaker as a sinful man; but he is nevertheless more than conqueror: which surely doth more advance the glory of the great Captain of our salvation, than if he had stronger and more expert soldier. O what riches of grace appears here, which otherwise would have been in great measure smothered! And seeing the Scripture so frequently calls the Christian course "a warfare," let me also add this, That when an enemy beseigeth a town, wherein he hath a multitude of friends ready on all occasions to betray the same into his hand, yet the town holds out, and he is repulsed; what a shameful repulse is that? Is not the glory of the governor far greater in this case, than if he had forced the enemy to raise the seige, while he had plenty of his friends within the walls? The application is easy.

Finally, to shut up all; it is plain, that the more difficulties the work of man's salvation is carried through, the free grace of God is the more exalted; our Lord Jesus, the author of eternal salvation, hath the greater glory: but in this way it is carried on over the belly of more difficulties, than it would have been, if by the first grace the Christian had been made perfect. Ergo, And seeing (*cœteris paribus*) none can prize rest so much as they who have been sore toiled, and have come out of the greatest tribulations, I think I may be allowed to say, that a child of God having come to his journey's end after many ups and downs, falls and risings; having win through the troublesome sea of this world, and being set safe ashore, after many dangers of shipwreck, in a longsome voyage, will have the praises of free grace in his mouth sounding more loudly, and will sing

the song of Moses and of the Lamb in a more elevated strain and higher notes, than if he had never been in danger through the whole of his course.

From all which it appears, that this dispensation is most suitable to the grand design of the gospel, the exalting of the riches of free grace in Christ. And what lover of Christ will not say, Amen!

## QUESTION. VI

### WHO HAVE RIGHT TO BAPTISM, AND ARE TO BE BAPTIZED?

THE right of infants to baptism hath been denied and violently opposed by the Anabaptists, so called from re-baptizing of those that were in their infancy baptized; so that, according to them, adult persons only have right to this ordinance, the whole species of infants being excluded. Against this spiritual robbery much hath been written by learned men, and infants' right to baptism asserted and solidly instructed from the Scriptures of truth. In which point I am fully satisfied, not doubting but as God is the believer's God, so he is the God of his seed; and therefore none can forbid water: wherefore I am not to meddle with this point. As the Anabaptists, denying infant baptism, have been faulty in making the subject lawfully receptive of baptism too narrow; so it is a question to me, Whether or not others have made the same wider than the word of God will allow? There may be a fault both ways; in excess as well as in defect. That some infants, born within the visible church, may be baptized, I doubt not; but that all such ought to be admitted to this holy ordinance, I find I cannot subscribe unto, unless I be more satisfied in that point than hitherto I am. This being a matter of practice, is worthy of consideration: and my doubts in that point have obliged me to this inquiry, if possibly I may find any thing in this matter wherein I may rest. In answer to the question proposed, somewhat must be said touching the right of adult persons to this ordinance, as well as of infants. But in regard that it is very rare to hear of an adult person baptized amongst us, I shall say but little upon that head; and possibly I might have waived it altogether, were it not that it may contribute something to the clearing of that wherein my difficulty lies, *viz.*, the right of infants born of Christian parents who are a reproach to their profession.

That we may the better succeed in this inquiry, there is one distinction that must be taken notice of; and that is, There is a twofold right to church privileges; there is a right in foro Dei, or before the Lord; and there is a right in foro ecclesiae, or in the judgment of the church. Where

these two are confounded, men multiply words to no purpose. A person may have a right to church privileges before the Lord, who hath no right thereto before the church; and contrariwise, one may have a right before the church to church privileges, that hath no right thereto before the Lord: for the being of a thing is sufficient in foro Dei, but the appearing of it to be so, is necessary in foro ecclesie, seeing as to us de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio et idem iudicium. So these are two distinct questions, Who ought to be baptized? and, Who ought to seek baptism?\* The first respects a right to baptism before the church; the second a right thereto before God. Which being premised, we lay down these following conclusions.

CONCLUSION I. None have a right to baptism before the Lord, but those who have actually a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

ARGUMENT I. The Scripture plainly holds forth, that the having of the Spirit and faith are necessarily pre-requisite to baptism: Acts 8:36, 37. "Here is water," says the eunuch, "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answereth, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He saith not only, "If thou believest;" but, "If thou believest with all thine heart;" which plainly denotes faith unfeigned, as the apostle speaks; hence then, as Ursin infers, Ergo, si non credas, non licet; "If thou believest not, thou mayest not;" which is necessarily to be understood with respect to the judgment of God; for none can say, that sincere faith is necessary to a right to the ordinance before the church. And so Philip baptizeth him on a credible profession of faith; but withal tells him, that it is no less than the truth of faith that can warrant him before the Lord to seek baptism to himself. Acts 10:47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" importing, that if they had not received the Holy Ghost, they had no true right to baptism; but they had received the Holy Ghost, as well as (Greek, kathos, even as) the apostle himself, and the believing Jews, who received the same as a spirit of saving grace, as well as of extraordinary gifts; not only (says Piscator) the gift of tongues, but of Christian faith. Whence he observes, that adult persons, concerning whom it appears from probable arguments that they believe in Christ, are to be received into the church by baptism. What though this receiving of the Holy Ghost

have an immediate respect to extraordinary gifts, it is no otherwise made a ground whereupon they have right to baptism, but as it is an evidence of their having the Spirit of sanctification. They heard them speak with tongues; therefore says Peter, "Can any man forbid water, seeing these have received the gift of the Holy Ghost;" which, according to that Acts 2:38, 39. did pre-suppose repentance, at least in appearance; which appearance was the ground of their right in foro ecclesiae, and the reality of the same the ground of their right coram Deo.

ARGUMENT II. The words of institution make this evident, Matt. 28:19, 20. "Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them," &c. They must first be disciplined; and then, and not till then, have they a right to baptism. To be a disciple of Christ and a believer are reciprocal terms, as Christ teacheth us, comparing with this Mark 16:16. "He that believeth, and is baptized," &c. And infants may be no less disciples of Christ than adult persons, as is clear from that Acts 15:10. "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [viz. circumcision] on the neck of the disciples?" The apostles understood it so, as is plain from their practice; which may well be to us a sufficient commentary thereupon. See how Peter sets himself to his work, Acts 2:38. "Repent therefore, and be baptized; where it is plain, that he requires their repentance antecedently to baptism, as necessary to qualify them for the right and due reception thereof. And there is no example of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, where any were baptized but such as appeared to have a saving interest in Christ; as afterwards we shall shew.

ARGUMENT III. This will plainly appear, if we consider the nature of sacraments, the ends and uses for which they are appointed of God, as the Scriptures do declare the same.

1. The sacraments are not converting, but confirming ordinances; they are appointed for the use and benefit of God's children, not of others; they are given to believers as believers, as Rutherford expresseth it loc. sup. cit. so that none other are subjects capable of the same before the Lord. Either must we say, they have no respect at all to saving grace; or that they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the first grace, that is, to convert sinners; or, finally, for confirmation of grace already received. If it be said, they have no respect at all to saving grace, then

baptism cannot be called the baptism of repentance; nor are persons baptized for the remission of sins; nor can it be looked on as a seal of the righteousness of faith: all which is evidently against Scripture testimony. And I do not remember it is pleaded by any, though Mr. Fulwood is pleased to say, that persons may be considered to be truly baptized\* without respect to saving grace. If it be said they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the first grace; then, 1. Either there are none converted before baptism, which is manifestly false, Acts 8:12. 37; or else baptism is in vain conferred on converts, which is no less false. But surely in vain are means used to confer on any that which they have before. 2. It were unfaithfulness to Christ, and cruelty to men to withhold the sacraments from any person whatsoever. Were it not soul murder to withhold the means of conveyance of the first grace from any, and unfaithfulness to him, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth? But that the sacraments, and particularly baptism, are not to be conferred on all promiscuously, none can deny. Wherefore it remains, they are indeed appointed for confirmation; which doth necessarily suppose the pre-existence of grace in the soul, seeing that which is not, cannot be confirmed.

2. Baptism is appointed of God to be a seal of the righteousness of faith. So testifies the apostle concerning circumcision, Rom. 4:11. and consequently of baptism, which hath now come into its room, Col. 2:11. 12.—"By the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism." This none but Socinians, and such as they, will quarrel. But now none have right to the seal, but such as have interest in the thing sealed. The being of a thing is pre-supposed to the sealing of it; the contract must be made before it be sealed. No wise man will seal a blank, far less must God's seal be given to him that hath no interest in that which it is appointed to seal. And it is evident, that such as are out of Christ, have no interest in his righteousness, therefore no right before God to the seal of it. "Abraham received circumcision" says the apostle, "a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had before." Where the party baptized is one that hath no saving interest in Christ, the ordinance as to him is abused, and so he hath no right thereto before the Lord. The abuse is manifest from what is said; for, as Witsius teacheth,\* God seals nothing, to such a one, that is truly good. The benefits of the covenant he hath neither part nor lot in;



how then can he have right to the ordinance sealing the same? Some possibly may say it seals the conditional covenant of grace to such a one. But, not to examine the conditionality of the covenant of grace, denied by many godly and learned divines, 1. This is inconsistent with the common doctrine of orthodox divines, teaching, That the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the moment of time wherein it is administered: for if it seal the conditional covenant to such, it is certain its efficacy is tied to that moment; for we know no other efficacy of it but effectual oblation. 2. Baptism either seals that conditional covenant as merely offered and not accepted, or as both offered and accepted. If the first be said, then, 1. It seals no engagement on our part; which is not only contrary to the orthodox doctrine of divines about baptism, but is inconsistent with what the Scriptures say of the baptized, their being "buried with Christ in baptism, baptized into Christ, into one body," &c. 2. How then can any deny baptism unto those to whom the conditional covenant is held forth, whether they consent to be disciples of Christ or not? If the second be said, the case is altered, yea the cause is yielded: for such as accept of the covenant are in Christ, seeing there can be no entering now into covenant with God but through the Mediator. It will not help the cause to allege, that it seals the conditional covenant, as accepted externally by profession: for God doth propose faith, and not profession, as the terms of the conditional covenant of grace; and therefore whoso come not up to the terms defined by God himself in his word, they are not accounted before the Lord to have accepted of the covenant, though before men they may be so accounted of; in regard not faith in itself, but the profession of it, vocal or real, appeareth to them. If any shall say, that baptism seals visible church membership to those that have no saving interest in Christ, his righteousness, &c. I would demand a proof of that, that baptism is appointed to seal visible church membership, and no other benefit of the covenant; or where it can be found, that God sealeth the benefits of the covenant by halves. As Mr. Baxter observes, the end of a sacrament must enter the definition thereof; and it is certain it is appointed of God to seal the righteousness of faith, remission of sins, &c. to some. If then it be appointed to seal only visible church membership to others, there must be two baptisms, though the apostle tells us there is but one, Eph. 4:5.

3. Let us view those Scriptures that directly hold forth the nature, ends,

and uses of baptism. Math. 3:11. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," eis metanoian. So it is called the baptism of repentance, Acts 19:4. John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance: not in respect of repentance to come after, but going before; for John baptized none but those that confessed their sins, Matth. 3:6. and he required of them a profession of their faith in him that was to come,\* Acts 19:4. It is called the baptism of repentance, for remission of sin, Mark 1:4. Peter calls those pricked at the heart to repent and be baptized for the remission of sin; where it can be no otherwise understood, but in testimony and confirmation of remission of sins, as our divines shew against the Papists. Rom. 4:11. He received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which he had before. Gal. 3:27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;" where baptism is made a seal of our union with Christ, which is one of the ends of baptism. This end, says a learned man,\* none but the faithful do obtain; for, as the apostle says in the same place, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." So baptism is called the laver of regeneration, and we are said to be baptized into Christ's death, and into one body; all which are to be understood of baptism, as sealing those things done already. From which it appears, that none but such as have an interest in Christ have right to baptism before the Lord. Which will be further clear by the arguments to be adduced for proof of the next conclusion.

Many testimonies might be adduced which are given by orthodox divines, unto this truth, whereof some afterwards shall be touched. But Mr. Fulwood flies in the face of it, in his discourse of the visible church. "The word of God" says he "Gen. 17:23. acknowledged, that one may have a right to the first seal of the covenant, and that coram Deo, that hath no saving grace. Ishmael was thirteen years old, ver. 25. when he was circumcised, and therefore of age to answer for himself; yet Ishmael had no saving grace, neither was he within the covenant of Isaac—the covenant of absolute and certain salvation, from which he was excluded, ver. 19. Yet Ishmael hath a right to the first seal of the covenant coram Deo, as is most evident from the immediate command of God, that he that was born in Abraham's house, must needs be circumcised, ver. 12. and accordingly Abraham understood it. He proceeds upon the command of God to circumcise Ishmael first of all. Now what is it that giveth one

right to any ordinance but the command, or at least more evidently than the command of God himself? And that right which we have from God's command, is doubtless a right coram Deo, and in his sight."

In answer to this, I deny that Ishmael had a right to circumcision coram Deo; and the contrary is very far from being most evident from the immediate command of God, ver. 12. The command of God layeth an obligation on such as it is directed unto, to make use of such an ordinance as the command relateth unto; but it giveth not a right to any ordinance. If the ordinance which the command respects be not a sealing ordinance, then indeed the command pre-supposeth the person's right thereto, and evidenceth it; the ordinance being such as requires no special qualification in the party to found his right thereto: As it is in the hearing of the word, the command to hear pre-supposeth a right to hear, otherwise ministers should, at the command of God, preach to them that have no right to hear; for the command to hear obligeth not but when there is something spoken that may be heard. But if the ordinance be a sealing ordinance, as that we now speak of is, then the receiving of it comes under a twofold notion; first, of a duty; and, secondly, of a special privilege; the confounding whereof, or not distinguishing of the same, seems to be the ground of this mistake. It is a duty, because commanded; it is a special privilege, because allowed only to a certain sort of persons. Now, in such a case there is some special qualification in the party required to found his right to the sealing ordinance. I think this learned man will not say but it was necessary, that the party having right to circumcision, should be one in covenant with God, whatever that covenant he said to be; and that a person no way in covenant with God, could have no right thereto coram Deo: so that the right to that ordinance turned on the hinge of personal qualifications undeniably; and the command of God did not give a right to it, but obliged to the qualification (whatever it was), and to the usemaking of the ordinance, and that conjunctly; but did not so much as evidence a right thereto, either before God or the church. And what is said of circumcision, agrees to all sealing ordinances: so that what is alleged by the learned man concerning the right to a sealing ordinance, from God's command obliging to receive, it is *de subjecto non supponente*, in my opinion. And the thing he had to prove, was, that the command of God in such a case gives a right to the

ordinance; which cannot be received without proof, and upon a bare assertion. When Peter, in the name of the Lord, commands every one of those to whom he spoke to be baptized, Acts 2:38. it did indeed oblige them to submit to that holy ordinance, but in the meantime to go about it in God's own way, and to be persons duly qualified for baptism. But this command did not evidence their right thereto, either coram Deo or coram ecclesiæ, while they continued impenitent murderers of the Lord of glory; nay nor at all; for it was upon their gladly receiving the word that the apostle proceeded to admit them. Here then I would ask, 1. Whether or not those persons to whom the apostle said, "Be baptized every one of you," were obliged to submit to this ordinance? That they were, is manifest, if the command of God, by the mouth of his servant, could oblige them. 2. Whether or not, while they continued impenitent mockers of religion, enemies to Christ, neither sorrowing for their sins, nor professing sorrow for them, not believing nor repenting, nor appearing so to do, might the apostles have baptized them? or could they lawfully have received baptism? Whoso will say they might, would pour contempt on Christ's holy ordinance. Sure I am, had they baptized them in such a case, they had gone beyond the bounds of their commission, obliging them first to disciple, then to baptize. From all which it appears, that persons may be obliged to the receiving of baptism by virtue of the command of God, and yet have no right thereto, either before God or the church. Again, the command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me," obligeth all that hear the gospel to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as God giveth opportunity; yet it neither gives all a right thereto before God or the church: nay nor does it evidence the same; for there are many that may not lawfully partake, and many that may not lawfully be admitted thereto by church officers, notwithstanding that the command of God obligeth them to do this. If it be their sin not to partake, which it must needs be, Christ revealing his will to them, whereof this is a part; then it is their duty to receive it: yet they may not lawfully receive it, while continuing in their open wickedness. All that hear the gospel have not a right to it, either before God or the church, as I think none will deny. All indeed ought to eat; but, according to the apostle, they must first examine themselves, and then eat.\* Ursin upon that question, "Who ought to come to the supper?" tells us, "The sacraments are appointed for the faithful and converted only, to seal the promise of the gospel to them, and

confirm their faith." And that the wicked and hypocrites ought not to come; not that they are not obliged to come, that is not his meaning; but that they cannot lawfully come as is manifest from what he says afterwards, that such not coming peccatum peccato cumulant, "heap sin on sin." But hear the objection against this doctrine, and his answer to it. "OBJECTION. 'God commands all to make use of the sacraments.' ANSWER. He commands to all the use of the sacraments; yet the lawful use, which is not without faith and repentance. He commands that all be baptized, and make use of the supper; but he also commands that all believe and repent, Acts 2:38." Let us suppose, a master commands his servant to sow his ground; doth this give a right to him to go immediately and cast in the seed, before that ever he break the ground with the plough, and make it fit for the receiving of the seed? Should he go thus to work, he were a disobedient servant. Neither could it excuse that he had his master's immediate command to sow his ground. Even so in the present case. Ishmael being by the command of God obliged to receive the seal of the righteousness of faith, was eo ipso obliged to receive the righteousness of faith; and till then he had no right to the seal before the Lord.

CONCLUSION II. Visible believers, and such as have a profession of religion, probably signifying their having a saving interest in Christ, have a right to baptism before the church, so that they may be admitted thereto, though indeed they have no saving grace, yea or never shall have it. This may be allowed without a scrupulous inquiry into their state before God; and men in this case ought to take the first probable profession as the ground of admission. All this is clear from the examples of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, particularly from the practise of John the Baptist, Matt. 3:6: and of Philip baptizing the Samaritans, and amongst them Simon the Magician; and his baptizing the eunuch, Acts 8. And truly, if an apparently serious profession did not warrant the church to give the seals to such persons as have it, they could administer them to none without a revelation from God as to the person's state before the Lord. But this is so plain, that it were in vain to stand upon further proof thereof. And therefore we proceed to

CONCLUSION III. None but visible believers, or such as appear to have a

saving interest in Christ, have right to baptism before the church. Whatever people do profess, in words, as to their faith in Christ, &c. if their profession be openly and visibly contradicted and belied by their practice; if they be habitually profane in their walk, or grossly ignorant of the fundamental points of the Christian religion, they ought not to be baptized, though they offer themselves to baptism.

ARGUMENT I. "That which is holy is not to be given to dogs, neither are pearls to be cast before swine," Matth, 7:6. But the sacrament of baptism is a holy thing, and those that are not visible saints, are visible dogs and swine: Prov. 26:11, "As a dog returned to his vomit, so a fool to his folly." 2 Pet. 2:18, 20. Who is the fool, but he that understandeth not, and doth not seek after God, who is altogether corrupt and filthy? Psal. 14. Our Lord himself tells us, that "it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs," Matth. 15:26. "And therefore," as Zanchy\* saith, "to admit unto the sacrament of baptism the impenitent and unbelievers, what else is it but to trample under foot, the blood of Christ, and expose it to mockery?" It were frivolous to say, that if this prove aught, it would prove that no unregenerate man ought to be baptized; for they are those fools; for indeed, as was said before, none of these have a right to the ordinance before the Lord. But be what they will as to their state before God, unless they appear to us to be fools, dogs, and swine, we are not to hold them as such, but to esteem them risible saints, as they are indeed supposed to be.

ARGUMENT II. None ought to be baptized but visible disciples of Christ; for in baptism there is an open acknowledging of the party for a disciple of Christ. He ought to be looked on as a servant of the great Master, before he get on his badge, and wear his livery. The commission for baptizing runs so, first to make disciples, then to baptize, Matt, 28:19. And this is the very native order of these things. But none but visible believers can be acknowledged for Christ's disciples. Ergo, The assumption I prove. 1. None can be esteemed Christ's disciples, but those that appear to have "learned of the Father," and so also have come to Christ, being drawn effectually by the Father, John 6:44, 45; and none but visible believers are such. Though that the Lord may have begun to teach others, and they are beginning to learn of him, yet till this appear to us, we can never reckon them disciples of Christ. Let it be remembered,

that we do acknowledge infants to be disciples of Christ, as well as adult persons; and whatever is, or may be said on this head, must be understood de subjecto capaci, and without prejudice to the holy seed, the infants of the faithful. 2. We must judge of people's discipleship by their fruit, Matt. 7:20, "By their fruit ye shall know them;" viz. whether they be Christ's disciples, or the devil's. This our Lord plainly teacheth, John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit; so shall ye be" (i. e. appear, yea further appear, to be) "my disciples." The same is taught, John 8:31, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Hence it plainly follows, that none but visible saints are visible disciples of Christ, and that such whose practice belies their profession are excluded. 3. Such as are worse than infidels, cannot be reckoned disciples of Christ; such as have denied the faith, are worse than infidels;\* and those whose practice openly contradicts their profession, have denied the faith; for though they "profess to know God, yet in works they deny him," Tit. 1:16; and it is horrid indeed to think on sealing them with the seal of the covenant that in their works deny God, unto whom "nothing is pure, who are abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." 4. We are plainly instructed what it is without which none can be Christ's disciples. Luke 14:26, 27, "If any man hate not his father and mother;—and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Will Christ acknowledge men as his disciples, on no other terms? then, without the appearance of these things, we ought not to reckon persons his disciples. Neither are ever any called disciples of Christ in the Scriptures, but such as were visible believers. We read indeed, John 6:66, "that many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him," and so some visible believers apostatize: not that they are visible disciples of Christ when they fall into a total and final apostacy; but they that now are apostates, were visible disciples of Christ before. When we say an apostate disciple, or a disciple gone back, the term disciple is affected with alienation, as philosophers speak; as when we say, a dead man, the meaning is, he who was a man while living, is now dead. Hence it appears, that the argument taken by Fulwood\* from this Scripture, to prove that the visible church may be considered to be truly a church of Christ without respect to saving grace, is of no use to his purpose. "Now, let it be supposed," says he, "that they now ceased to be disciples, (and truly I think it may not only be supposed,

but fully concluded they now ceased to be disciples), yet this only evidenceth, for the time past, that they never had any true grace, howbeit they were then disciples. Unless they had gone on, they could not have gone back; and so long as they went on, they were disciples. Not those that seemed, but those that were disciples, went back." It is true indeed, that the apostacy of these persons evidenced, for the time past, that they never had any true grace; but it did not evidence that they never had any evidence, before men, of true grace, or that they never had any appearance of true grace, which, unless his argument prove it, cannot reach his conclusion: yea, it evidenceth the quite contrary, that they had some time an appearance of saving grace, in so far as they were accounted disciples of Christ, and to have walked with him. But I deny that their apostacy only evidenced they had no true grace; it evidenced also, that they were never the true disciples whom Christ sent his disciples to make and baptize, and so no church members before God: for, as Mr. Baxter saith, "When Christ saith, Make me disciples of all nations baptizing them, he means sincere disciples, though we cannot ever know them to be sincere." It is a weak criticism, to remark, that it was not those that seemed, but those that were disciples, that went back; for were is no more in the text than seemed. And what if I say, they were seeming disciples, and not real. But they were indeed visible disciples before their visible apostacy; they were as really visible disciples, as Peter and John were; but when they apostatized, they ceased to be visible disciples.

ARGUMENT III. All the examples of baptism recorded in the Scripture, hold forth none to have been baptized, but those that before baptism appeared to have a saving interest in Christ. Those whom John the Baptist admitted, were such as "confessed their sins," Matth. 3:6. So those baptized by Peter, Acts 2:41. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." The Samaritans believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and then were baptized, Acts 8:12. "Simon himself believed also, and was baptized," ver. 13. "The eunuch said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and then was baptized," vers. 37, 38, Paul is first converted, and then baptized, Acts 9:18. The centurion, and those with him, received the Holy Ghost; and therefore none could forbid water.\* So Lydia, Acts 16:14,



15. the jailor, vers, 32, 33. Crispus and others, Acts 18:8. Neither can any instance be adduced wherein the matter appears to have been handled otherwise; and surely these examples are our rule in this case. What though some of them, as Simon Magus, were indeed hypocrites, the argument nevertheless holds good, if their hypocrisy did not appear before they were baptized; which cannot be proven to have been, even in the case of Simon: yea it appears right plainly, from the history of him, that it was some time after he was baptized that his hypocrisy appeared; for, after he was baptized, he continued with Philip all the time, till the apostles which were at Jerusalem, sent unto Samaria Peter and John, and the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost through the laying on of the the apostles' hands.

ARGUMENT IV. If the admission of such to baptism as are not visible saints be a profaning of the holy ordinance, then they have no right before the church thereto, nor ought they to be baptized; the former is true: Ergo, the latter also. The profanation of the ordinance appears, in that those are declared to be real members of Christ, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, blessed with the pardon of sin, &c. who, to the sight of the world, have, or at least appear to have, none of these things: for baptism, as was shown before, is appointed of God to seal these and such like; and so is a testifying sign that the party baptized is such a one. Wherefore, to baptize such persons, were to proclaim an agreement betwixt Christ and Belial, and to set up for concord betwixt light and darkness, and seal the same with a witness; which cannot be but an abuse of God's holy ordinance. It was a heavy charge against the priests, Ezek. 22:26. that they had violated God's law, and profaned his holy things; and put no difference between the holy and profane, nor shewed difference between the clean and unclean. Now, the law which they violated in this, we have expressly set down, Lev. 10:8. 9. 10. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; lest ye die: It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." The first respects moral, the other ceremonial purity or impurity. And this putting difference is evidently distinguished from the shewing difference doctrinally; as appears from ver. 11. "And that ye may teach the

children of Israel," &c. Now, surely the Lord doth as little allow the profaning of his holy things under the gospel, as under the law; and the putting no difference betwixt the holy and profane, cannot but be a profaning of God's holy things, now as well as then. The priests also are reprov'd for bringing into the sanctuary, strangers uncircumcised in heart and in flesh, and thereby polluting it, Ezek. 44:7. And to prevent the mistake, lest they should think that the only ground of the quarrel was, that such were uncircumcised in flesh, the Lord tells them, ver. 9. that "no stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into his sanctuary." Mark the disjunctive particle, "uncircumcised in heart, nor in flesh." Was the sanctuary more holy than the sacrament of baptism is? will moral impurity pollute the one, and not the other? If any shall say, that this respects not Israelites, but strangers; and so although it may hold good in our case as to professed pagans, yet not as to professed Christians: I answer, 1. The strangers were debarred from the sanctuary as uncircumcised in heart, therefore all uncircumcised in heart were debarred; for a qua tali ad omne valet consequentia. 2. The Lord expressly reproveth the profane Israelites for entering into his sanctuary, Jer. 7:9. 10. 11.

ARGUMENT V. ult. If none have a right to baptism before the Lord but real saints, then none have a right to it before the church but visible saints. The argument has been already proven; and the consequent is very plain. These two positions do mutually establish one another. If the word debar all from the sacraments that are not real saints, to admit such as have no appearance of saintship, were to pull in with the one hand, when we shut out with the other; which is the high way to make people Atheists, and to believe nothing that is preached. When God hath declared, that none have right before him to the seals of the covenant, but those that have a saving interest in his Son, in whom "the promises are Yea and Amen;" and hath required the dispensers of the holy mysteries, to "put a difference betwixt the holy and unholy, and to separate betwixt the precious and the vile," and told us, that "we shall know them by their fruits;" men ought to beware of admitting such as plainly appear to be profane and vile. Men must not be blind, when the works of the flesh are manifest, Gal. 5:19.

Now, all this doth no way prejudice the right of infants to baptism corame celestie; for the infants of visible believers are no less visible believers than they themselves are, seeing the Lord declares himself to be not only the believer's God, but the God of his seed. "We do not tie," say the professors of Leyden,\* "the efficacy of baptism to that moment when the body is washed; but we do, with the Scripture, pre-require faith and repentance in all that are to be baptized, at least, according to the judgment of charity: and that as well in infants that are within the covenant; in whom, by the power of God's blessing and of the gospel covenant, we affirm, that there is the seed and spirit of faith and repentance; as in the aged, in whom the profession of actual faith and repentance is necessary." "Yea," saith Zanchius, "We must believe, that an infant of faithful parents is already baptized with the baptism of the Spirit, seeing it is in the covenant." It were easy to heap up testimonies given by orthodox divines to the first and third conclusions. Ursin gives his judgment thereanent in two theses: "All," says he, "and only the regenerate lawfully, receive baptism. The church administereth baptism lawfully to all, and only these whom she ought to account in the number of the regenerate." See "Calv. Inst." lib. 4. cap. 16. § 23, 24; "Wits. in Symb. Apost." p. 455. § 15; "Exer." p. 372, 381, 416; "Zanch. in Eph." p. 226; "Wend. Christ. Theol." p. 432; "Baxt. Inf. Bapt." p. 327; "Bowles' Past. Evang." p. 185.

CONCLUSION IV. All infants descended of parents whereof one only is a visible believer, hath right to baptism before the church; they ought to be baptized, whether it be the father or mother that makes a credible profession. Such are in covenant with God visibly; we are to look on them as probably within the covenant, as to the saving benefits thereof, so that none can forbid water. The apostle plainly tells us, they are not unclean I but holy, 1 Cor. 7:14. and therefore subjects lawfully capable of this ordinance. I find no need to insist on this point, being fully satisfied therein, and knowing none that deny it who do not altogether reject infant baptism. If it be inquired, Who is to be sponsor for the child when the father is the unbeliever? I answer, The father cannot be admitted, seeing there is no reason to expect that he will bring up his child in the fear of that God, the fear of whom is not before his own eyes; or in that religion to which he himself is a stranger. To overlook the mother, and to

require another to be sponsor for the child, I see no reason. But the mother is to be sponsor for the child: 1. Because it seems the child hath its right by her. 2. Because the Scripture lays the bonds on her; so that she is antecedently obliged to bring up her child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6:4. 3. Because she is the person most to be trusted in such a weighty concern. Whoever it be that presents the child to be baptized, I suppose is not material, providing he or she be a church member. Neither is it necessary that the sponsor present the child; but if it can be conveniently done, it ought to be. Only in the case supposed, the bonds being laid on the mother, it is not reasonable the child should want the seal of the covenant till she be able to appear in the congregation, if providence allow an opportunity before that time.

But now I come to the main point of this inquiry, viz. Whether or no all infants born of Christian parents, so called in opposition to Jews, Turks, and pagans, have a right before the church to baptism? or, whether the open wickedness, profanity, or gross ignorance of the parents, should hinder the infant to be baptized, till either the parents reform, or the child come to mature age, and by his personal walk satisfy the church as to his right to that ordinance? What hath been said to the former points seems pretty clear; but to determine this, hoc opus, hic labor est.

Many godly and learned hold the former part of that question, though, as I apprehend, on different grounds; all which, I conceive, are expressed by Zanchy, and Oliver Bowles. Their words are as follows. "The children of those," says that judicious divine, Zanchius,\* "that are indeed in the church, but, because of their unclean way of living, declare that they are not indeed of the church; if they be offered to baptism, they cannot be debarred therefrom, nor ought they. The reason is, because though the parents be wicked, yet their impiety ought not to prejudge their children which are born within the church. But if you say, only the children of the faithful are to be baptized, because those infants only are judged to be within the covenant, and they only holy; I answer, the impiety of their nearest parents is not to be considered here, but the piety of the church in which they are born;—as also their ancestors who have lived godly and holily." "All infants," says Mr. Bowles,\* "who, in the judgment of charity, are within the covenant, are to be baptized. And baptism is to be

administered exactly according to this judgment of charity. And that judgment concludes all to be within the covenant, whose parents were sometime sealed with the seal of the covenant," Hereto add Mr, Fulwood's notion of it. He judgeth the children of openly wicked parents are to be baptized, because their parents may be really members of the visible church, (notwithstanding their want of saving grace), and really baptized. And so they allow the children of such heretics amongst whom the formula of baptism remains safe, children of excommunicate parents, bastards, if there be any evidence of the baptism, at least of one of the parents. Some add foundlings. Bowles requires that there be sponsors found in order to the baptizing of these children of heretics, &c. otherwise he acknowledges the action to be lusory, and baptism to be polluted. I remember there is a question, Whether or not the infants of pagans, Turks, or Jews, wholly in the power of a Christian believer, being by him devoted to Christ, ought to be baptized? This is by Mr. Baxter resolved in the affirmative, on Scripture grounds. In this case, the infant's right is wholly from the sponsor. Now, if the children of openly wicked Christians be put in this case, the plea for their right to baptism from their being born in the church, of godly progenitors, of baptized immediate parents, falls to the ground. But I suppose those learned men mean no such thing; but that, by virtue of their birth privilege, the children of openly wicked Christian parents have a right to baptism; and that, laying aside the case of such sponsors from whom the infants wholly derive their right to the ordinance, it is not necessary that one of the parents be a visible believer, or have a serious and credible profession, in order to their children's having a right to baptism coram ecclesia. And for proof of this point let the following arguments be considered.

ARGUMENT I. The seal of the covenant belongs to all those that are within the covenant; but the infants of all Christian parents are within the covenant; for so runs the covenant, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed." Seeing the parents are sealed with the seal, they must needs be within the covenant, and consequently their seed also. The covenant is not made with the root, but also with the offspring; and if so, why may not the seal of the covenant be effectual, not only to the baptized parent if he believe, but also render his seed capable at least of the external sign. Wherefore the apostle with, "Now are your children holy," to wit, by

external holiness; whereby they are reputed to be within the covenant, being come of such a parent as hath given up his or her name to Christ, 1 Cor. 7:14. Let it be duly considered what was the case that was so straitening to those Corinthians, which Paul doth resolve in the forecited place. It was not, whether or not the godly husband or wife might lawfully abide in the state of marriage with a wicked Christian yoke-fellow? but, whether or not the Christian husband or wife might lawfully abide in that state with a pagan? The apostle tells them they might, and gives the reason, "For the unbelieving husband it sanctified to the believing wife," i. e. the pagan to the Christian; and gives the reason, "Else were your children unclean; but now they are holy." And it is very palpable there was very open wickedness amongst that people. What sad divisions and disorders were among them! They tolerated the incestuous person; they did not mourn, but were puffed up; some of them were drunken when they came to the Lord's table; some denied the resurrection, &c. Notwithstanding of all, the apostle tells them their children were holy, consequently within the covenant, and to be baptized.

ARGUMENT II. The infant not having stretched forth its hand to the parent's iniquity, must not bear his sin, at least in spirituals, Ezek. 18:20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But surely, if no infants should be admitted to baptism but those of visible believers, many infants born of Christian parents should be debarred, and so uncontrovertibly bear the iniquity of their fathers. If God hath manifested his mercy so far, that the child shall not bear the father's sin, they seem to go strangely to work that will debar poor infants because of the wicked life of their parents, in which they, poor souls, have no hand. Which is the more to be noticed, and calls people to be the more wary, if we consider that many a time God brings chosen vessels out of the loins of the most profligate parents. Even in the family of Jeroboam was one "found in whom there was some good thing found toward the God of Israel."

ARGUMENT III. If the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents did not exclude their children from circumcision, then the heresy, profanity, or impiety of Christian parents cannot exclude their children from baptism; the former is true: Ergo, the consequence is plain: for

baptism is the same to us, that circumcision was to them; "circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. 4:11. as well as baptism; and none will say, that the grace of God is more narrow under the New Testament than it was under the Old. The minor is no less manifest, if ye consider these four things. 1. The universality of the command with respect to circumcision, Gen. 17:10. "Every man-child among you shall be circumcised;" which command is repeated ver. 12. Here is no exception. 2. The punishment or censure to be inflicted on the uncircumcised man-child among the Jews, ver. 14. "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people." 3. Consider the practice of Joshua, who at God's command circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, Josh. 5. where it is expressly said, "When they had done circumcising all the people," ver. 8.; yet these were the children of them whom God for their wickedness kept out of Canaan, who fell in the wilderness, who vexed his Holy Spirit forty years, so that he swore they should never enter into his rest And they themselves cannot be supposed to be all visible believers. 4. We never read of any of the Israelites' children that were debarred from that ordinance on any pretence whatsoever. From all which it is evident, that the impiety of the Jewish parents did not debar their children from circumcision, and therefore as little can the impiety of Christians debar theirs from baptism. Here is a grant of the first seal of the covenant, yea, a command to receive the same, directed unto the children of all that are externally in covenant with God, as Christians and their seed are. If any will say, it is now done away, and concerns not us under the New Testament dispensation; they must acknowledge themselves obliged to shew us the repeal thereof in the sacred records, otherwise confess it still stands in force.

ARGUMENT IV. This doth further appear, if we consider that Scripture, Acts 2:38, 39. "Repent therefore, and be baptized every one of you. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Now, what is that promise he speaks of, but the great promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed." The apostle hereby means to stir them up to repentance, and to be baptized; and for their encouragement he tells them, the promise is to them and their seed. Note, that the promise is to them antecedently to their repenting; this is plain, because the apostle's argument is truly thus,

the promise is to you, therefore repent and be baptized; he argues from their privilege to their duty. Again, the promise is said to be to such "as are afar off, even to as many as God shall call," meaning the Gentiles, Eph. 2:13. "Ye who sometimes were afar off." The call here spoken of, is the outward and external call, which puts the Gentiles into the same case with those Jews who surely were not savingly called, so that the promise is to their seed also, as well as to the Jews' seed. Hence I form a twofold argument.

1. If the promise be to the born Israelites and their seed even antecedently to their repenting, then the promise is unto persons within the Christian church and to their seed, antecedently to true repentance in them: but the former is true: Ergo, and if the promise be so to them, the seal of it must be so likewise.

2. The promise is to the Gentiles, whom the Lord externally calleth, and to their seed; but such are openly wicked Christian parents: Ergo, Who can forbid water to their infants?

ARGUMENT. V. John Baptist and the apostles admitted all to baptism that offered themselves, Matt. 3:5, 6. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and were baptized of him." He debarred none; no not the Pharisees, whom yet he called "a generation of vipers," ver. 7. That he did baptize them, is clear from his own express testimony, ver. 11. where, speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees, he saith, "I indeed baptize you with water." Luke 3:21, it is expressly said, "When all the people were baptized." Now the practice of John plainly holds forth, that they had a right to that ordinance, and that they were in covenant: Ergo, a majori the infants of wicked Christian parents are to be baptized. Now, if we look to the practice of the apostles, we shall find, that notwithstanding of all that John baptized, yet Christ by his disciples baptized more than he; as the evangelist expressly testifies, John 4:1. Philip, on a bare profession of faith, baptized the eunuch; and so in other examples. Now, it is certain, that they would never have refused baptism to the infants of the parents whom they baptized; but so it is, that those children whose title to this ordinance is questioned, are the children of such parents as profess their faith in Christ; why then should not their right to the ordinance be acknowledged?



ARGUMENT VI. Those children whom God acknowledged to be born to him, and to be his children, have a right to the first seal of the covenant; for what children have right to it, if God's children, such as are born to him, have it not? but so it is that God owneth the children of the Jewish wicked parents to be born unto him, and to be his children: Ergo, Ezek. 16:20, 21. "Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons, and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these thou hast sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire unto them." Here is most gross and open wickedness of the parents, yet the Lord will not have it to prejudge the church state of the children.

ARGUMENT VII. If none but the infants of visible believers have right to baptism, and ought to be baptized; then, 1. Families, parishes, and whole countries, might come in a short time to be paganized; seeing in many places there are so very few visible believers. 2. Through the rigidity and indiscretion of church officers, many poor infants who are the children of believing parents should be deprived of that ordinance: for people may go to heaven while we hear not the sound of their feet; and it is Well known saving grace may lie hid under the ashes of much ignorance and corruption. 3. Then ministers should have no certain rule to walk by in baptizing any infants. All that is left to them, is their opinion: They think such a one to be a believer, and such a one to be an unbeliever; and therefore they will baptize the infants of the one, not of the other: and they may be mistaken as to both; they may take a sheep for a goat, and a goat for a sheep. Is this sure standing? or can we suppose that God bangs such a weighty matter as this upon the opinion and fallible judgment of men? One possibly thinks such a measure of knowledge, and such a walk, to be sufficient ground whereon he may judge a man a believer; another will think so little will not serve the turn: Where shall we fasten? Surely these things hang not on such uncertainties.

ARGUMENT VIII. The children of baptized church members ought to be baptized; but the children of many openly scandalous and wicked parents are the children of baptized church members: therefore such children ought to be baptized. This argument is Mr. Fulwood's, and is the result of a large discourse concerning the visible church.\* And so much for the

proof of this point.

Notwithstanding of all that is said for the right of the infants of such Christians, some are of opinion, that one of the parents must needs be a visible believer, or have a serious credible or probable profession, or else the child hath no right before the church to baptism. And truly, though I have not willfully dissembled any thing that might add more force to these arguments, but have represented them to the best advantage so far as it occurred to me, yet I still doubt of the truth of that position: and therefore I will now propose some arguments that make me to doubt the truth of it, and incline me to the latter opinion, that I may at least ease my mind a little, by casting forth these my doubts into this paper.

In the first place, We must consider, whether infants may derive their right from their mediate and remote parents, or only from their immediate parents; for to bury this in silence, were to beat the air in arguing for the last position. And if I understand ought of this controversy, this is one of the main hinges of it. Some learned men, distrusting the right of infants from such immediate parents as are openly wicked, who declare by their impure life they are not of the church, do derive the right of such infants from their mediate or remote parents, who lived a godly and holy life. I find two Scriptures adduced for proof of this. The one is, Rom. 11:16. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." "By the root" says Zanchius\* "he understands not their nearest parents, who perhaps were wicked; but those first fathers of the Jewish people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom was made and confirmed the promise and covenant, that God would be their God, and the God of their whole seed, by a perpetual covenant. Therefore all their posterity, who had not altogether apostatized to the gods of the Gentiles, were, I say they all were, in the covenant, and they were judged holy by reason of covenant holiness, *fœderis sanctitate sancti judicabantur.*" Hence the promise is said to be "to them and their seed," (Acts 2:39.), many generations after Abraham. Another Scripture is that, Exod. 20:6. "Shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments," while he visits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation. The truth is, if this were satisfyingly explained, and convincingly proven, the difficulty of the case would be in great measure

removed. But it seems to me to come short of both. Against it let these few reasons be considered.

I. I observe, that the learned men who plead this, must needs disown the necessity of the baptism of one of the parents; and so they shall be judged holy, and within the covenant, and to have right to baptism, whose immediate parents were never so much as baptized; besides, that they are openly wicked in their lives: for it is plain, that godly progenitors may have such come of them as are unbaptized. But notwithstanding, according to this opinion, the children of such unbaptized parents may have right to baptism, and ought to be baptized; which will not be granted, as we heard before, even by such as agree with them in the main point: and I suppose, there are few that will be satisfied with less than the baptism of one of the immediate parents.

II. Are there not many infants born in such places where God has a church, whose immediate and mediate parents, so far as any man now living knoweth or can remember, have been brutishly ignorant, profane, or both; so that the God in whose name the infant is to be baptized, is a God whom neither they nor their fathers have known? As to these we may crave leave to enquire, Quomodo constat? what evidence is there that their mediate parents have lived a godly and holy life? I think no man that considers for how many generations God hath left some nations without the knowledge of his will concerning man's salvation, will obtain of himself to build his charity in this point upon that, that God "visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation" only.

III. If it be sufficient to give an infant a right to baptism, that it is come of godly progenitors, then the children of some pagans and Mahomedans have a right to baptism, though born and to be bred up in a pagan and Mahomedan country, and having nothing common with the church of God; but that is absurd, Eph. 2:12. "At that time ye were without God, strangers to the covenant of promise." And the apostle gives us to know, that the children of pagans are unclean, 1 Cor. 7:14. The consequence holds good, in regard the children of some pagans have had godly ancestors, and some of them lively baptized members of the Christian church, as is manifest in the case of those of Smyrna, Thyatira, Laodicea,

and the rest of Asia (for the most part), which are now unchurched. But you will say, these infants are unchurched. It is so, but how do we know that but by their parents being unchurched? What if a godly woman with child should be cast out into a pagan country and there bring forth her child; is the poor infant therefore a stranger to the covenant, and no church member, because born in a pagan country? No, sure: "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and the place of the child's birth can never prejudice it of the right it has by the promise and covenant of God. Wherefore it is plain, that the place of the nativity of the pagan's children can never evince their being unchurched; for quatenus ad omne valet consequentia. So that it is by the unchurched state of the parents that we know these infants to be unchurched. Let us consider the infants of the first unchurched generation, we find they have no right to the seal of the covenant, yet, *ex hypothesi*, they are come of godly progenitors. Wherefore it doth inevitably follow, that mediate parents their being in covenant with God, is not sufficient to give to their remote seed a right to baptism.

IV. If infants may derive their right before the church, or the evidence of their right before the Lord, to baptism, from their remote parents; than either from any of them whatsoever, or from some of them only—I know no mids. If from any of them whatsoever, then there is no infant under heaven that hath not a right to baptism; which is absurd. The reason of the consequence is, because there is not an infant in the world that is not come of parents that were godly; which will hold true, so long as it remains undoubted that all the world is come of Noah and of Adam. If from some of them only, then, 1. They that will have this believed, must tell us how far we may go back to seek mediate parents from whom the infant may derive its right. 2. They must afford us some probable evidence that such mediate parents were godly. 3. They must give us some reason, why we may go so far back, and no further. These demands seem truly as reasonable as the answering of them is difficult, to say no more.

Now, let us consider the Scriptures adduced for infants deriving their right to baptism before the church, from their remote parents. The first whereof is that Rom. 11:16, "If the root be holy, so are the branches." I am

satisfied, that by the root the apostle doth not mean Christ, as some think; nor yet the covenant, as others; but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or rather Abraham alone. And it is clear, that the apostle is speaking here of the Israelites, to whom only Abraham was a root in respect of carnal generation; so that whatever advantage the Israelites may have of this, we Gentiles can have none, seeing he was none of our remote parents. It is true, the Gentiles may be the spiritual seed of Abraham: but this quite alters the case, if we would plead it in this matter; for now we speak of parents from whom infants descend by carnal generation. And the way how we come to be Abraham's seed, the apostle plainly tells us, Gal. 3:29. "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." If any shall say, that this is a general maxim, and may be applied to the Gentiles as well as the Jews; then unless the immediate parents be the root, by virtue of which their children are holy, as was argued before; so now, we crave 1. That it be shown how far we may go up to seek the root. 2. That it be manifest such infants are branches of a holy root. Yea, and it is reasonable in this case, such a remote parent be condescended on as had such a privilege as Abraham had, that he should be a root, whose remote seed should be holy: for however every godly parent is, by the covenant of God in which he enters, so privileged, that God is his God, and the God of his seed; yet I think none will make every believing parent equally privileged, in this matter, with Abraham; the Scripture holding forth Abraham's special privilege in the holiness of his seed, by any other person in the world. Now, where can we fix for such a one in the case of us Gentiles? But to speak plainly to the point, I am of opinion, that unless we be swayed with authority of men, there is nothing in this Scripture that appears for evidencing the right of the branches to the seals of the covenant; so that it hits not the point in hand. My reason for this is, That the branches the apostle speaks of here, was the body of the people of Israel, the offspring of Abraham, and natural branches of this holy root; which branches were already actually broken off and unchurched: so that whatever he said of them, they could have no right to the sacraments, unless you will make them common to them that are without the church, as well as those that are within. That the body of the Israelites was now broken off, is plain; so that it were in vain to prove it, while the apostle is treating so expressly of their reingrafting. And that they were the branches spoken of here, is evident to me from the scope

and design of the apostle, which is, to prove the calling again of the Israelites, and their reingrafting. For one proof of which he adduceth this argument, "If the root be holy, so are the branches;" but the root is holy: Ergo, the branches also. But holy branches, though cut off, shall be grafted in again. It is true, some of these branches were not broken off, viz. the believing Jews; for there were still some, amongst whom the Gentiles were grafted in, ver. 17. But the apostle needed not prove, that the believing Jews were holy; neither would it contribute ought to his purpose, so far as I can see; neither did the Gentiles boast against those branches that were not broken off, but against those that were broken off, ver. 18, 19, 20. "Boast not against the branches. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off." The only difficulty here is this, How branches broken off, or an unchurched people, can be said to be holy? I find one\* arguing from this text for infant baptism, brings in this objection, "But what kind of consequence is this, If the root be holy, so are the branches?" which he solves, and senseth the text thus. "The apostle in the former verse speaks of a receiving in again of the Jewish nation, and brings in this as a ground to hope for it: There is yet a holy root which hath an influence on the branches; and argues, that if the root be holy, when the branches broken off shall be reingrafted, they shall be holy likewise." If this interpretation be received, the difficulty is removed; but I know none else that puts this sense on the text. It is true, no time is defined in the text, neither the present nor the future; for the words are *ei he riza hagia, kai hoi kladoi*. But if we read that of the branches in the future tense, why not also that of the root? But that which stumbles me mainly as to this interpretation, is, that it is utterly alien from the scope of the apostle, makes his arguing very jejune, and fathers on him a most palpable *petitio principii*: for thus says the apostle, according to him, The Jewish nation shall be received again; for when they shall be reingrafted, they shall be holy; which evidently supposeth the thing in question. But the learned man supports the cause with better arguments than this. Only by the by I cannot but notice, that Mr. Baxter upon that subject, adducing several arguments out of that chapter, makes no mention of any argument from the text under consideration. In whatever sense those branches broken off are said to be holy, it seems plain they are called holy. And, in my opinion, the branches of this root, or the body of that people which was now broken off, are said

to be holy; holiness being attributed unto them not universally, but indefinitely; and that not only in respect of particular persons, but particular generations of them. Abraham being the root, all that come or shall come of him, from the first child begotten of his own body, to the last of his race that shall be born in the world, are accounted the branches of this root, make up one collective body of branches, one seed, and one people; which, by virtue of the holiness of the root, is said to be holy. Thus we find the apostle speaks of them, ver. 15. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Where it is evident, the apostle understands not this receiving again of the particular generation, or the particular persons that were then broke off, as the event hath proven; yea, many generations have passed since, and they are not as yet received; but of this collective body of branches, which is said to be received again, when some of them are received. So ver. 24. "How much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive?" Ver. 31. "Even so also these have now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Now, this holiness is in respect of separation to God by the decree of election; God hating so cast the lot of electing love, that it runs most eminently in that vein, or amongst the natural branches of the root; though it is, by the unsearchable judgments of God, like unto some rivers, that having run above ground a good space, get under the earth, and run there, (as Gnadiana in Spain, running under ground fifteen miles), and afterwards brake forth again, to run above the ground, till they empty themselves into the sea; as Ovid says of Lycus, a river in Lycaonia,

*Sic ubi terreno Lycus est epotus hiatu,*

*Existit procul hinc, alioque renascitur ore.*

So under the Old Testament dispensation, "Happy wast thou, O Israel; who was like unto thee?" Now their sun is overclouded, but we look for the day when all Israel shall be saved, Rom. 11:26. Or, if you please, call it a separation by virtue of the covenant with Abraham; all comes to one thing. Only this holiness of the branches, you see, can give no right to sealing ordinances. The apostle right clearly favours this interpretation, ver. 28. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as

touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Why not holy, as well as beloved of God? not that every individual branch has share, either before God or the church, of the special love of God; but that that people, and collective body of branches, is so beloved of God by others, that out of them he will yet choose many to himself, having in a special manner pitched on that seed for vessels of glory. Thus God is said to have "so loved the world, [in opposition to fallen angels], that he gave his Son, that whosoever should believe on him, should have everlasting life." Even as a king may be said to love a particular family, when he takes one or two of that family, and prefers them, while he takes not any notice of other families, though he do not prefer every individual person among them. This is plainly confirmed by the apostle's reason, ver. 29. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Yea, and they are still called the natural branches, and the olive, their own olive, notwithstanding that they are broken off, ver. 24. And thus we see how the branches broken off are said to be holy. As to that Scripture, Acts 2:39. brought for confirmation of the point foresaid, it is plain, that notwithstanding they were Abraham's seed, and the promise was to them, and to their children, (in what sense we shall afterwards inquire), yet the apostle expressly pre-requires repentance to their admission unto baptism.

As to that other Scripture, Exod. 20:5, 6. "Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me;" whence some learned men would prove infants' right to baptism from their remote parents: I suppose no such thing can be proven from hence. This promise doth not respect the children of wicked immediate parents, though the remote seed of the godly, as those learned men would have it; but only the children of immediate godly parents, to whom the Lord will shew mercy for their parents' sake, and that unto thousands, viz. successively godly; the Lord will still remember those their progenitors, in doing them good, and the longer the godly race has continued, one after another, in the love of God, the better shall it be for the children. Now, these few reasons incline me to understand it so.

I. If by the event we may judge of this promise, as doubtless we may, we shall find, that it cannot be understood as those that differ would have it. Take we an instance in the seed of Abraham. From Abraham to Christ, as



Matthew reckons, there are reckoned only thrice fourteen generations. However we understand the evangelist, it is certain, there were but a few generations in comparison of the thousand in the text; and yet a very little after, the Jews are broken off, and unchurched, and had no right to the seals of the covenant; and long before, the ten tribes, all the seed of godly Abraham, were rejected. Yet no doubt the promise of God remained sure; his truth failed not, though the wicked seed of Abraham was cast off, yea, and "wrath came on them to the uttermost," as the apostle speaks, 1 Thess. 2:16. I know, that to ward off this, it is said, the promise is only to be understood of those that are within the church. But, in my opinion, those who will be satisfied with this answer, are fixed before in the point in question, on some better grounds, or else they are easily satisfied: for it seems strange, to plead from this text in favour of the children of openly wicked immediate parents, for their right to the seals of the covenant, and yet to yield, that God may so far take away his mercy from them, notwithstanding of this promise, as to break them off utterly, and put them in the same case with pagans, while they, poor souls, were not capable to unchurch themselves; so that, notwithstanding of the piety of their remote parents, they are ruined by their nearest parents. I would think, that if this promise made over church privileges to such children, it should, in the first place, secure them from breaking off, and being cast out of the church; in regard it is made to go over the immediate wicked parents, and the mercy is to be shown to their children, being the remote seed of the godly. If any shall say, that, by virtue of this promise, the rejected Jews shall be received again, it is gratis dictum: for there is nothing here peculiar to the Jews, nothing which may not be applied, and belongs to the godly Gentiles, and their seed, as well as the Jews; and so ye may as well argue for the receiving in again of the Laodiceans, Thyatirians, &c. But however it be, notwithstanding of this promise, they are broken off for the time, and have no right to church privileges.\*

II. Unless our interpretation be admitted, the promise and the threatening will be found inconsistent. For suppose the second generation of a wicked man be godly, and also the third, the promise and the threat both should belong to that third generation; the promise, because such a one is the immediate seed of the godly, and the Lord will shew mercy to thousands of them that love him; the threatening, because

he is the remote seed of the wicked, even the third generation; and the threat is, that he will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. And that such cases may and do fall out, who can deny? An instance of it take in the case of Rehoboam, whose son was like himself, 1 Kings 15:3. "He walked in all the sins of his father, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord." Yet Asa, the second from Rehoboam, did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father, ver. 11. And the third, Jehoshaphat, was a godly man. See then, according to the interpretation of those that differ, if both the promise and threat belong not to Jehoshaphat?

III. Unless we expound it of the immediate seed of the godly, there are none, or at least very few in the world, not comprehended in this promise: for I think it will be hard to find any in the world that are a thousand generations removed from godly parents. And truly, if it be so very good and profitable to be come of godly parents so far remote, genealogies are no more vain under the New Testament than under the Old.

Thus it would seem, that children derive their church right to baptism from their immediate, and not from their remote parents. But I will add yet some more for proof of that point; and will try whether those texts alleged on the contrary, have led us to any thing that may be helpful to our purpose.

ARGUMENT I. The child stands coram ecclesia for church privileges by the same person or persons by whom he falls. This proposition, I think, cannot be denied in the matter of moral standing, and right to privileges, whether civil or religious; and of no other standing do we speak here. But so it is, that infants fall from church privileges by their immediate parents: Ergo, they stand by them. The minor is clear from the case of the Jewish infants at the rejection of that people. That their infants fell from all right before the church to the seal of the covenant, is clear; and I think none will doubt it: for they were the natural branches as well as others, and were capable of reingrafting; and the believing Gentile comes with his seed in the room of the unbelieving Jew and his. Well, then, the apostle tells us, it was "for unbelief they were broken off," Rom. 11:20. If so, then either because of their own, or their parents! unbelief; not

because of their own, for they were not capable of rejecting Christ in their own persons, if because of their parents' unbelief, then either of their remote or immediate parents; not because of the unbelief of their remote parents, for their root was holy, ver. 16: therefore because of the unbelief of their next parents. I think none will quarrel our reasoning from the ease of the Jewish children to those of Christians, but Anabaptists and Socinians. I see not what exception any would enter against this argument, unless it be, that these Jews who professedly rejected Christ; but the openly wicked Christians, of whom we speak, do not. But let the difference be what it will; though these Jews had turned professed Atheists, still it remains true, that unless their children had stood by them, they could not have fallen by them. I find Fulwood\* brings in this as an objection against his doctrine, "That children stand in the visible church in their parents' right:" And answers, "That the infant's right is seated in itself, though it be derived from its parents." And this he proves by four arguments. But, in my opinion, he needed not have been at the pains; for I doubt if there be any that say the child's right is seated in the parent, whether it be understood of his right before God or the church. But sure it is, the child can have no visible right to the seals of the covenant, but as he is the child of such mediate or immediate parents, that have right to the same, and are members of the church; and his visible right stands or falls with theirs. So that it may well enough be said, that they stand in their parents' right, or that they stand before the church by their parents.

ARGUMENT II. If the repentance of immediate parents be necessarily pre-requisite unto their infants' right to baptism, (I mean the visible repentance of the parents to the visible right of infants), notwithstanding that such infants are the remote seed of undoubtedly godly parents; then infants derive their right to baptism from their immediate, not their mediate parents; but the antecedent is true: Ergo, the consequent also. The sequel is manifest. The assumption I prove from Acts 2:38. 39. "Repent, and be baptized for the remission," &c. Here are two sorts of persons spoken off, viz. adult persons, who were personally guilty of the murder of the Son of God; and their seed, or little ones. Both were Abraham's seed, at least most of them were so: for however these words, "and to as many as are afar off," &c. be explained; yet none can doubt but

the natural seed of Abraham are designed in these words, "For the promise is to you, and to your children." So the children here spoken of, are the children of remote godly parents. Two things here remain to be proven for clearing of the assumption: 1. That repentance is required as necessary antecedently to a right to baptism here enjoined. 2. That in the call to baptism, the children of those parents are comprehended as well as themselves.

1. As to the first, That repentance is required of the parents in this text, as necessarily pre-requisite to a right to the baptism urged by the apostle, is plain, if ye consider, in the first place, That if they had right to baptism antecedently to their repentance, the apostle could not have denied the same unto them till they did declare it; and that the rather, that they were now pricked at the heart for their murdering of Christ, and crying out, "What shall we do to be saved?" Yet we find the apostle requires, in the first place, that they should repent, and stays their baptism till they have evidenced their repentance, notwithstanding that their present perplexity required a speedy possession of those privileges they had right unto. And when the apostles do fall a-baptizing, they baptize those, and those only, who gladly received Peter's word, ver. 41. Further, how could they have been baptized antecedently to their repentance, seeing they were to be "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," as says the text; and none but Christ's disciples ought to be baptized? Matth. 28:19. They could not be accounted Christ's disciples till they professed their faith in him, and their repentance; and consequently till then could have no right coram ecclesia to baptism in his name. Finally, they are called to be baptized for the remission of sins, non obtinendam, sed obsignandam, i. e. in testimony of remission of sins: but this could not be before faith, seeing it is by faith we obtain remission; and faith cannot be without repentance. Wherefore it is evident, they are called to repentance as necessary antecedently to baptism.

2. For the second, That the call to baptism here comprehends the children of these parents as well as themselves. Metanoesate, kai baptistheto ekastos humon. The authors of Antisynodalia Americana will have these words (if I right remember) read, "and every one of you be baptized," (it seems) that the sense may be, Every one of you that repent

be baptized. But as our translation is exactly according to the original, so the call to repentance and to baptism are of equal latitude, as the words plainly bear, and the nature of the things themselves, as was shown before; otherwise it was no sin in them that rejected baptism so to do, providing only they did not repent, though under this call: which methinks is no sound divinity. But to the point: This appears, if ye consider these particulars. 1. Here is express mention made of their children together with themselves, "For the promise is to you, and to your children." Now, those to whom is the promise, are by this call obliged to be baptized; but the promise was to their children as well as themselves; Ergo, If any doubt the major, I might prove it thus: If the gift of the Holy Ghost was to be given after baptism, then those to whom the promise is made, are called to be baptized; the former is true: Ergo, The reason of the consequence is, because the gift of the Holy Ghost and the promise being to them, are joined together; the latter as the ground of the former. The assumption appears from the apostle's own words, "Be baptized,—and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." 2. To what other end should mention be made of their children, but that the apostle would have them to repent, that so both they and their seed might receive the seal of the covenant? This, I think, must be granted, unless we will join hands with the Anabaptists, and delay the baptism of their children till such time as they were capable personally to evidence their repentance. 3. The scope of the apostle, which was to comfort those that were pricked at the heart for the murdering of the Lord of glory, doth prove this. They saw now what it was to be guilty of Christ's blood; and doubtless (as an awakened soul has a quick memory for bygone sins) they remembered well, that sometime they had cried out, "His blood be on us, and our children." Wherefore, that the plaster might be as broad as the sore, it was necessary that they should be taught the reception of their children to baptism, together with themselves; and so both were called together thereto. 4. In all examples of the parents' call to receive the first seal of the covenant, the children also are comprehended, whether under the Old or New Testament dispensations; and how can it be otherwise, seeing God has said, he will be the believer's God, and the God of his seed also.

ARGUMENT III. God threatens that he will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them

that hate him; but promiseth to shew mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. I have already proven, that the promise is only to the immediate seed of godly parents; and by the same labour, that the threatening is only to the immediate seed of the ungodly: and as I said of the meaning of the promise, its being extended to thousands; so say I of the threatening, its being extended to the third and fourth generation, viz. successively, and one after another ungodly. God, in punishing the children, will remember the iniquity of their fathers and grandfathers; they being still the children only of the wicked. Now, whatever else the mercy promised doth comprehend, I think it will be denied by none but Anabaptists, and such as they, that it includes a visible right to the first seal of the covenant. By the same reason then, the threatening includes the contrary; and so God himself, in his holy and wise dispensations, has explained it, while he hath broken off wicked parents and their seed from the visible church, and all right to church privileges. This Scripture then affords us a twofold argument for our purpose.

ARGUMENT 1. From the threatening. If God visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of immediate wicked parents, then the children of immediate wicked parents have no right to baptism, though they be the remote seed of the godly; the former is true: Ergo, The sequel, which only needs proof, is thus evinced: The mercy promised to the children of those that love God, comprehends a grant of a visible right to the initiating seal made to them; Ergo, the judgment threatened to the children of wicked parents, comprehends a denuding them of, or a denying unto them, a visible right to the same: for contrariorum contraria sunt consequentia. And otherwise, they to whom the threatening visibly belongs shall have the mercy of the promise visibly belonging to them also; not without great appearance of confusion of those things which God hath so divided and distinguished. This reasoning the learned Zanchius yields to us in thesi,\* though in hypotesi he is against it. His words are, "There is a certain antithesis betwixt the promise and threatening. Now, what doth he promise, when he says 'He will shew mercy to those that love him'? temporal good things only? not at all; but eternal life, according to that, 'He that doth these things, shall live in them:' and in many places he promiseth salvation to them that keep his law. Therefore also in the

threatening, he threatens eternal death." Yet the same learned man will not allow us to conclude from this, that the children of those parents who are excluded from the covenant for their iniquities and defections, are excluded also. But why, upon the same ground we may not argue as before is done, I see not. Nothing can strike against the one, that doth not equally militate against the other. But says the learned man, "Surely when we have come to the fourth generation, where those fathers also are wicked, and excluded from the covenant for their own wickedness; their children also, belonging to the fifth generation, must necessarily be supposed to be excluded from the covenant; and likewise their children, and so on. How then would it be true that the Lord says, he will not extend this curse but to the fourth generation at most?" I answer, with all deference to that judicious man, there is no absurdity in this consequence that he draws from the opinion of those that differ from him; yea, the threatening itself obligeth us to believe it, it being supposed they are still wicked one after another: for surely even the fifth generation, in the case supposed, are the children of those that hate God, and so liable to the threatening; only the fifth generation, according to the threat, hath not the sins of any of the former, but the fourth remembered against them in the punishment: and so on, till we come to the third and fourth generation again: whereby the Lord shews himself indeed slow to wrath, but abundant in goodness; while, on the other hand, the mercy promised extends to thousands. And thus we see how it remains true, that God will not extend this curse beyond the fourth generation, that is, visiting the iniquities of grandfathers upon the children. But nevertheless, if there should be thousands of quaternions of wicked generations, the denial of the mercy should be carried down through them all, according to the threatening. If the learned man mean, that we cannot refuse, according to our interpretation, to allow the fifth generation of successively wicked persons the seal of the covenant; I deny any such thing follows, but the contrary, as was cleared before. But if he take that to be true, it deserves consideration, how that can agree with God's dispensation, in visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children among the Jews, sixteen hundred years and upwards; not to speak of the pagan nations. It can no more be inferred from thence, then, that God will not give the mercy to more than thousands of them that love him. But when God minds the mercy we speak of, either to the fourth or fifth generation, the mercy, I say, of

visible right to the first seal of the covenant in their infancy, we may expect he will deal with the third or fourth so as to make way for it.

ARGUMENT 2. From the promise. If the mercy promised belongs only to the immediate seed of godly parents, then children derive their visible right to the ordinance of baptism from their immediate, not from their mediate parents; the former is true: Ergo, the reason of the consequence is, because a visible right to the first seal of the covenant is comprehended in this mercy, whatever more it include; which I need not stand to prove, till the arguing of the orthodox from this text, against Anabaptists, be invalidated. The assumption I have already proven by three reasons. And I shall now add a fourth from the scope of the words. The scope plainly is this: that seeing it is natural for parents to desire the prosperity and happiness of their seed, and the evil that cometh on their children, especially by their means, is afflicting and heavy to them; therefore, as they would not ruin the fruit of their bodies, they should take heed that they depart not from the way of God's commandments; and as they would have their children to enjoy the mercy of God, they would shew themselves to be lovers of God, and keepers of his commandments. That this is the scope of the place, is past doubt with me. This the learned man before mentioned doth grant.\* "If then," says he, "their children be dear to them, at least on their account let them not revolt from the true worship of God to idolatry. Surely this is the end of this commination." But how the contrary opinion agrees with the scope, I cannot see. Now, let us consider the Israelites to whom the law was immediately given. It is pleaded, that the open wickedness of immediate parents among them did not take away this mercy from their seed; but they derived their visible right to the seal from the holy root, which was Abraham alone, or Isaac and Jacob also. But these holy men were dead long before, so that there was no need to stir them up to keep God's commandments, being then in glory: and as for that generation of adult persons, it could have no influence on them, being so understood; what needed they fear the threat, seeing their infants were already secured from any harm they could do them, seeing they were the remote seed of the godly? The promise could have no influence on them either; seeing, by virtue thereof, however holy they were, their infants could have no advantage they had not before, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So that



the threatening and promise both are rendered quite useless to them, and could have no tendency to the stirring up of them to a holy life; unless their fearing where no fear was, and hoping where there was no ground, could have efficacy on them. The same way is it rendered useless to us Gentiles, supposing once that we have had but one godly remote parent. I see no way to evite this, unless we say, that the mercy promised has no respect to a visible right to the seal of the covenant, and so gratify the Anabaptists; or deny this to be the scope of the place. Either of which they may venture on, that will; I dare not. It is in vain to say that the mercy in the promise comprehends many particular mercies; and though that one was secured to them as the children of remote godly parents, yet there might be some others that the children might meet with, through the holy life of their immediate parents. For, though it might be, that they should have many mercies, through the holy life of their immediate parents; yet none at all by virtue of this promise, which they had not before by their remote parents: for though the mercy promised comprehend ten thousand particular mercies, they are all in that one word made over to the children of those that love God; and if these be the remote parents, in the supposed case, then they are all made over unto the remote seed of the godly, though the immediate seed of wicked ones, as upon the account of the remote parents. But nothing can be more agreeable to the scope, than to understand it only of the immediate seed of godly parents: and it is easy to perceive what an incentive to a holy life it must needs be to every parent. It is very probable it would scar many from their open wickedness, if it were duly pressed doctrinally, and followed accordingly in the way of discipline. And I am truly apprehensive, that the blunting of the edge of this threat and promise, is one of the pillows of the security of our day, and fills our congregations with so many people as would not be tolerated in a well ordered commonwealth. I will add yet

ARGUMENT 3. From the threat and promise jointly considered. If the children of openly wicked immediate parents may be acknowledged by the church to have a right to the seal of the covenant, on the account of their remote godly parents, as well as the children of godly immediate parents; then the church should make no difference betwixt the children of those that love God, and those that hate him: but that ought not to be so. For where God in his word hath made a difference, the church ought

to do so too; for in all things revealed we are bound to follow God's judgment: but such practice seems to thwart with it, as the text shews; God having put so manifest a difference betwixt them, that he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the one, and shew mercy to the other. It seems then, we ought to separate betwixt the precious and the vile, put difference between the holy and profane, even in this case. Let none say, they know not who are the precious, who the vile, amongst infants. Here is God's revelation of his mind, for the terror of the wicked, that he will visit their iniquities on their children. If the Lord be pleased to bring elect vessels out of the loins of openly wicked parents, and of his free grace to give them his Holy Spirit, as no doubt he may do, and many times actually doth; yet *de occultis non judicat ecclesia*. We are to wait till we see the same evidenced by their personal carriage; and in the meantime, we go according to the plainly revealed word, leaving secret things unto the Lord: even as we are to look on the seed of visible believers as visible saints, and to deal with them as such, till by their walk they manifest the contrary. Wherefore, there is no ground to say, as Zanchy,\* "that this is repugnant to God's eternal election, seeing that many times elect children are born of wicked parents and idolatrous reprobates." What though they be elected, we have no evidence of it; without which, as to us, it is as if it were not. Truly, if this should hold good, there is no infants of the most barbarous savages in the world but have a right to baptism; for who knows but they are elected, and in due time will be called? But I suppose, in admitting to baptism, the church looks to the party's being in Christ, and having the Spirit; not to his election immediately or solely; for even the elect may be for a time dogs and swine, not fit subjects of sealing ordinances. If any say, that they do make a difference betwixt those children requiring sponsors, in order to the administrating of the seal to the children of openly wicked parents; I answer, 1. I wish it were so ordinarily, that sponsors were required for the children of such parents as are not themselves visible believers. 2. If the godly parents die before the child's baptism, where is the difference? But, 3. There is no difference at all in point of right to the ordinance and church state: for still the one as well as the other is supposed to have right to the ordinance as such a seed; and the children of the godly are not baptized without sponsors either.

ARGUMENT IV. If the children be unclean, unless the unbelieving husband be sanctified by the believing wife, or the unbelieving wife be sanctified by the believing husband, then the children derive their right to baptism from their immediate parents; the former is true: Ergo, All this is clear from the testimony of the apostle, 1 Cor. 7:14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy." So that the apostle plainly turns this matter of the children's holiness, and consequently of their right to the ordinance, on the state of the immediate parents, as the only hinge of it coram ecclesia. I do easily perceive an exception that will be entered against this argument by those that differ, to wit, that in this case there were no remote parents from whom the children could derive their right; these immediate parents being once both pagans, come of pagan parents, though now the father or mother was a believer; and so can make no general rule. ANSWER. Grant these parents to whose case the apostle applies this, were all come of mere pagans; which nevertheless will be impossible to prove, but that some of them might be the children of parents proselyted to the Jewish church; yet the rule that the apostle lays down here, is a general rule for all such cases wherein a believer is yoked with an unbeliever, "For the unbelieving —is sanctified: else were your children unclean," &c. This, I think, cannot be denied. Let us then suppose the believing, wife, a daughter of a believer, but the wife of an unbeliever: such a case not only may be, but no doubt has been. It is no strange thing to imagine an unbeliever to profess faith and repentance, and that to gain marriage with a believing woman; and thereafter to turn back again to infidelity, and that openly, when he has accomplished his design: yea, it is very supposable, and like unto the Lord's dealing in his ordinary dispensation of grace, that there were some in Corinth in that case, the father and the daughter called, but her husband left to remain in infidelity, or vice versa. In this case then, I ask, Whether or no the children of the believer and unbeliever should be holy, and have right to the seal of the covenant, though the unbelieving husband were not sanctified by the believing wife? If you say, they should be holy, as you must say, while so much stress is laid on a child's being the remote seed of the godly, (for so the child is in the supposed case), then you plainly contradict the apostle, teaching that unless the unbelieving husband were sanctified by the believing wife, the children

were unclean, not holy. If you say, they should not be holy, unless the unbelieving husband were sanctified by the believing wife, then you plainly derive the child's right from the immediate parent, and acknowledge that the piety of the remote parent giveth not a visible right to the ordinance unto the child; which is the very thing we plead for. Moreover, let us suppose amongst these Corinthians a believing father, his daughter a wife, and her husband, both unbelievers; which I think is a very rational supposition: I ask, whether or not their children be holy? If they be holy, then I would know what children under heaven are unholy. If they be not, then the piety of remote parents doth not evidence their seed to be holy, and infants derive not their right from godly remote parents. We have a case in the Old Testament which we shall consider here: Ezra. 10:3. "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the strange wives, and such as are born of them." ver. 16. "And the children of the captivity did so." ver. ult. "And some of them had wives by whom they had children." Now, I would know whether or not those children born to the Jews of their strange wives, were holy children, and had right to the seal of the covenant? If they were, it is strange they should put away their holy children, or that the fierce wrath of the Lord should go out against them for keeping such a holy generation. This looks not very like God's way, to put out of his church a holy seed. To say they were to be put away because they rejected the covenant of God, is gratis dictum; surely some of them were not capable to reject the covenant. Yet those children put away, were the remote seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as much as Boaz, whom Salmon begat of Rahab a Canaanite; and Obed, whom Boaz begat of Ruth the Moabitess, and many others. These two are expressly owned by Matthew to be the children of Abraham, Matth. 1:2. 5: yet were not these children holy; and consequently, some of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were not holy; and that though born within the visible church: which, I think, should go far to prove the main point now under consideration, How was it then that they were unclean, and not holy? I know no other reason can be given, but that their mothers were not sanctified to their fathers for bringing forth of a holy seed. The contrary whereof was in the case of the Corinthians; which still hangs all on the state of the immediate parents. Whatever disparity be betwixt these two cases, here is all we are seeking after, viz. children come of godly remote parents, born within the church likewise, as that

phrase is commonly used, yet unholy, having no right to the seal of the covenant, because of the state of their immediate parents. And if a thousand differences betwixt these two cases should be produced, so long as they agree in the point for which they are adduced, the cause is safe.

ARGUMENT V. ult. A cursed seed have no right to the seal of the covenant; but the children of openly wicked immediate parents, though they be the remote seed of the godly, are a visibly cursed seed. This is plain from Deut. 28:18. where God tells the Israelites, even the seed of Abraham, that "if they did not hearken to the voice of the Lord, to observe to do all his commandments, the fruit of their body should be cursed." Hence it follows, that children's right to the seal of the covenant is derived only from their immediate parents, not from their remote parents: for, notwithstanding of the holiness of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God will curse their remote seed, because of their immediate parents' wickedness. Now, whom God has declared in his word to be cursed, they are visibly cursed; which is inconsistent with a right to a sealing ordinance, as I shall afterwards prove, when I come to improve this argument further. And so much for the proof of infants deriving their right to church privileges, or to the sacrament of baptism coram ecclesia, from their immediate parents only.

I come now to offer some arguments to prove that none but the children of visible believers, or such as make a credible profession, have right before the church, or a visible right, to the sacrament of baptism. Having fixed the former point, viz. that infants derive their visible right to baptism, from their immediate, not their remote parents; now the question is, Whether or not it be necessary, in order to the child's visible right to baptism, that one of the immediate parents be a visible believer, or have a probable or credible profession? We offer the following arguments for the affirmative.

ARGUMENT I. If no infants but those whereof one of the parents do commend themselves and their seed to the church, either by their conversation, or by their baptism, have right before the church to that ordinance; then no children but those whereof one of the parents is a visible believer, have a visible right to the same; the antecedent is true: Ergo, the consequent also. The truth of the antecedent is acknowledged,

at least by some of those that differ, while they do necessarily require that it appear to the church, that one of the parents have been baptized, otherwise the children can have no visible right to the ordinance; though indeed they think this sufficient to entitle their children to baptism, though their walk be not as becomes the gospel in any tolerable measure. I suppose those learned men that do require the evidence of the baptism of one of the parents, understand it as the minimum quod sit, that the church can be satisfied in this matter with nothing less than this; though albeit this were wanting, if the parents commend themselves and their seed to the church, by a credible profession, or holy conversation, in the sight of men, they would look on this as giving their infants a visible right to the seal. If it be not understood thus, I cannot yield to it. I doubt not but in some cases, the administrator of baptism may have greater clearness to baptize the child of an unbaptized person, than of many that are certainly known to have been baptized. The child of such a parent may have a visible right to baptism; for it is plain, that an unbaptized parent may have faith and repentance, and that so as they may sufficiently appear to the church to be believers and penitent, while in the meantime there is not the least shadow of those things in many that are baptized. Now, by faith the soul is entered into covenant with God; and at the same time the parent is taken into covenant, his seed also is brought into the covenant: whence it appears, that both parent and child have a visible right to baptism, antecedently to the baptism of the parent. So these converts, Acts 2 they had visible right to baptism before they were baptized, and this by reason of their probable profession; which also gave their children a visible right thereto as soon as they themselves had it. So, put the case such parents should have died before they were baptized, it could not have robbed the children of their visible right which they had before to the seal of the covenant. Yea, I suppose, the truth of the antecedent is yielded by them all, viz. That one of these two, either the baptism, or else a visible godly conversation of one of the parents, is necessary to the child's visible right to baptism. As for those that go to the remote parents for the child's right, we are agreed in that the visible piety of parents is necessary. Only they say, the piety of the remote parents is necessary; we say, it is the immediate parent, as has been proven. Others express themselves thus, that the children of such as are probably judged within the covenant, have right to baptism. Now, this probable judgment

must needs proceed upon one of the two things mentioned. And as for those who say, that the infants of wicked parents being born within the church, have right to baptism, I think it is plain they mean by that, born of baptized parents. Either they mean it so, or that it is the place of their birth that gives them this privilege. I could scarcely have thought any could have been so absurd as to have affirmed the latter. Yet I find one zealous assertor of the real and visible title that the children of openly wicked parents have to baptism, tells us,\* that there are many arguments urged by divines for it, that to him were never yet satisfactorily answered; whereof this is one: "That such children have their right supplied from the holiness of the place or people wherein they are born." I wish he had told us what divines those are that urge this argument. I doubt if he can shew us any of whom he will have much credit, that ever asserted such a thing. He might have left out the people here, for there are none born in people, but in the place where a holy people lives: but by this addition he seems to answer a question arising from his own words, which I fancy would puzzle many great divines; and that is, How a place now under the gospel dispensation is made holy, especially so holy that the very birth of an infant in it gives it a real title and visible right to the holy ordinance of baptism? ANSWER. There is a holy people lives in that place. But I would propose more questions still upon the back of that. What holiness is that that a holy people communicate to the spot of ground where they live? And what is the way how they make it holy? And by virtue of what appointment of God is it that English ground is holy, where a holy people lives? And whether or not we may suffer pagans to come in, and defile our holy place with their unclean feet? And how came it that the land of Egypt and Babylon were not made holy places, seeing they were places where God's holy people lived for many years? Why had not the Egyptian and Babylonish infants a right to circumcision from the holiness of the place and people wherein they are born? No doubt, if this learned man had been living in the seventh century, when Augustine came from the Bishop of Rome, and called the Britons to help him in the conversion of the Saxons that were heathens, he would have thought their answer very unmannerly, (as indeed it cannot be approven), viz. that they were not obliged to preach to their enemies, seeing the Saxons had spoiled them of their lands, and did still continue to prey upon them: but he would off-hand not only have preached to them, but baptized their infants, in

regard of the holiness of the place and people wherein they lived: for, besides the ancient inhabitants, the queen was a Christian, and had her preacher; and the king was converted too afterwards by means of Augustine, and no doubt he did not aloue embrace the Christian religion. But enough of this. Paul used another way of arguing, 1 Cor. 7:14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy;" though these infants were born in a place where God had a church. And I do not think we shall find many to conclude, if a pagan woman were cast out upon our coast, and brought forth a child, that ipso facto the child should have a right to baptism. But I proceed to prove the sequel of the major thus: The baptism of a parent that hath no credible profession, or is an openly wicked person, is not sufficient to commend himself to the church, or to commend his seed to her, for the seal of the covenant; Ergo, the sequel stands good. For if one of these two, the baptism, or the credible profession of the parent, be necessary to this end, then it clearly follows, that if his baptism be insufficient to that end, and yet he have no credible profession, his child hath no visible right to baptism: and so none but the children of visible believers are thus privileged. I prove the antecedent. That baptism that ought to be looked upon as unprofitable and non-baptism, cannot commend a man's seed to the church, as having visible right to baptism; but that baptism which is without a credible profession, ought to be looked upon as unprofitable and non-baptism: Ergo, the proposition is clear. The assumption I shall prove by the following reasons.

REASON I. The apostle tells us expressly, Rom. 2:25. "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." I hope those that differ will allow us to argue from circumcision to baptism; and will easily acknowledge, that we may say the same concerning baptism, Baptism verily profiteth, &c.\* Ursin, arguing for the necessity of church discipline, among other reasons gives this for it, "Those that are not yet baptized, must not be admitted to the supper; but baptism is not baptism to those that fall away from their baptism, Rom. 2:25. Ergo," I hope none will think he is arguing for the necessity of church discipline to be exercised against Turks, pagans, and Jews; but the openly wicked of whom we



speak; as is manifest from what he says in the same page. It is evident the apostle speaks here of the openly wicked Jews, who had the outward sign of circumcision, but a profane conversation; as is clear from the preceding verses. So that ver. 24. be plainly tells them, "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles, because of them," (as it is in our case); which manifestly argues open wickedness, with a profession of religion. Yet because of their circumcision they valued themselves highly; but the apostle shews them they had no profit of it, but their circumcision was by their profane life made uncircumcision. "He answers," says a learned commentator\* on the place, "That the outward sacramental symbols profit nothing without good life and manners; without which circumcision differs nothing from uncircumcision; that is, a Jew differs nothing from a heathen." If then God in his word hath pronounced the circumcision of openly wicked persons to be unprofitable and uncircumcision, and so hath declared his mind concerning the baptism of openly wicked Christians; the church ought to look upon it to be such as God hath declared it to be, that is, unprofitable and non-baptism. If this hold good, it says much to the point. I shall consider what exceptions may possibly be entered against it, so far as they occur to me.

EXCEPTION 1. It would follow then, that such should be re-baptized when they repent. ANSWER. I deny it would follow, more than that those to whom circumcision became uncircumcision by their profane life, ought to have been circumcised again upon their repentance; which was never done: and yet this was no new, but the good old way, that the apostle lays down here. Although, as Christ teacheth, by excommunication a man is made to be as a heathen; yet the re-baptizing of an excommunicated person upon his repentance, is not urged. I say then, with Ursin, in answer to the same objection, that "reception by baptism is ratified to penitents, even without the iteration of the sign." Indeed, if baptism were of the kind of physical causes, this exception might possibly have some force; for when a physical cause is unprofitable, and as good as none, there must be a new application, or else the effect is not produced; as when a plaster is laid to a sore, if it be unprofitable, and as good as none, there must needs be a new application made, or the party cannot be healed. But baptism is no physical cause, but a moral cause; which, though unprofitable, and as good as none to a person sometimes; yet,

without a new application, it may become profitable: As suppose a seal were appended to a blank paper, even the king's seal, and given to a man, what is he the better of it, what doth it profit? nothing at all: but if the king shall write on that paper a grant of a pension, then it profits indeed. But you see plainly there needs no iteration of the sign. The application is easy.

EXCEPTION 2. The apostle means, that circumcision profits nothing to justification, though otherwise it may. I answer, *Non distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit*. The apostle simply, without any limitation, pronounceth, That circumcision profiteth nothing, if a man be a breaker of the law. To which that is a plain contradiction, Circumcision profiteth something, though a man be a breaker of the law. Yea, he tells them roundly, it is uncircumcision, and therefore unprofitable, not only to justification, but to all intents and purposes. And I think it can scarcely be denied by any that considers the apostle's discourse, but that hereby he levels the openly wicked Jews with the heathens in point of circumcision, so that the one had as much real profit of it as the other, that is, none at all. Yet further, I do indeed believe, that the great thing the apostle is aiming at in these chapters, is justification by the free grace of God; and to this end, he endeavours, in this chapter, to beat down the boasting of the wicked Jews, (as, in the next chapter, he proves all, both Jews and others, to be guilty before God): for effecting of which, he lays out before them their vicious lives so unanswerable to the written law that God gave them; which has a native tendency to his main scope and design: and withal tells them, that their circumcision would not cover their wickedness. But notwithstanding of that, they were wicked men still, as he clearly shews, vers. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly:—But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly," &c. But I see no reason to understand the words of the text we are now upon, as the exception gives it, viz. That it profiteth nothing to justification, but in that respect is uncircumcision. Read the whole text accordingly; and I suppose we may find the weakness, yea and unsoundness of this exception. "For circumcision verily profiteth to justification, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision in point of justification." Now, by justification here, is either meant justification by free grace, or justification by works. If justification by the

free grace of God, according to the covenant of grace, be meant; how does circumcision profit to it? has that any hand in our justification? If justification by works, according to the old covenant, then I ask, by what appointment of God was ever circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, made profitable for justification by works? Let any such appointment be produced, and then we shall see the law and the gospel confounded. Wherefore, though a man should keep the law of works, circumcision could profit him nothing to justification: yea, possibly I may say, if he should go about it as a piece of God's worship, it should contribute to his condemnation, in regard it is no part of the law of works, and therefore to him should be will worship. And so, if any shall say, that though circumcision was never appointed to be a seal of the covenant of works, yet it might profit as a commanded duty, and as an act of obedience to the law of works; I confidently deny it, that it could be an act of obedience to the law of works; that could ever profit that way. And the reason is, because God never commanded it to be used but as a seal of the righteousness of faith: nor did it ever belong, before God, to any but such as were in the covenant of grace with him; nor, before the church, to any but such as were visibly in that covenant. The law and grace have two distinct dominions, Rom. 6:14; so that receiving of circumcision could no more be an act of obedience to the law of works, than the obeying of a particular law of the kingdom of England, can be an act of obedience to the law of Scotland, though both kingdoms be under one sovereign. Only I desire it to be noticed, that when I deny that the receiving, of circumcision could be an act of obedience to the law of works, I deny it only in the sense it is asserted in the instance against our answer to the exception; that is, that it could be an act of obedience to the law of works profiting to justification, thereby, as a part of a law righteousness; which is the plain sense of the instance. The reason why I add this caution, is this, because I am of opinion, that where the covenant of grace is revealed, and it is revealed only to lost sinners, and they are called to enter this covenant, and consequently to receive the seal of it; those sinners being under the covenant of works, as to its commanding and threatening power, though the promise of it is weak through the flesh, are, by virtue of that covenant and law of works, obliged to believe, accept of the covenant of grace, and to receive the seals thereof, and so to get out from that covenant of works. In this respect, to receive the seal of the

covenant of grace, is a remote act, at least, of obedience to the law of works, but not at all profiting as a part of our righteousness before God, or profiting to justification by that law. I cannot indeed apprehend how the covenant of works does not oblige every one that is under it to obey whatsoever God shall command them to do; so that, supposing a call to receive Christ made to one under the law, he is obliged by the law to receive Christ, and to submit to the law of Christ, which commands men to receive the seals of the covenant of grace, whosoever they be that are under it: and therefore I cannot deny but thus it is a remote act of obedience to the law of works, to receive the seals of the covenant of grace, in so far as it obligeth them to submit to Christ, whose law particularly enjoins this; though indeed the law of works leaves the soul as soon as it is in Christ, they dying to it, and it to them. The law then that the apostle speaks of here, I conceive to be the ten commands, as they are the law of Christ; to which obedience is performed only in point of sanctification. And thus indeed these persons might be profited by circumcision, if they did evidence their faith in, and love to Christ, by sincere keeping of his law; circumcision being a seal of the covenant of grace; and their keeping of the law sincerely, an infallible token that they were within the bond of that covenant, and had right to all the promises of it; the accomplishment whereof is confirmed by the seal. But while they, by their loose walk and wickedness, evidenced their hypocrisy, and that they were but Jews outwardly and in name, they were not a whit profited by circumcision.

EXCEPTION 3. This is understood of their circumcision before the Lord, not before the church. ANSWER. That cannot be proven from the text. But let it be so: Then, 1. I say, seeing God makes account of everything as it is in itself, for his judgment is according to truth, then their baptism who are profane in their lives, profiteth nothing, but their circumcision is made uncircumcision. 2. Seeing God hath not kept his judgment of it secret, but hath revealed the same in his word, so as every one may read what account he makes of it, it necessarily follows, that the church must account so of it, unless men may take liberty to let their judgment go another way than God's mind revealed, and look on them quite another way than God tells us he looks upon them.

EXCEPTION 4. The apostle plainly teacheth the profit of circumcision, chap. 3:1, 2. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" Much every way. For answer to this, we must take notice, that there are here two distinct questions, which are so many objections, of the Jews against his doctrine. He had in the former chapter levelled them with the heathens, and reckoned their circumcision for uncircumcision; he easily perceives the Jews would take this very ill, and therefore brings them in here with two questions in their mouths; the first, "What advantage hath the Jew?" the second, "or what profit is there of circumcision?" To the first of these, the apostle answers by way of concession, "Much every way," ver. 2. to wit, in respect of God, who had given them many things which were indeed advantageous in themselves; which things he had not given to the heathens: but not in respect of themselves; for they were no advantages to them, no advantages eventually. And so again, in this chapter, he puts the Jews and Gentiles in the same balance, by testimony from the Psalms. So that it is a kind of ironical concession, used also by the apostle towards these same persons, chap. 2:17, 18, 19, 20. As if he should say: "Ye have indeed much advantage every way, I confess: for unto you were committed the oracles of God; God gave you the revelation of his mind and will, when the poor heathens were left to walk in darkness, having nothing to guide them but the dim light of nature; but so much the more miserable are ye, and the greater shall your condemnation be, while ye walk as ye do." As for the second question, it is not here answered; but that "much every way" belongs allentirely to the first, which the words in the original plainly hold forth, which are these: *Ti oun to perisson tou loudaiou, e tis he apheleia tes peritomes? Polu kata panta tropon. Polu, viz, to perisson* But the second question he answers, chap. 4:11; where he tells them, what profit there is of circumcision,\* and to whom it was profitable. Both these he sheweth in the person of Abraham, of whose fatherhood they boasted; "And he received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet before being uncircumcised." That is the profit of circumcision, that it seals the righteousness of faith; but it profits only those that have received and submitted to that righteousness: to the wicked it profits no more than a seal to set a blank. So that the argument stands good notwithstanding of these exceptions.

REASON II. The baptism of those persons to which the characters given by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures appear not to agree, ought to be reputed unprofitable, and their circumcision is uncircumcision; but such is the baptism of those who have no credible profession: Ergo, the major is plain: for no baptism but the Scripture baptism can be reputed profitable; and the Scripture characters of baptism must needs agree to Scripture baptism. The minor will appear if we take a view of some Scriptures speaking of baptism. Mark 1:4.—"the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." Matth. 28:19. "Disciple all nations, baptizing them," &c. Mark 16:16. "He that believeth and is baptized." Acts 2:38. "Repent and be baptized, for the remission of sins." Acts 22:16. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," or, "be washed from thy sins," as some read it,\* and the words will bear, *kai aplousai tas hamartias sou*. Gal. 3:27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." 1 Pet. 3:21—"Baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." "For many are externally washed only, [which is the use of baptism not lawful, *qui est usus baptismi non legitimus*]; few, so as they may call on God with a good conscience." Pareus in loc. "This purifying of the conscience is opposed indeed to washing simply carnal, but not to the sacrament of baptism; for to the entireness of baptism (*ad integritatem baptismi*) both concur the external and the internal washing, not one of them only; and when any hath received it worthily, that answer of a good conscience towards God is joined." Hoornbeek. Now, let it be considered how these things agree to the baptism of those that have no credible profession: What visible agreement is there betwixt them? nay, what visible disagreement is there not? If any shall say, that such persons profess all these things; I shall reply with the same learned man, speaking of the same Scriptures, *Nunquid illa non plus dicunt quam nudam aliquam a nobis factum professionem?*

REASON III. That baptism which the church cannot look upon as a seal of the righteousness of faith to him that hath it, they ought to make no account of it, but look on it as unprofitable; but such is the baptism of him that hath no credible profession: Ergo, the proposition is evident, if ye consider, that baptism is a sacrament of the covenant of grace, and all the sacraments of the covenant of grace, whether under the Old or New Testament, agree in this, that they are seals of the righteousness of faith.

Now, it is an undeniable maxim, *Negato genere tollitur species*; That which I cannot look upon as an animal, I cannot look on as a man. That baptism which is not a seal of the righteousness of faith, is non-baptism; and how can that baptism be profitable that sealeth not that which baptism is appointed of God to seal? The assumption I prove also: Where the church cannot look on a man as privileged with the righteousness of faith, they cannot look on his baptism as sealing the righteousness of faith to him; but so it is in the present case, where the person makes no probable or credible profession: Ergo, the assumption is clear, and the proposition also; for the having of the thing sealed is pre-supposed to the seal, as was said before. If they repent, it becometh indeed a seal to them, but otherwise it doth not. This I apprehend to be the truth. We have heard Pareus' judgment, that the bare outward washing, which is all that many get, is the unlawful use of baptism. Ursin tells us,\* "The sacraments are no sacraments to them that have no true faith. Therefore," says he, "they are mad that say unbelievers receive, together with the signs, the things signified by the signs." And a little after he thus argues: "To whom nothing is promised in the word, to him the sacraments seal nothing. To the wicked nothing is promised in the word; therefore the sacraments seal nothing to the wicked." The learned Witsius teacheth us thus: "Baptism confers nothing on such [viz. to whom it belongs not *stricto jure*]; no grace, no salvation doth it signify or seal, no more than a piece of wax, adorned indeed with an elegant character, but appended to clean paper, on which nothing is written, and to be written; or, if you will, appended to a paper bespattered every where with so exceeding great blots, that no good can be written on it." It must be observed, that this very learned man is of opinion, that all federate elect infants are regenerated before baptism. That I dare not say; but, with the generality as I suppose of the orthodox, I think they are, in the judgment of charity, to be looked on as such, and that baptism is conferred to them as visible saints. Now, that opinion made the learned man to express himself so, "On which nothing is written, and to be written." And concerning adult persons, he tells us, "It cannot be that any adult person may well be baptized, but he that believeth." So that it is plain, according to him, baptism seals nothing to the unregenerate. Mr. Baxter gives us his judgment in the point thus: "Baptism is ordained to signify and seal, and thereby confer remission of sins; but not to all that have right in the

judgment of the church to be baptized; but only to those that have right to it before God, and to whom his word doth first give remission; that is, not to all whom we must baptize, as being probably true believers, but only to those that have true right to baptism and its benefits, as being true believers indeed." And if we would hear again who have right to baptism before God, he tells us elsewhere, "It is only solid true faith which is the condition of the promise of remission; therefore it is that only that gives right in foro Dei to the seal." But how, notwithstanding of all this, he condemns as an error in Mr. Tombes the following proposition, I do not understand. The proposition is,\* "Every right administration of baptism is not God's sealing: actually God sealeth not, but when it is administered to a believer: it may be called a right act of the administrator according to God's appointment, but not God's sealing." We see here Mr. Tombes speaks plainly of the administration of baptism in respect of the administrator, not of the party to whom it is administered. I confess I incline very much to Mr. Tombes' error in this point; and so much the more freely, that I think, by what is said, it appears to be the judgment of others of more entire fame than he. Once more hear the learned Witsius. "Indeed," says he, "the administrators of holy things, who must act about every one from the judgment of charity alone, cannot distinguish the elect from the non-elect; and in so far they are not at all faulty (atque hactenus nihil peccant) if perhaps they baptize even them to whom baptism is not due stricto jure." And a little before: "If we consider the most strict right to baptism, it agrees to none but the elect in very deed and in the judgment of God." And who would think but Mr. Baxter himself had fallen afterwards into the same error with Mr. Tombes, at least when he says, "We ought to baptise them though they have no true right to baptism, because we are to take all for true believers that make a probable profession." Is not that a right act of the administrator which he ought to do, and must do? And yet, as he himself says, baptism is ordained to seal remission of sins, but not to all whom we must baptise. I hope none will say, God seals by baptism what he did not, or where he did not ordain it to seal. It would seem then very consequential to infer Mr. Tombes' conclusion from these premises. Mr. Baxter says indeed, in confutation of this position of Mr. Tombes, "That it is only the conditional promise which God sealeth by the sacraments, 'If thou believe in the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved.' " Possibly then one may think,



that he means God seals remission of sins to believers only, but to others he seals the conditional promise. But this will not salve the matter in my opinion. For, 1. Mr. Baxter telleth us roundly, that the promise is to others besides believers, and so is the seal; and that this will I be evident, if it be once understood, that it is only the conditional promise which God sealeth by the sacraments. What can be made of this, but that it is the same thing that God seals to believers, and to others besides them? 2. Understand it only of others, besides believers; is not remission of sin comprehended in that promise which he says the sacraments seal? Sure I am the scriptures make it one main part of the salvation promised, Matth. 1:21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." 3. How can baptism be appointed to seal remission of sins to believers, and only the conditional covenant to others, when, as Mr. Baxter himself teacheth us, "That in relations, such as sacraments are, the end entereth the definition?" Therefore (if not through any natural incapacity of the subject, (which I dare say Mr. Baxter will not plead in this case), but God's mere institution), baptism have ends so exceeding different in (infants and the aged, says he there, let me change it into) believers and others, then you must have several definitions of baptism, and so several baptisms; but the apostle saith, there is but one baptism.\* Much more he has to the same purpose in that place. Let them who can reconcile these things, do it, it is altogether beyond my reach; it may be because I am not well acquainted with his doctrine. But I will weigh what the learned man says in confutation of the above-mentioned proposition, and to prove that the sacrament rightly administered to a hypocrite is God's actual sealing. His arguments are two.

I. "If the sacrament rightly administered to an hypocrite have all in it that is essential to God's actual sealing, then it is an actual sealing: but the sacrament—therefore it is his actual sealing. A seal is an engaging or obliging sign, or at least a testifying. He that actually useth a seal to such an end, doth actually seal. Now, I. God useth this sign; II. and to this end. 1. He useth the sign while his ministers use it in his name at his command. 2. He commandeth it to be used to this end, to engage himself to make good his promises. For, 1. to what other end should God command them? 2. Else he should command them to be used to one end to one, and to another end to another. 3. If the promise be to others

besides believers, then so is the seal, (for to whom God promiseth, to them he engageth himself to perform); but the promise is to others: therefore, &c. It is only the conditional promise, &c. ut supra."

ANSWER. I deny the minor of this argument, together with the proof of it, that God useth the seal to this end to hypocrites. The reason is because hypocrites have no possession of, interest in, or right to those things whereof God hath appointed the sacrament to be a seal. What a minister may do de facto, is not the question: but I deny, that ministers do use the sacrament at God's command, or de jure, towards any but as they are visible saints; and if they should use it in his name towards any that are not so, they should go beyond the bounds of their commission, Matt, 28:19. as it is above improven, with help from Mr. Baxter himself. That God commandeth the seal to be used to this end, to engage himself to make good his promises, is true in respect of them that are in Christ, in whom the promises are Yea and Amen; but in respect of hypocrites, it is false. But to what other end should God command I them? I answer, that God hath commanded the seals as seals to be used towards believers only; and he hath commanded ministers to look on them as visible believers that have a probable profession. And if it be said, that he has commanded ministers to use them towards all visible believers, but some of them are hypocrites and so he commands them to be used to hypocrites; I answer, he commands the seals materially considered, that is, sprinkling with water, and bread and wine, to be given and administered to all visible believers; but considered formally as seals, he commands them only to be administered to those that are real saints. So that in this sense the sacrament cannot be administered as a seal to any but on supposition that the party is in Christ, seeing none other have a right before God thereto: yet it is a right act of the administrator when he administereth the sign to one that is a close hypocrite, in regard he is a visible believer. And in asserting that the administrator is not bound to know certainly and infallibly, that the party whom he baptizeth hath a right to baptism before the Lord, Mr. Baxter himself will bear me out: for he saith expressly,\* "Ministers have right to baptize those that before God have no right to baptism; for they must judge of men's right by a probable profession." Now, let Mr. Baxter ask, to what other end than to seal actually, doth God command the seals to be administered to a hypocrite?

I answer, he commandeth them not at all to be administered to them: for whatsoever is given them, or administered to them, is not God's seal; for *forma dat esse rei*. And the water in baptism administered to a hypocrite, is no more God's seal to him, than a soul and a body without union are a man. And if I should say, the sacrament is no sacrament to him, it is no more than what we heard before was roundly said by a far wiser head. And truly I think it deserves to be considered, how the definition of a sacrament agrees to that which is administered to a hypocrite. "A sacrament is an holy ordinance, instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." But I pass this. If we consider other cases wherein ministers are commanded to dispense other ordinances, besides this of baptism, it may give light to what is now under consideration. When a brother hath fallen into any scandalous sin, and he appears penitent, the church officers look on themselves as commanded to absolve him, and to loose his sin; and this they do in the Lord's name and at his command, not only loosing him from church censure, but declaring his sin to be pardoned before God; yet this is on supposition that he really be before the Lord that he appears to be before the church. Yet, notwithstanding of all this, if he be hypocritical in his repentance, he is not loosed in heaven; but what they do herein, they do in God's name and at his command. And you may prosecute this the same way, to prove God's loosing the hypocrite in heaven, as Mr. Baxter doth the present argument. In admitting of close hypocrites to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the church dare not debar them, which argues a sense of God's command in the case; yet the church dare not admit them but as they appear to be real believers. The act of admission is a right act in those that admit them; but God in his word declares they have no right to it, ministers doctrinally debar them as such to whom the seals belong not. Only men know not their hearts; and in their lives they are visible believers, but in their hearts enemies to God, whom he will severely examine for coming to this gospel feast without a wedding-garment; for stretching out their hands, being profane dogs, to snatch up the children's bread. Strange! if notwithstanding of all this, the administration be God's actual sealing. The short is, the command to the administrators is not an absolute, but a qualified command. His second reason to prove that God useth the seals for actual sealing to hypocrites, falls with the first. It

follows indeed on his doctrine, as was observed before, that the sacraments are used for one end to one, and another end to another, which with him (as it was above explained) I account an absurdity; but it no way follows upon our doctrine. As to the third reason, that the promise is to others, and therefore so is the seal; I cannot but observe another piece of inconsistency (as it appears to me) of this man with himself. He saith, the promise, meaning that, "If thou believe," &c. is to others besides believers, and therefore infers that so is the seal; no doubt he means it belongs to them really and in foro Dei: and yet elsewhere he flatly denies, that the seal belongs to any but true believers, and such as have true solid faith, in foro Dei, though it may belong to them in foro ecclesiæ. But I deny, that the promise which the sacrament seals is that promise he speaks of, and have given my reason before. But the former observe brings to mind an argument against it; which is this: if it be that conditional promise which baptism sealeth, or God sealeth by baptism, then whosoever have a right before the Lord to that promise, have a right before the Lord to baptism; but that is absurd: Ergo, the consequence is evident: for whoso have a right to the thing sealed, have a right to the seal; and deny it who will, it cannot be denied by any making use of his argument. The minor I prove thus: if those that have a right to that promise before the Lord, have therefore a right to baptism before the Lord, then Jews, Turks, and pagans, to whom the offer of the gospel is made, though they be still in their infidelity, have a right to baptism, even coram Deo; but that is most absurd: Ergo, the sequel is plain. For whosoever they be that have the gospel offered to them, have right in foro poli to the conditional promise of salvation; so that if they should believe, God could not but save them by virtue of that promise. The appendix to his "Aphorisms," in which he saith he hath fully proven this position of his, my poor library doth not afford me; neither think I myself at any great loss thereby, for I look on it as most uncomfortable doctrine, That it is only the conditional promise which God sealeth by the sacraments. If they seal no more, sadly have many godly souls, been deluded in their enjoyments at sacraments. But, however, it falleth under the next question, he says; and so we may expect to hear that sad doctrine confirmed. If I really believed he could confirm and prove it convincingly, I would hear it as my doom and sentence of death. Wo to poor saints if the sacraments confirm and seal no more to them.

Now, that which Mr. Baxter in the next question sets himself to prove, is, that the absolute promise (or covenant) of the first grace\* is not it that is sealed in baptism and the Lord's supper. And for proof hereof he gives six arguments. But this seems to me strange arguing, as from the mill to the moon. What consequence is this, it is not the absolute promise of the first grace that baptism seals; Ergo, it is only the conditional promise, "If thou believe, thou shalt be saved?" What though it be not the absolute promise of the first grace, must it therefore be that conditional promise? are there no other promises in the covenant but these two? I think, if there were any shadow of a consequence here, it behoved to be thus: It is not the absolute promise of the first grace; Ergo, it is the conditional promise of the first grace; which should be Pelagianism in grain, and put much respect on the Jesuits' maxim, *Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegabit ulteriorem gratiam*. And so we might leave him to his dispute with Mr. Tombes. But I cannot think that ever Mr. Tombes would assert, that it was only the absolute promise of the first grace that baptism is a seal of. His words as Mr. Baxter sets them down, are,\* "That the covenant, whereof baptism is the seal, is the absolute covenant of grace, made only to the elect." It is certain many famous divines do hold, that the covenant of grace is absolute, and that baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace; and therefore it must needs be, according to them, a seal of the absolute covenant. But that which Mr. Baxter aims at, seems to be, that baptism doth not at all seal the promise of the first grace. Whatever be of this, if I were obliged to believe it, I would require more convincing arguments than Mr. Baxter offers for it; which I will briefly consider, to the end I may win to some light in it.

ARGUMENT 1. "That which is sealed to by the sacraments is a proper covenant, having a restipulation on our parts, as well as a promise on God's part; but the absolute promise is not a proper covenant, with such a mutual engagement: therefore." ANSWER. Those that hold the covenant of grace to be absolute, will tell him, that in respect of us it is a mere promissory covenant. But if I deny the major with them, I see nothing to prove it, but somewhat from Mr. Baxter, who holds it to be that promise, "If thou believe," &c. to disprove it. For, says he, "The very definition of a proper covenant sheweth as much, that it must be a mutual engagement. Now, in that absolute promise there is no such matter—but only God

telleth what he will do." I say the same, *mutatis mutandis*, of the conditional promise, there is no mutual engagement there; but only God telleth what he will do, if we will do so and so. Where it is plain, there is no engagement at all upon the party to whom this promise is made by virtue of it, unless it be an engagement, by way of gratitude, to accept of such a precious offer; but the promise is to him, whether he fulfil the condition or not, or any way engage with the promiser, ay and until he that made the promise declare he will no longer stand to these terms. I am confident, that neither Grotius *de jure belli*, nor other lawyers (of whom he speaks here), will ever say, that a bare conditional promise is a proper covenant, where there is a mutual engagement. Many times both in peace and war, such conditional promises are made, which not being accepted, there is no covenant made. So that by this argument neither Mr. Tombes nor Mr. Baxter are right.

ARGUMENT 2. "If it were the absolute promise of the first grace that is sealed by the sacraments, then the sacraments must be given to no man, or to all men. But, &c. The consequent is manifest, because that absolute promise or prophecy is only of the elect, and that before regeneration: now, no man hath any sign given him, so much as probable, by which to judge of the unregenerate elect." ANSWER. I deny the consequence, here called the consequent, either by a typographical error, though not marked among the rest, or that *Aquila non captat muscas*. And what is alleged for proof thereof, is false taken universally. Though we have no probable sign given us whereby we may judge of the election of the seed of openly wicked parents, till such time as they evidence some good thing in them by their personal walk; yet as for the seed of believers, we have God's promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed." As for infants especially this holds good. And as for those children of godly parents, who when they are come to years of discretion, yet savour nothing of piety, that says indeed we cannot judge them probably to be regenerated: but yet it says not that we may not probably judge them elected. But this brings into my mind an argument against baptism its being a seal of the absolute promise of the first grace, which possibly may deserve consideration. It is this.

If baptism be a seal of the absolute promise of the first grace, then some

openly wicked adult persons have a right coram ecclesia to baptism; but that is false, as we have before proved: Ergo, I prove the consequence. They to whom the thing sealed doth visibly belong, have a visible right to the seal of the covenant; but if baptism be a seal of the absolute promise of the first grace, the thing sealed by baptism doth visibly belong to some adult persons openly wicked: Ergo, if baptism, &c. The proposition is plain. The reason of the assumption is, because the promise of the first grace belongs visibly to those that are visible elect ones, or such as we may probably judge elected; and the seed of the righteous we must probably judge to be elected, because of the promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;" yet nothing is more plain, than that there are many of the adult seed of the righteous that are openly wicked: Ergo, but I pass this.

ARGUMENT III. "It may be known to whom that covenant belongs which is sealed by the sacraments, but it cannot be known (before the fulfilling, no not at all) to whom (particularly) that absolute promise doth belong: therefore, &c." ANSWER. I distinguish the major. It may be known (without extraordinary revelation) probably to whom that covenant which is sealed by the sacraments belongs particularly, I grant; and in this sense the minor is false. It may be known infallibly, I deny. Bat, as Mr. Bowles saith,\* "Baptism is to be administered according to the judgment of charity, seeing it can by no certain signs be determined who they are that are actually in covenant." Now, if this argument could have any weight, it behoved to be proven, that we may, without extraordinary revelation, know infallibly to whom in particular the covenant sealed in baptism doth belong; which the learned man doth not attempt.

ARGUMENT IV. "If that absolute promise must be fulfilled to a man before he be capable of receiving the sacraments, which are seals of the covenant of grace, then it is not that absolute promise which is the covenant of grace sealed to by the sacraments; but that absolute promise must be fulfilled, &c.: therefore it is not that absolute promise which is the covenant so sealed to." ANSWER. This is a manifest ignoratio elenchi. This is neither what Mr. Baxter undertook to prove, nor what Mr. Tombes denied, so far as we can learn by his words cited by Mr. Baxter. Mr. Tombes indeed saith, that the covenant whereof baptism is the seal, is the

absolute covenant of grace, as several divines of better note say as well as he, but not that the absolute promise of the first grace is the covenant of grace; it is according to their opinion a part of it, but a part is not the whole. Does Mr. Baxter think, that his adversaries in this point leave out of the covenant of grace all grace but the first? and if Mr. Baxter would have concluded his own thesis, he should have inferred, Ergo, it is not the absolute promise of the first grace that is sealed to. But let us hear the proof of the consequence; which is this: "The mercy promised in the covenant which is sealed, is not given before the first sealing; but the mercy promised in that absolute promise is (according to Mr. Tombes, and in part the truth) given before the first sealing of the covenant of grace: therefore, &c." I wish Mr. Baxter had set down his conclusion. However, we will get some conclusion in the premises. But behold! how he wavers again. The conclusion of this argument is plainly this: Therefore the mercy promised in that absolute promise, is not the mercy promised in the covenant which is sealed. And this conclusion we have instead of the major proposition of his argument, which ought to have been the conclusion of his proof. Such wavering would tempt a man to distrust the cause he is defending. But as to the premises, the major taken universally is manifestly false: and unless you will maintain that there is only one single mercy of the covenant which is sealed, which is the covenant of grace no doubt, you must either take it so, or it is an argument *ex puris particularibus*, as is manifest. So then the major is, no mercy promised in the covenant which is sealed, or in the covenant of grace, is given before the first sealing. But most of our divines, that ever I read, against the Papists and Lutherans, their baptismal regeneration, will tell him, that some mercies promised in the covenant which is sealed, are given before the first sealing; yea more, unless that some of these mercies be given before baptism, such as the saving indwelling of the Spirit, regeneration, union with Christ, remission, &c. they can have no right, before God, to the first seal; and unless they appear to us probably to be given them, they have no right before the church to it And if Mr. Baxter hath not said as much, as that some mercies promised are, yea, and must be given before the first sealing, or the parties have no right to baptism before the Lord, let what is said before manifest. I need not stand to prove the falsity of Mr. Baxter's major proposition last named, it hath been sufficiently done before. But at length we come to something that is



indeed to the point, which immediately follows the conclusion of the last syllogism; and it is this: "God doth not promise and seal to a man that hath a new heart, to give him a new heart; or to a man that is a believer, that he will give him to be a believer; except we speak of the continuance or increase of faith and newness, which is not the thing in question." But I answer, there is another use of a seal besides that of engaging and obliging to the performance of anything; it is also of use to testify and represent, as a demonstrative sign. This is plain not only from the common nature of seals appended to contracts, but from that plain Scripture, Rom. 4:11. "And Abraham received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had before." And Mr. Baxter himself acknowledged it;\* "A seal" says he "is an engaging or obliging sign, or at least a testifying." So then, although God doth not seal the promise of giving a new heart to him that hath a new heart, by way of engagement and obligation to perform the promise, yet he may seal to him that hath a new heart the promise of giving a new heart; he may seal it, I say, by way of testimony, that such a promise hath been made to, or concerning that person that hath the new heart. This is not done in vain: for the promise contains a grant of the mercy; it is the foundation of our right thereto, and the tenor of our free-holding, or holding of free grace; which it is very reasonable we should be put in mind of, the rather that some learned men do very much to darken the glory of grace. Suppose a king should write a promise of a vast sum of current money, to be given freely to one that had been a traitor to him, or rather is a traitor, and should actually pay it him before the writ be sealed; and, upon the payment thereof, the man sees his folly, in that he should have been so undutiful to such a gracious prince, and so becomes a loyal subject: what solecism in conduct would it be, either in the subject to desire of him, (even after he hath got the money), that he would please to seal this his promise and grant; or in the king, to seal his own writ? Maybe the man hath no great skill to discern betwixt true and counterfeit money; the rather should the promise be sealed. The application is easy. God made promise to Abraham, saying, "I will be thy God," seals it with circumcision; yet before circumcision the promise was made out to Abraham; God was the God of Abraham before he was circumcised, yet was not the seal used in vain. But Mr. Baxter will say, that he sealed the continuance of that mercy of being his God. Let it be so; yet ipso facto that God sealed by way of

engagement and obligation the continuance of that mercy to Abraham, he also sealed, by way of testimony, the beginning of that mercy, or that mercy given at first, and consequently the promise thereof; for God seals no mercy to us but as it is comprehended in a promise. If any will say, that the sacraments seal any mercy but what the word promiseth, let them prove it. For my part I think it contrary both to Scripture and reason.

ARGUMENT V. "The benefits of the covenant of grace, which is sealed by the sacraments, are (by those of age) to be received by faith; but the benefits of the absolute promise of the first grace are not to be received by faith: therefore this is not the covenant of grace so sealed. The major is evident. Mr. Tombes saith, only believers must be baptized as disciples. The minor is proved before. Faith is part of the thing promised; and we do not by faith receive our first faith, or our power to believe." ANSWER. To pass this, that the conclusion of this argument is indeed, Therefore the benefits of the absolute promise of the first grace are not the benefits of the covenant of grace, which is sealed by the sacraments; the conclusion, as it is formed by the learned man, labours under the former disease, quod non concludit negatum. He had need of quicker eyes than I can pretend to, that can discern a contradiction between these two; The absolute promise of the first grace is not the covenant of grace, which is sealed by the sacraments; and that, The covenant whereof baptism is the seal, is the absolute covenant of grace, made only to the elect; which is the proposition Mr. Baxter undertakes to confute. But I deny the major, universally taken. When Mr. Baxter speaks of receiving the benefits of the covenant by faith, either he means receiving things themselves, or receiving a right to them; and in both senses the proposition is false. If he mean it of receiving the things themselves, as contradistinct from receiving a right thereto, then I would fain know, 1. Whether the resurrection of our bodies, and glorification, be benefits of the covenant of grace? and then, 2. How these benefits in this sense are received by faith? If he mean it of receiving a right thereto, contradistinct from receiving the things themselves, then I would desire to understand, whether justification, adoption, and such relative benefits, be benefits of the covenant of grace; and then, how a man can receive a right to relative benefits, as contradistinguished in re from the things themselves; or if a

man can have a right to a relation, and not ipso facto be so related. I speak not of jus sub termino; but an immediate present right, as the matter with faith in respect of justification, &c. Whoever may quarrel this, it cannot be contradicted by Mr. Baxter's principles, "As to the relative benefits," says he,\* "right to them, and right in them, are inseparable," &c. As to the proof of the proposition, I confess I see not how it toucheth the point. Mr. Tombes saith very right, and according to the scriptures, when he saith, Only believers must be baptized as disciples, meaning it of those that have right thereto before the Lord; and many others say, and that on good grounds, that only the regenerate, justified, &c. must be baptized as disciples; and yet it will not hence follow, that the benefits of the covenant of grace, sealed by the sacraments, must be received by regeneration, justification, &c.

ARGUMENT VI. "The covenant sealed to by the sacraments is a plainly propounded, unquestionable covenant; but this absolute promise of the first grace is not such," &c. ANSWER. This conclusion is like some others before, that hit not the scope of the dispute. But no doubt the covenant is plainly propounded, and ought not to be questioned. But who can help the questioning that nice wits will needs make about truths plainly propounded? And this argument might have been left out, while it is seen plainly and unquestionably, that many that have eyes in their head as well as this learned man, cannot agree with him, as to what it is that the sacraments do seal. But it is time now to come to his second argument for God's actual sealing to hypocrites.

II. "If God do no more in his actual sealing to believers, than he doth when the sacrament is rightly applied to hypocrites, then he actually sealeth to hypocrites; but God doth no more, &c. The major is proved by the enumeration of the several acts. 1. God maketh the promise. 2. He commandeth ministers to publish it. 3. He hath instituted the sacraments as mutual engaging signs or seals. 4. He commandeth ministers to deliver or apply them to those that profess their consent and desire to enter or renew the covenant—now, what act more than these doth God perform to the elect or believers?" ANSWER. The proof of the major I will take for the proof of the minor, which is denied. And to his question, I say, God doth more than all those things enumerated while he actually seals to

believers, or else he should not actually seal to them at all. The Westminster Assembly, in their Shorter Catechism, tells us, what God doth more, in answer to that question, "How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?" The answer is, "The sacraments become effectual—by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them." So then God blesseth them to believers, which he doth not when administered to hypocrites; God works by his Spirit in the one, not in the other; and thus he gives them efficacy to believers, not to others. God ratifies in heaven what ministers do on earth, when the sacraments are administered to them who are fit for receiving them; which is not done in the case of others. What if a Jew or a Mahomedan should undertake to put a mock on the Christians and their God; and, in pursuance thereof, should feign repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ, so as no minister should know but he were serious, and so be baptized? might not this be a right act of the administrator? But doth God no more in his actual sealing to believers, than he doth when such a one is baptized? Believe it who will, I cannot obtain it of myself to give credit to it. Put the case, that two visible church members fall into some scandalous sin, and are censured: both give sufficient evidences of their repentance to the church, yet the one is hypocritical, the other sincere: God maketh the promise, commandeth his ministers to publish it, he hath instituted church discipline for the gaining of offenders, he commandeth that such as appear penitent be absolved. But doth God no more towards the one than towards the other? Surely he doth, as in the former case.

ARGUMENT II. If the parents of such infants concerning whom our question is, have no right to the table of the Lord, then the infants have no right before the church to the ordinance of baptism: but the former is true: Ergo, and hence it hath been a piece of difficulty to me, to reconcile the practice of admitting men's children to baptism, and in the meantime debarring themselves from the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and that constantly. The minor is least to be doubted; for the church, in debarring openly wicked persons from the table of the Lord, declareth that they are looked on as persons that have no right thereto. I apprehend it will be said, that such persons have *jus ad rem*, but not *in re*; and that the former is sufficient to entitle their children to baptism in *foro ecclesiæ*. This I

willingly grant, as to some that are debarred from the sacrament of the Lord's supper: even as in the case of the Israelites with respect to the passover, where some had a remote right to that ordinance; but when they were unclean, they could not rightfully claim the possession of it. But I would distinguish of scandalous Christians, or baptized persons. Some are habitually and constantly scandalous, who never gave any probable signs of their sincerity; others there are that have sometimes given such probable signs, but afterwards fall into some scandalous sin or sins. That the latter sort have jus ad rem, or a remote right to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, I will not deny. Yea, it will not be grievous to me to grant, that the children of such persons, while as yet they have not evidenced their repentance, have nevertheless a right coram ecclesie to baptism. And my reason is, because the church still looks on such a person as a living, though not a lively member of Christ, as one savingly in covenant with God, evidenced by his former walk, before the hour of temptation; and the child's visible right to baptism, depends not on the parent's visible frame, but his visible state as in covenant with God; for so runs the promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed:" so that the church looking on the parent as having God for his God, in the sense of the promise, must needs look on his seed as enjoying the same privilege, and consequently a right to baptism. But as for those who are habitually profane, who never appeared to walk in any tolerable measure becoming the gospel, as there are too, too many baptized persons, they have not so much as a remote right to the sacrament of the Lord's supper: for it is appointed of God for believers, and them only: for the living, to make them grow; not for the dead, to give them life, else why are any debarred from it? So that none have a right, no not a remote right thereto, before God, but real believers; and none have a remote right thereto, before the church, but visible believers. Whatever some are pleased to plead for the right of all baptized persons to the Lord's table, it will not much move me, nor do I think will it move many (but to indignation,) when they sist their consciences before the tribunal of a holy God; therefore I will not digress from my purpose, to consider the weak arguings wherewith some endeavour to support that cause. We say then, that as none have a remote right to this sacrament in foro poli, but such as are right as to their state; and none a proximate right thereto, but such as are in a frame, in some measure, suitable to that venerable ordinance: so none have jus ad rem in

foro poli, but visible believers; and none jus in re, but the same persons being free of public scandal. I proceed to prove the consequence. The child hath no visible right to that ordinance to which the parent hath none. This proposition hath been proven before. But if the parents have not so much as a remote right to the table of the Lord, they have no right to baptism: Ergo, if the parent have not so much as a remote right to the table of the Lord, the child hath no visible right to baptism. The minor is clear; for I think it will be denied by none, that all that have right to baptism have a remote right to the table of the Lord, et vice versa. None need to think it strange, that we speak of persons actually baptized having right to baptism, no more than to question the right that a man hath to an estate he has long enjoyed; for it is certain here, that possession may be where there is no rightful possession, or right and title to what is possessed. If any say, that children are not baptized in their parents' right, but in their own right, they may freely for me enjoy their liberty to express it so: for it is certain the child has a right, and that right is not the parent's right; but all the evidence that we can have of a child's right to baptism, is from the parents; therefore said I, the child can have no visible right, &c. I doubt not, but as the child of a most profane parent may have the Spirit; so in that case it hath a most undoubted right, before the Lord, to the seal of the covenant: but the parent being an openly wicked person, there is no probable evidence of this; nor can there be in that case, till the child do manifest the same by its personal carriage. In the meantime, as to us de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.

ARGUMENT III. A cursed seed hath no right to a sealing ordinance; but the children of the openly wicked, or such as make no credible profession, are a cursed seed: Ergo, there can be no doubt of the assumption, the Scripture is express for it, Deut. 28:18. "Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body." The proposition I prove thus. If a visibly cursed seed, (for so I understand the cursed seed I speak of in the argument, taking it for granted, they are visibly cursed whom God has declared in his word to be cursed, which I think none can deny with any colour of reason); if a visibly cursed seed have a visible right to a sealing ordinance, then a visibly cursed seed are a visibly blessed seed; but that is absurd: Ergo, the consequence is plain: for they that have right to the seal of the covenant

of grace, are a visibly blessed seed; they are surely visibly blessed who appear to be in covenant with God, and members of Christ, as those do who have a visible right to baptism. The assumption is no less plain: for blessing and cursing are inconsistent; whom God visibly curseth, he cannot at the same time visibly bless, else they should be visibly happy and miserable at one and the same time; even so happy as God's blessing makes, and so miserable as God's curse makes a person. It is in vain to say, they are blessed and cursed in sundry respects; so that however in some other respects they are cursed, yet, in respect of a right to the first seal of the covenant, they are a blessed seed: for there is no distinction, nor ground for such distinction, in the text. But in what other respects can they be visibly cursed, when they are visibly blessed in this respect? Were they in the most miserable case that ever any was in the world in other respects, while they have a visible right to baptism, God is their God, and who will dare say, that those who are thus visibly privileged are visibly cursed? As the blessing of God puts a person in a blessed state, so his curse puts him in a cursed state, in whatever particular the blessing or the curse do chiefly appear; for God's blessing and cursing are formally forensic actions, and so the different states resulting therefrom are inconsistent utterly, as justification and condemnation. Yea, I add, that the executive blessing and cursing are also inconsistent; for these flow from, and do necessarily pre-suppose the formal acts of blessing and cursing: so that although a person in a cursed state may receive good things from God, that are in themselves, and unto others blessings indeed, yet they are cursed to him, Mal. 2:2: even as afflictions, which are curses to the wicked, are nevertheless blessings to them that are in Christ. What though the seed of the wicked by sovereign grace may be blessed; yet, while this blessing is latent, we are to look on them as God in his word hath denounced the seed of the wicked to be: for the word is the rule of the church's judgment, not the secret will of God; "Secret things belong to the Lord, but unto us those things that are revealed." When they do by their personal carriage declare themselves to be blessed ones, the church is to deal with them as such then, but not till then. As God hath declared the seed of the wicked to be cursed, so he hath also declared the seed of the righteous to be I blessed, Psal. 37:26, "His seed is blessed;" and 112:2. "The generation of the upright shall be blessed." What a vast difference doth the Lord in his word make between the seed

of the righteous and the ungodly! the one is blessed, the other cursed: it seems reasonable then the church should make some difference betwixt them also in the matter of church privileges, as was argued before. Can we suppose, that God hath given no more ground of comfort to the godly as to their seed, than he has given to the wicked, if they be but baptized? or can we restrain this ground of comfort merely to temporal good things? In this readily the children of the faithful have least share. I think it is a pitiful straitening of the many promises that are made to the godly and to their seed, to allow them no more ground of comfort as to their children's souls, than wicked baptized persons may have as to theirs, notwithstanding of the curses denounced upon them. Allow both an equal right to the seal of the covenant of grace, and so to all the benefits thereof, and then sure all odds are made even. For my part, I am indeed of opinion, that, but prejudice to the sovereignty of God, who hath neither in the curse nor in the blessing set a law for himself, to bind up the hands of free grace from bringing forth elect vessels out of the loins of wicked parents; nor the hands of absolute dominion, in reprobating some of the seed of the godly; that the main thing aimed at, both in the curse and in the blessing, is what concerns the eternal state of their seed, viz. that God will deny his grace to the children of the wicked, and so damn them for their sins; and give his grace to the seed of the godly, and so save them eternally. So judicious Calvin\* understands the threatening and the promise in the second command. And it is highly reasonable, that the holy oracles of God should be always understood in the most comprehensive sense, where there is nothing to restrain the same, as it is in this case. And what else can we make of the grand promise of the covenant, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed?" This answers the scope and design of the declaration of the mind of God most fully, both in the declaration of the curse, and of the blessing. This makes them most pungent incentives to true piety. And thus God himself hath visibly explained the same. How often do we see the children follow the footsteps of their parents, graceless parents with children no better than themselves, when the children of the godly are blessed? It is true, the wickedness of some of the children of the godly is much noticed, and ready to be talked of, when the impiety of the children of the wicked is not: but this plainly confirms what we say; for no better is expected of the seed of the wicked, when better things are looked for in the children of



the godly. Seldom it is but the godly have some good; seldom the wicked have any. Of some stock of people God never wants some, even to the view of the world; and of others he hath none, in all appearance. And if the curse and blessing be thus understood, it doth mightily strengthen the argument, as I apprehend; for baptism is de jure conferred on children, only as they are apparently such as belong to God in a saying manner, as was before pleaded. This argument then I will conclude, with Balaam's words inverted, "How shall we bless whom God hath cursed?"

ARGUMENT IV. If it be necessarily pre-required to infants' right to baptism coram ecclesia that their parents appear penitent, and lovers, not haters of God; then none but the infants of visible believers have a visible right to the ordinance of baptism: the former is true; Ergo, the latter also. The consequence is plain: for visible penitents, lovers, and not haters of God, are visible believers, and none other; the one cannot be necessary, but the other ipso facto is also necessary; and those whom we cannot look upon as visible penitents, and lovers of God, we must needs look upon as visibly impenitent persons, and haters of God, and so as visible unbelievers, wanting that which is necessary to evidence their infants' right to baptism. The assumption is proven before from Acts 2:38. Exod. 20:5, 6. From the former of these, it plainly appears, that repentance was pre-required of those pricked at the heart, antecedently to their own, or their children's visible right to baptism. And what though parents now are ordinarily possessed of that privilege in their infancy, when they were admitted as visible saints, seeing afterwards they have nothing of that visible saintship? ought they not to be pressed to repentance, in order to a visible right to their seed for this ordinance, having now lost that visible right thereto themselves, which they possibly had in their infancy? Those in the text were circumcised, whether jure or injuria we shall not determine; and circumcision was a seal of the same covenant whereof baptism also is; it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, as well as baptism: yet notwithstanding, they behoved to evidence their repentance before their children's right to baptism could be acknowledged; as was proven before. It seems then no less reasonable, that baptized parents should be obliged to do the like, ere their children's right to baptism be acknowledged by the church. From the latter of these Scriptures, it hath been evinced, that the children of wicked parents are, by the threatening,

denied a right to the seal of the covenant; and that it is given, by the promise, only to the children of those that love God; which doth plainly restrain the same to the seed of visible believers coram ecclesia. Hereunto add that testimony of the apostle, 1 Cor, 7:14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife:—else were your children unclean; but now they are holy:" from whence it doth inevitably follow, that one of the parents must needs be a visible believer, else the children cannot be reckoned holy; and hence it is ordinary to prove the right of the infants of the faithful unto baptism.

EXCEPTION 1. By the haters of God in the second commandment are meant idolaters only; and so by lovers of God, those that cleave to the true worship of God: and therefore the threatening cannot be extended to the children of those that do not turn aside to idolatry, or renounce Christianity. ANSWER. Many things may be returned to this exception; as 1. Then all baptized persons' children have not a right to baptism; for they may be baptized, and yet be idolaters, though they have not renounced their baptism. 2. Then the children of Papists have no right to baptism; for they are manifest idolaters, as all Protestant divines do hold; and yet those that differ will not allow this. But, 3. Though the contempt of this command is no doubt aimed against in the threatening, and the promise hath respect to the keeping of it; yet to restrain either the threat or the promise to this command, is to do violence to the words; for the words are express for God's commands in the plural number, both in Exod. 20:6. and Deut. 27:10; so that at least they belong to all the commands of the first table. "If you consider duly," says Calvin,\* "the promise which we have now explained, is not peculiarly annexed to one command, but is common to the whole first table of the law." Zanchius carries it further. "The true interpretation," says he, "is that this (viz. the fifth command) is the first command with a promise, to wit, not pertaining universally to all the commands." And a little after: "God doth so much esteem the keeping of this command, that he hath added to it only, and so to none other, a peculiar promise." 4. That by haters of God are meant idolaters only, &c. is gratis dictum. It seems strange, to restrain that odious character to those only, seeing the hatred of God is common to all unregenerate persons, who are "enmity against God," Rom. 8:7; and the hatred of God is most vigorous amongst those where

idolatry is banished, and the pure word of God is preached, levelling pithily against the sins of the wicked. And no less strange is it, that those should be accounted lovers of God who outwardly cleave to pure ordinances, while they are openly wicked in their lives: surely Christ accounts those his enemies, who shall be brought forth, and slain before his eyes, and that with a double death. Wherefore we understand the haters of God to be all the wicked, and the lovers of God the truly godly, who obey out of love, as the other disobey out of hatred to God; as Calvin judiciously teacheth.\* Those that love me. "The fountain and origin of true righteousness is expressed. The transgressors of the law are called enemies and haters of God. For seeing he cannot be separated from his justice, the contempt of the law argueth this hatred; because it cannot be, but he that will not suffer God to be his lawgiver and judge, desires also to rob him of his governments" 5. Lastly, Though it should be yielded, that the threatening and promise belong only to this command, yet what reason is there that they should be restrained to one sin and one duty only? I should think at least, that such as do not observe the ordinances of God, as prayer, &c. should be also here included.

EXCEPTION 2. The apostle (1 Cor. 7:14.) means not real believers, in opposition to openly wicked Christians; but believers, in opposition to pagans, accounting all believers who had given up their name to Christ in baptism. ANSWER. The apostle means visible believers, amongst whom some were sincere, others hypocrites; even as he means visible holiness, when he saith, their children were holy. To suppose that there were any in the church of Corinth that were not visible Christian believers, is what I cannot grant without proof; and I am of opinion, it cannot be proven from the Scriptures. There is, as I said before, a vast difference betwixt one that sometimes, by his personal carriage, gave probable evidence of his saintship, and one that never did so. There were certainly many grievous enormities amongst that people, or in that church; yet the former of these appears to be their case. The reason is, because, as the history of the acts of the apostles shew, none in those days were baptized, but such as gave probable signs of their sincerity, together with their children; and of the Corinthians particularly Luke testifies, that "many of them hearing, believed, and were baptized," Acts 18:8; and the Lord told Paul in a vision, that "he had much people in that city, and so he abode a

year and six months with them," vers. 9, 10; and though he himself baptized few of them, yet it cannot be thought but that people were baptized by his direction, and that therein he did as the rest of the apostles, requiring them to evidence their repentance before baptism; and when he was gone, Apollos, a faithful brother, was with them for a time, Acts 19:1. That others than visible believers were baptized among them, we cannot without proof grant, especially seeing all of them whose baptism is recorded in the Scripture, were visible believers, and therefore baptized. Wherefore, although that by means of their own corruptions, and hypocrisy, no doubt in some of them, and by means of false teachers, some were led aside into erroneous principles and disorderly practices, they could not lose their visible saintship, till such time as they proved utterly irreclaimable: but how they took with the apostle's reproofs, the apostle himself plainly tells, 2 Cor. 7:8. &c. And indeed, for all the faults that were among them, the apostle acknowledgeth them still as visible believers; writing to them, as few ministers amongst us, I suppose, durst write to his congregation of baptized ones: 1 Cor. 1:2. "Unto the church of God that is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called" (our translation adds, but without reason,) "to be saints" ver. 3. "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father," ver. 7. "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." ver. 8. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." See ver. 9. chap. 6:16, 19, 20. But in our case the persons we speak of, are such as never, gave probable evidence of their sincerity, else there would not be so much difficulty about the matter.

ARGUMENT V. Those who cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant, have no visible right to baptism; but the children of openly wicked parents cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant: Ergo, the major is owned to be a truth by most divines that are orthodox. Wendelin is very express for it:\* speaking of the subject recipient of baptism, he says, "It is all, and only those who are probably judged to be within the covenant of grace." So saith Oliver Bowles, who nevertheless allows the children of all baptized persons a right to baptism. "All infants," says he, "that in the judgment of charity are within the covenant, are to be baptized. I call that the judgment of charity, when we obtain all those things by which it is probable the party to be baptized is under the

covenant." It is evident, these learned men speak of a saving inbeing in the covenant, the probableness whereof they think is requisite in those that have right to baptism before the church; which is the very thing our proposition doth import. However, I shall prove it. None have right to that ordinance, before the Lord, that are not really and savingly in covenant with God, as hath been already cleared; Ergo, none have visible right to the ordinance, that are not visibly or probably within the covenant. The consequence is manifest; because the judgment of the church must be regulated by the judgment of God, so far as the same is revealed. Again, those who cannot be probably judged to have a real right to the thing sealed, or rather a real interest in the same, have no visible right to the seal; but those who cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant really and savingly, have no visible interest in the thing sealed, because it is the covenant of grace that is the thing sealed: Ergo, if therefore any will plead an external being in covenant with God, as a distinct thing from a visible being in covenant with him; and allege, that the seal may be given on the account of this external being in covenant, they speak unadvisedly; for it is no other covenant that is sealed by baptism but the covenant of grace, which is entered into, or accepted by faith; neither can any be said to be in it, but either really or apparently, which we call visibly. Now, I prove the minor. Openly wicked parents cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant; Ergo, neither their children. The antecedent must needs be yielded, unless we say, that openly wicked persons give probable signs of their piety and interest in Christ; that they are probably regenerated, justified, adopted, &c.; which is in effect to say, that openly wicked persons are not openly wicked, but visible saints. It is in vain to say, that they are within the conditional promise, in so far as they are baptized; for we speak now of a probable judgment of a particular person's being within the covenant. But if by this be meant, that they are within the compass of that promise, though they have not yet come up to the terms, then they have no more than what pagans have, whensoever the gospel-offer is made to them: if the meaning of it be, they are within it in so far as they have really believed, then we would fain learn, how a real believer comes to be an openly wicked man; and by what means, or probable signs, men do judge an openly wicked person to be a believer. The consequence is proved from hence, that children stand and fall before the church, with their

immediate parents; so that we cannot judge a man's seed probably to be in covenant with God, if he himself be not visibly in the covenant. I can apprehend no way how the force of this argument can be warded off, unless we make recourse to the remote godly parents: which to how many inconveniencies it is liable, we have heard before. Some indeed lay the whole stress on the baptism of the parents, one or both, and will have the judgment of charity to conclude all those to be within the covenant probably, whose parents sometime were baptized; which, in my opinion, is wonderfully wide charity, to say no more of it. How can a person's baptism be more useful to another, than to himself that personally received it? The baptism of some is followed with open wickedness; and that which we now speak of, is that right the children of openly wicked parents can have to baptism; and we have proven, that the openly wicked cannot be probably judged to be within the covenant; and yet a baptized person may be openly wicked; consequently the baptism of an openly wicked parent cannot be a ground whereon we may probably judge him within the covenant. Yet that this baptism, so useless to himself, should be so useful to his seed, is a thing that would need strong arguments to back it with, in order to its reception. One would expect, that such as go no further than the immediate parents for the church-state of the infants, should shew as much in the immediate parent as the child hath, seeing nothing can give more than it hath to itself. Moreover, if the judgment of charity must conclude all those children to be probably in covenant whose parents were once baptized, then, if Simon Magus had enjoyed a child, even after his discovering himself to have been still "in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity," and to "have neither part nor lot" with the people of God "in the gifts of the Holy Ghost," that child would have been probably judged to be within the covenant, and so to have had right to the seal of the covenant: but that could not be, in regard Simon himself had then no visible right to baptism; and had that discovery been made before, doubtless he had not been baptized. How many baptized persons do as really discover themselves to be still "in the gall of bitterness," as Simon did, by their open wickedness? But the unprofitableness of the baptism of openly wicked persons, while they continue so, has been largely discoursed on before.

ARGUMENT VI. If none be visibly privileged with having "God to be their

God, and the God of their seed," (in the sense of the promise and covenant of grace, which is sealed, to by the sacraments), but visible believers; then the infants of openly wicked parents, though baptized, have no visible right to baptism; the former is true: Ergo, the latter also. The sequel is manifest, if ye consider, that openly wicked persons, though baptized, are visible unbelievers, and that they can have no right to baptism coram ecclesia whose God the Lord is not: for, in baptizing infants, we do really declare that we look on God as the God of the parent, and the God of his seed. Now that this great privilege visibly belongs only to visible believers, we hope to manifest by these following reasons.

1. That which belongs only to real believers before God, visibly belongs only to visible believers and their seed; but this privilege belongs only to real believers before the Lord: Ergo, &c. The reason of the proposition hath been given oftener than once in this discourse, therefore I stand not upon it. I prove the assumption: Those to whom this privilege is given, have ground to expect the accomplishment of the rest of the promises of the covenant to them: the reason is, because this is comprehensive of all, and all the rest depend on it; for what can God promise or give more than himself to be a God to us? but none have ground to expect this but real believers: Ergo, further, those who are thus privileged now coram Deo, God will at the last day openly acknowledge as his people; for these two go together, "I will be their God and they shall be my people;" but God will so own none but real saints: Ergo.

2. Those to whom this privilege doth visibly belong, whose God the Lord is, are those, and those only to whom the Lord hath been visibly so gracious, as to "put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" but these are none other but visible believers and their seed: Ergo, the major is clear; for these two are joined together in the promise, Jer. 31:33. Heb. 8:10. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel—I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." See now how this doth visibly agree unto the openly wicked, that visibly cast God's laws behind their backs.

3. Only Abraham's visible seed are thus visibly privileged: Ergo, only visible believers. The antecedent is plain. The consequence I prove thus:

None are Abraham's real seed spiritually but real believers; Ergo, none are his visible seed but visible believers. The Scripture plainly holds forth, that none are really Abraham's seed but true believers, Gal. 3. ult. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The apostle is there speaking to such as in the judgment of charity were Abraham's seed; but because men may be Abraham's seed that way, yet none of his in the judgment of God, he tells them who they are that are the true seed of Abraham, even they that are Christ's by real union with him through faith; not by a bare profession, or by baptism without true godliness: for there were none of them but were baptized, and professed Christ, but that was not enough to make them heirs according to the promise, and consequently not enough to make them sons either. Gal. 3:7. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." ver. 9. "So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham."

4. Those only are thus visibly blessed for whom it appears Christ has died, and who are apparently redeemed by him from the curse of the law; and such are only visible believers and their seed: for the apostle plainly teacheth, that these go before the blessing of Abraham, as the procuring causes thereof, vers. 13. 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Now, it is certain, that God's being Abraham's God, and the God of his seed, was the blessing of Abraham, comprehending all other particular blessings, which is now come on the Gentiles.

5. From the same Scripture we further argue thus: That blessing which comes on people only through Jesus Christ, and that promise of the Spirit (or promised Spirit) which is received only by faith, doth visibly belong to none but visible believers, such as appear to be in Christ and endued with faith; but such is the blessing of Abraham which comes on the Gentiles: Ergo, the proposition is plain: for where there is no visible evidence of a person's being in Christ, through whom alone the blessing comes; where there are no probable signs of faith through which it is received, that blessing is not, nor cannot be visibly come on them.

6. Lastly, It sounds exceedingly harsh, to say, that God is the God of a



visible unbeliever and his seed, in the sense of the great promise sealed by the sacraments; for in some sense he is the God of the whole creation, but surely it will not be denied, that this is something else, viz. that he is their God by way of covenant. Either, then, to have God for our God in the sense of this promise, is to have God for our God in the way of the covenant of works, or in the way of the covenant of grace. The first will not be pleaded: for the sacraments seal not the covenant of works; besides, God is the God of all out of Christ that way, of pagans as well as others. It is therefore meant of God's being our God in the way of the covenant of grace; and what greater blessing hath the most undoubted real believer? Consider then how this can be digested, that God is the God of an openly wicked person; one grossly ignorant of the principles of religion, necessary to salvation to be known; of one possessed with a dumb devil, that calls not on God in secret or in his family; that hath not so much as a form of godliness, but is a visible member of Satan's kingdom, and a visible enemy to the kingdom of Christ. That God is the God of such a one and his seed, and that we are to judge so of him and his seed, as of the most holy and exercised professor of religion, is what would need bands of iron and brass to tie a body to the belief of it. Wherefore I conclude, that seeing God cannot be judged to be the God of any and of their seed, but of visible saints and believers, none others' children have right to baptism: which must needs hold good, till such time as it be manifest, that others have right to baptism than they whose God the Lord is not, and have no interest in that privilege and blessing, to which circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, and consequently baptism, was appended, Gen. 17:7–10. Let none say, he is their God by their profession, in so far as they were baptized in his name, and have not yet renounced it; for what sort of a profession is that which is visibly contradicted by their practice! Surely men would lay little weight on such a profession of service made to them by others. But God hath made faith, not profession, especially a profession visibly contradicted by their practice, to be the way of entering into covenant with him; and we look on a credible profession only as a probable sign of real faith, which we cannot discern but in its effects. Where then this credible profession is wanting, there appears no faith; and consequently there is no probable evidence of God's being the God of such persons, or of their seed.

ARGUMENT VII. If the children of openly wicked parents, though baptized, have a visible right to the seal of the covenant, then the church is bound to admit them to baptism, and actually to baptize them? but that practice of baptizing the infants of openly wicked persons, or such as are not visible believers, as deriving their right from their parents, (in which sense the proposition is to be understood,) is unwarrantable; Ergo, the sequel is plain: for it is a wrong to deny any the possession of that to which they have a visible right, when there is no impediment laid in the way by the party who is to have possession; as it is in the case of infants. Yea, it is a wrong not to put infants in the possession of those privileges whereof they are capable, and have a visible right to, seeing they are such as cannot move in their own business. Thus Moses was injurious to his son, in not circumcising him at the time appointed of God; for which cause God sought to kill him, Exod. 4:24. I prove the minor: the action is lusory, even according to the principles of those that differ, if the church hath no probable grounds to expect the religious education of those children that are baptized, or that they shall be brought up for the service of him in whose name they are baptized; but, in the case we speak of, they have no probable grounds to expect the same: Ergo, the action is lusory, and consequently unwarrantable. How can openly wicked persons, whether grossly ignorant of the fundamentals of religion, or profane in their lives, having knowledge, be trusted for the bringing up of a child for Christ? Is it probable, that they who are visible slaves to the devil themselves, will bring up their children in and to the service of God? We know not but they may formally renounce their baptism, and carry away their children with them to idolatry, &c. who have so far gone on in a practical renunciation of the same. Such persons are not fit to be trusted in such a weighty concern. If any shall say, that the baptizing of the children of such parents is to be suspended till their parents reform, or they themselves come to ripe years, and evidence their piety by a visibly holy walk; we agree in the thing, though not in the name; for by this means the infant's visible right is plainly made to depend on the visible state of the parent; which is indeed not to suspend, but utterly to deny the thing, and all right thereto, unto such infants, till such time as one of these two things before mentioned does appear. But how the suspending of the child's baptism for shorter or longer time, upon the parent's account, can be pleaded, according to the principles of those that differ, I

see not; seeing that were contrary to what they urge in the main point, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.

But this is thought to be salved by bringing in of sponsors for such children; that their openly wicked parents are not to be admitted to make faith for them, but some other fit person. If such a fit person be found, then the child is to be baptized; if not, then indeed the action is lusory, say they. To this I answer, That either the child hath its right to the ordinance from the sponsor, or the parent. If from the sponsor, then not from the parent; which is the very thing we plead: if from the parent, then how comes the child to be denied that which it hath a visible right to, in any case, while, poor soul, it can do nothing to lay an impediment in the way of its possession of the privilege it hath right to? must it so far bear the iniquity of the father? It follows then still, that such an infant must be baptized in the right of the immediate parent; and that, on the same account, the infant cannot be kept back from baptism, nothing being on its part to hinder the actual possession. It is in vain to say, that the infant hath from the parent *jus ad rem*, and from the sponsor *jus in re*: for unless there were a *jus sub termino* fixed by the Lord in his word, as it was in the case of circumcision, when the child had no actual right in that ordinance till the eighth day, which cannot be alleged here, the infant hath a most immediate right by birth privilege, if it have any at all; so that the actual possession of that privilege may be immediately claimed in favours of such a child. And therefore that distinction is not applicable to the matter in hand. Neither do we need the help of it, in such a case, where godly parents are both dead before the child be baptized: for such a child being by birth privilege within the covenant visibly, and so having a visible right to baptism, in whose favours the actual possession of the seal may immediately be claimed, the church is bound to be tutor to it, and see to the education of it in the ways of God, and baptize it according to its right. Even as in the case of a temporal inheritance, where the heir is left an infant; the magistrate is bound to see to the bringing up of such a one, and that it be not defrauded of its heritage. So the church, in this case, gives it not any right to the ordinance that it had not before, but doth her duty in putting it in actual possession of that which it had all right to, antecedently to their meddling with it, and takes care of its education. And this they were obliged to do upon this formal

consideration, that such a one was a child of the covenant.

To consider a little further of sponsors for the children of openly wicked parents: In the first place, the practice of many is to require those only in some more odious cases, as when the parent is guilty of fornication, adultery, or the like; but readily, if they be civilized, though they have not so much as a form of godliness, nor ever bow a knee to God in secret or in their family, which doth hold them out of the number of visible believers, and so ranks them amongst the openly wicked, no sponsors are required for their children other than themselves. Now, what, are those persons to be trusted in the religious education of a child? Either we must say, that mere civility is religion and Christianity; or else we must say, it is probable that these will bring up their children in the holy religion and for Christ, that have not so much as a form of godliness themselves; which is a strange sort of probability. And what reason truly is there why such a difference should be made, in this matter, betwixt civil men that have not so much as a form of godliness, and common drunkards, swearers, &c. that are baptized? Are they baptized? so are these we speak of. Are they civil persons, free of gross immoralities? so are some pagans as well as they. If the church be I satisfied with them on the account of their baptism, they must also be satisfied with the other sort: if on the account of their civility, then they must be so satisfied with pagans also; for quatenus ad omne valet consequentia: if on the account of their baptized civility, why not also with many of the other sort upon the account of their drunken prayers? Nothing but bad custom, I presume, hath authorised the want of a form of godliness, neglect of prayer, and the like, in a civil baptized person, to go with such a black character, in the face of the visible church, as drunkenness and the like are marked with. Further, what if the parents will not allow another person to be sponsor for their child, and will rather let it lie unbaptized than suffer any such thing; will the church force away their children from them, and baptize them whether they will or not, so that the child may not be defrauded of its pretended right? Finally, in order to the church's security for the education of such children, it seems to be of absolute necessity, that they be put wholly in the power of the sponsor; for how can a man be trusted with the upbringing of a child that hath it not wholly in his power? To promise otherwise is to promise impossibilities, or that which might be

rendered impossible by the parent. Surely no man will take it upon him to learn another man's son a trade, whereby he may gain his livelihood, unless such a one be put in his power, so that the father may not call him away when he pleaseth. If the child be still at the disposal of the wicked parent, the sponsor may promise, but the parent will perform as he seeth good. Now, if the child be put wholly in the power of the sponsor as to its education, it is plain, the formal reason for which the child is baptized, is not because he is born of baptized parents, but because he is as it were the adopted son of the sponsor; so that the child hath his visible right to baptism, not by the parent, but the sponsor. And so the cause is yielded, and the case and question quite altered. And the question will be, Whether or not an infant which is devoted unto Christ by a stranger, having it wholly in its power, at least as to its education, hath a visible right to baptism? which is resolved by Mr. Baxter in the affirmative, on Scripture grounds, even though they were the children of Turks and Jews. Against which I dare not as yet reclaim, providing these sponsors be visible believers, and so fit to be trusted in such a matter. Hence it appears, sponsors, 1. ought to be visible believers; 2. having the child for whom they engage, wholly in their power as to its education; 3. required in the case of all children that are not the seed of parents whereof one is a visible believer. If matters were brought to this pass, much, if not all the difficulty of this case, would be removed.

ARGUMENT VIII. No infants but those of visible church members have right to baptism coram ecclesia; and none but the infants of visible believers are the children of visible church members: Ergo, the major is evident: for if the children of those that are no visible church members have right to baptism, it is made a privilege common to the church with those of the rest of the world; which is absurd. I prove the minor: if none be true members of the church but the faithful or real believers, then none are visible church members but visible believers; the former is true, therefore the latter also: consequently none are the children of visible church members, but the children of visible believers. The reason of the consequence is this, that visible church members are none other but such as apparently are true members of the church of Christ; so that if none be true members but real believers, none can be visible members but such as appear to be true believers. Christ hath not two churches, one invisible,

and another visible; but one church, that in one respect is visible, in another respect invisible: Christ is not a head with two bodies, but we are "all baptized into one body," and mystical "Christ is but one," 1 Cor. 12:12, 13. If then the true members of the church are only believers, it is plain that the visible members thereof are only such as are apparently believers. If we judge in thesi that believers only are true members of the church, when we come to judge in hypothesi as to this or that particular person, we cannot judge him a true member but as he appears to be such. As to the assumption, the body of Protestant divines will bear me out in it; whose constant doctrine against the Papists is, That the wicked, hypocrites, and reprobates, who outwardly profess the faith, are not true members of Christ's church; but only the godly and faithful, who not only profess faith, but indeed believe and are regenerate, are to be judged true members of the church.

ARGUMENT IX. If none but visible believers have right to baptism before the church, and infants derive their visible right thereto from their immediate parents; then none but the children of visible believers have right to baptism before the church. The antecedent hath been already proven in both its parts, and the consequence is too evident to be denied. The Scripture is so plain and full, in asserting, that no adult persons but such as are visible believers ought to be baptized, that I can see no evasion from the force of this argument, for those that do not derive the infant's right from the remote parents, but require evidence of the baptism of one of the immediate parents; whereby they plainly suspend the visible right of the infant on the visible state of the next parent; unless they say, either that one can give what he hath not to himself, or that the parent's baptism, notwithstanding of his gross ignorance of the fundamental points of religion, or of his openly vicious life, never having had so much as a form of godliness, be a sufficient evidence of his faith as to us: the absurdity whereof I will not stand to prove, being under no temptation to suspect the truth of it, but assured, by the Lord's word, that we ought to judge of the tree by its fruits.

ARGUMENT X. Lastly, I shall conclude with this, That the way we plead for seems to have the advantage of the other, in that it apparently hath a more direct tendency to the advancement of the great ends of the gospel;

which calls men to "join themselves unto the Lord" through Christ by faith, and "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live godly and soberly in this present world." And this it hath, in respect of the parents, of the children, and of others.

1. In respect of the parents. We find the most ignorant and profane wretches almost that are amongst us, cannot easily digest their children's want of baptism, though they understand not the nature of it, the ends and uses for which it is appointed; or if they do understand, yet take no care to perform their vows. Now, while their children are baptized, as they offer them to baptism, they are hardened in their impiety, and the church is mocked with their engagements; for what trust can be put in them, or what credit can be given to the promises and engagements of such? It is sad that many are trusted in this matter, to whom we could give no credit in far less matters. And this evil is not cured by requiring of sponsors, into whose power the child is not wholly given up, as to its education, as was said before. But were the children of such parents debarred from the sacrament, till such time as either their parents, one of them at least, should reform and amend their lives, as the same parents are debarred from the Lord's supper; or they themselves should evidence their faith by their carriage at years of discretion, it might rationally be expected, that we should see a reformation in the lives of many, if not of most, who now do never bend themselves that way: "the haters of the Lord should" at least "lye unto him," as it is Psal. 81:15. And it is a promise made unto the church, that "her enemies shall lye unto her," Deut. 33:29. but otherwise, it is rather a mocking than a lying to her: for, as Ursin says, "they deny in their deeds what they profess with their mouth, and it is plain they lye:" for faith and a Christian life cannot be separated. Whoso separate them, mock God and the church. But were they thus dealt with, they might at least be brought to the performance of the external duties of religion: and who knows but many, being thus laid in Christ's way, might be really delivered from the snare of the devil, who otherwise are led captive at his pleasure. Experience hath shown these hopes are not vain.

2. In respect of the children themselves. They seem the same way to be hardened in their sinful courses. When they come to understand their

parents have always lived as they see them do, and yet they were admitted to baptism in their infancy, being born not of unbaptized but baptized persons, having right to the seal of the covenant by their parents, whether mediate or immediate; unless God, with his overcoming grace, work with them, there is no probability that they will in the least trouble themselves to mind religion. And if it should be so, that their wicked parents should tell them, they were devoted to God in their infancy, what success can their instructions and admonitions be expected to have, while they have still before their eyes the bad example of their parents? A more forcible inducement to wickedness, than a thousand of their admonitions will be to the contrary. But were they denied baptism, till either their parents should reform, or till they themselves by their personal walk should evidence their right thereto, in case their parents be incorrigible, it would be a very probable mean to induce them to seek the knowledge of religion, and to study a holy walk; considering that they live in a place where the gospel is preached, and the sad case of those that are without the church is holden forth. I confess, these things have no small weight with my conscience.

3. Whence it appears, that it would very probably have no small influence on others, especially the younger sort; who first, because of their youth, think religion not fit for them; and then betaking themselves to a married state, do wholly drown themselves in the cares of the world, or other lusts, leaving all care concerning their souls till they come to old age, (which perhaps they never see), or to a death-bed. This would at least put them in mind of changing their course of life, and turning over a new leaf ere they change their single life. I shall add, that by this means it would probably come to pass, that the holy ordinance of baptism, which is a seal of the same covenant with the Lord's supper, should not be so visibly degraded, and put so far below the other sacrament, in people's estimation, as indeed it is, by the promiscuous admission of infants thereto; there should be a more beautiful harmony in the subjects receptive of both; gross ignorance and wickedness should get a black mark set on it before the world; and, finally, the name of Christ should not be so blasphemed amongst Turks, Jews, and pagans, as it is, by reason of the vicious lives of those that live in the visible church.



Thus I have proposed what arguments on both sides have occurred to me, being desirous to find out the truth: and though there be difficulties on both hands, some whereof possibly may not be easy to answer, yet, truly, upon the whole of what is said, I think the opinions of those that say, None but the infants of visible believers have a right to baptism before the church, is most probable; and that the infants of any such as are not visible believers, though their immediate parents be baptized, and though they have had godly remote parents, have no visible right to baptism. And so I address myself to consider the arguments offered by those that differ, which are mentioned above.

I. As to the first argument, That the infants of all Christian parents are within the covenant; I answer, The phrase of being within the covenant is ambiguous. 1. Improperly, it may signify a person's living under the outward administration of the covenant; that is, in a society and amongst a company where all gospel ordinances are administered, so that they have the call of the gospel to come to Christ, and partake of the benefits of the covenant: for to say, the meaning of that is, that they are those to whom all ordinances are actually administered, as it would not help the cause, so it were impertinent here, while we speak of those to whom some of these ordinances may lawfully be administered. But this is very improperly said to be a being within the covenant, and can give no right to the seals of the covenant: for why? people may be living under the outward administration of the covenant, that is, in a society where all gospel ordinances are administered, and yet neither be in reality nor in appearance within the covenant; as Jews and pagans living in a Christian town or country, having Christ offered to them, and the benefits of the covenant, as well as baptized persons. So these Jews, Acts 2 were under the outward administration of the covenant, yet had they no visible title to baptism, and consequently were not properly within the covenant, till such time as they gave evidence of their faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance towards God. 2. There is a real being within the covenant coram Deo; as all are, whether adult or infants, that have the Spirit of grace. This cannot be meant here, (although it is that which only gives right before God to the seal;) because, as Mr. Bowles\* tells us, we cannot certainly know who are actually, as he terms it, within the covenant. 3. There is a visible being within the covenant; and that is, when a person

doth really appear before men to be savingly within the covenant, or rather really and before God in it; and in this sense I deny that such infants as we speak of, are within the covenant: yet this only is that whereby they can have a visible right to the seal. The reason is, because their parents are not visibly within the covenant, unless you will reckon them to so visibly within the covenant, who have made a professed but a feigned devoting and upgiving of themselves to God; which is openly and plainly discovered to be feigned, by their profane walk, or gross ignorance. But of this before. Yet, if you will, it shall not be grievous to me to grant, that even this is a visible being in a covenant with God, (though not in the covenant, viz. of grace, holden forth in the gospel,) and a most proper visible being, under their own voluntary promise to take God for their God; by virtue of which, God hath a kind of interest in them more than others that have not come that length, which serves to aggravate their sin, and will heighten their misery; so that they are God's people, by virtue of their voluntary obligation to take God for their God; and God also, by virtue of the same, is their God, to give them laws, exact obedience of them, and to punish them for their disobedience. Yet are they not within the covenant of grace, either really or apparently; neither is God their God in the sense of the promise on which this argument is built; and so they can have no right to baptism by their being under that covenant or promise, however it be called. The plain reason is, because in that covenant, or the covenant of grace, to which baptism is appended as a seal, God promiseth not to be our God on any other terms but saving faith: so that whosoever believeth not really and savingly, is not before God within the covenant; and whoso doth not visibly believe, is not visibly within it. Hence seeing openly wicked baptized parents come not up, either really or in appearance, to the terms of the covenant, which is not a bare profession with the mouth, or the receiving of the sign in baptism, but true faith, or a real accepting of Christ, and God to be our God in him, they cannot be said to be in the covenant, either really before God, or visibly and apparently before the church. And this observation may serve to invalidate an argument wherein some do confide much, viz. that God owns himself to be the God of a profane people, and them to be his people. As to that which is added for proof, that such are within the covenant, viz. that their parents were sometimes sealed with the seal of the covenant; I deny it follows; and there is good reason for it: for so let

men turn Arians, Socinians, &c. or wallow in never so open and manifest gross abominations, notwithstanding of all means used to turn them from their evil way, they must still be looked on as within the covenant of grace, till they actually and formally renounce their baptism, But I say, with Riissenius, answering the Popish objection and argument adduced by them to prove that hypocrites and reprobates are true members of the church, because they are baptised, "they have only the sign."\* It was never a seal to them, as I have already shown. It will be worth our pains to hear what a censure a very learned divine passeth against the assertors of this doctrine. "To profane the covenant of God," says he, "is to give out and acknowledge those for the confederates of God, who are enemies of God; and so to make such a God as obligeth himself to hypocrites and wicked ones." As for that proof of the argument, viz. That the covenant is made, not only with the root, but with the offspring; from whence it is inferred, that the seal may not only be effectual to the baptized, if he believe, but also render his seed capable of the external sign; it is of no force. If the learned man that hath this argument, mean by the root, the immediate parent, as I think he plainly does, then I deny the covenant is made with such roots; and therefore not with the offspring either, visibly; and have given the reason before. If he mean the remote parents, we have discoursed that already at some length. But truly I see no reason to talk so diminutively of baptism, as to call it the external sign. Was ever baptism appointed of God for a mere external sign? or do ministers, in baptizing the children of profligate parents, mean, that they should receive only the external sign, and not the seal of the righteousness of faith, remission of sins, &c.? If so, no doubt they are guilty of profaning that holy ordinance. As for the confirmation of the argument taken from 1 Cor. 7:14. we have already vindicated that place, and shewn that the apostle speaks to them as visible believers, which needs not be repeated here.

II. I am convinced there is scarcely less force in any of the arguments adduced for this cause, than in the second, which is, That the children must not bear the iniquity of their fathers, (for which Ezek. 18:20. is alleged); and therefore the infants of wicked, openly wicked baptized parents, are to be baptized. ANSWER 1. Why then is there an infant under heaven that ought not to be baptized? The infants of the rudest savages in the world have as little stretched forth their hands to their

fathers' iniquity, as the infants of baptized persons. 2. Whose iniquity did the infants of the first unchurched generation of the Jews, and those of Smyrna, Laodicea, and others, bear? I suppose none will plead their visible right to baptism. 3. The Israelites had God's express command for cutting off all the Canaanites, Deut. 20:16. 17. "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. All the males among the Midianites' little ones are slain with the parents at God's command, Numb. 31:17. The children of Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up with their parents; Achan's sons and daughters were stoned and burned with him; and so, as Mr. Baxter\* saith, cut off from the church and life. 4. Doth not the Lord expressly threaten, that "he will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation?" But how all this may be, and yet that it should be such a strange thing, that the children of openly wicked parents have no visible right to baptism, because they are the children of such parents, I see not any colourable pretext for it. Now, as for the reconciling of this with Ezek. 18:20. the opponents are obliged to see to it as well as we, not only in the fore-mentioned cases, but also in their dealing with the Socinians, in the matter of the imputation of Adam's sin, and our obnoxiousness to the wrath of God upon the account of it, and in the point of Christ's satisfaction; in reference to both which, these heretics abuse that Scripture: yea, not only so, but in the case of baptizing the infants of heretics and excommunicated parents, where they do necessarily require sponsors; and if there be none found that will oblige himself to the church, and undertake the care of teaching those infants, they confess the action is lusory, and baptism is polluted: so that, even according to their own principles, the child may bear the father's iniquity. But the reconciling of these may be seen with such of our divines as write on the second command, and of the Socinian controversy. And what answer those learned men that use this argument make for themselves in the forementioned cases, they may bestow the same on themselves for us. Only I think, in the meantime, they should prove, that our doctrine doth properly make the children to bear the iniquity of their fathers in this case, as if the formal ground and reason whereupon the Lord proceeds against those infants were their parents' open wickedness; which if they do not, they do but beat the air, and fight with a shadow. Why may not

the Lord well be said to visit the open wickedness of such parents on their children, when he only takes occasion from that open impiety of the parents thus to punish the children; yea, to punish them for worse, for their own sin, which they bring to the world with them, and lays them open to the wrath of God? As if a king had a parent and his son both under sentence of death for treason, and the father should be so far from shewing any sorrow for his offence, that he is still going on in treasonable attempts, the king should on that occasion execute the sentence of death, not only on the father, but also on the son, who otherwise might have had mercy; and thus punish the father in his son, as well as in his own person: and yet the formal reason of the sentence against the son is his own treason, though he owes it to his father that the sentence is executed, but yet has no ground to complain of injustice in this matter. For my part, I will plead for no more in this matter; and this sufficiently maketh the argument without force.

III. But now we come to the third argument, which is the most considerable, in my opinion, of all that is advanced in this matter by those that differ. It is this: if the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents, did not exclude their children from circumcision; then the heresy, impiety, or profanity of Christian parents, cannot exclude their children from baptism; but the former is true: Ergo, ANSWER; before I come directly to answer this, I will propose three prejudices that I have against it. The first is this: that this argument concludes, that no heresy, profanity, or impiety of Christians, so called in opposition to pagans, Turks, and Jews, excludes their children from baptism; so that the door is thereby opened to the children of the most gross heretics that ever bare the name of Christians, and that even though accompanied with the grossest wickedness, unless perhaps they formally renounce their baptism: so that, as good right to the seal of the covenant have the children of the Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Ebionites, Cerinthians, Samosatenians, Arians, and Socinians, and such hellish crew, as the most holy and pious professor of the truth that is according to godliness. Quis feret hæc! what a sad thing is it to repute practically open blasphemers of Christ, and of the Holy Trinity, amongst those in covenant with God, though Turks, pagans, and Jews belch not out such blasphemies as they do against the truth! 2. This is inconsistent with the principles of some of

those that use this argument. They say concerning the Jews simply, without any limitation, that their heresy, &c. did not exclude their children from baptism; yet when they come to shew their mind concerning Christian parents, they tell us only of the children of such heretics amongst whom the formula of baptism is safe, that they are to be baptized; whereas, their argument carries it, not only to those, but to all heretics. And, alas! what is the formula of baptism to the purpose in Socinian congregations, where they do baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while it is the open confession of their Satanical synagogue, that Christ is a mere man, whatever divine dignity is conferred on him, and the Holy Ghost not a person?\* It is strange there should be such virtue in bare words, without the true sense and meaning. The Socinians in Transylvania sometimes baptized "in the name of Jesus who was crucified," but afterwards were obliged by the Prince to baptize "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." If the children of those who were baptized in the name of Christ who was crucified had right to baptism, then even the children of heretics, amongst whom the very formula of baptism is not preserved, have right to baptism; and so indeed the argument concludes: if they had not, but the latter sort had, what made the difference betwixt them who still retained their former doctrine and principles, and only for pleasing their prince changed their words? It is like it will be said, the former were not Christians: and why were they not Christians? because they were not baptized persons, not being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I should be loath to plead, that either of them were or are Christians: but I dare not unchristian them upon this head, that they are not baptized, lest I should make the holy children of the faithful no Christians, till they be baptized; or unchristian such Anabaptists as are not baptized, till such time as they may be baptized according to their principles; or unchurch the church in the wilderness, that for forty years wanted circumcision: but I would make both the sorts aforementioned no Christians, on the same ground that John makes them Atheists, 1 John 2:23. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:" which is judiciously improven against them, by a late writer.\* And thus, as we go on, we go the deeper, finding the right of the children of very Atheists to baptism. 3. There is another prejudice I have against it, the lawfulness whereof may appear, if ye consider this argument: if the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish

parents, did not exclude their children from circumcision; then the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents did not exclude their children from baptism: the former is true: Ergo, the consequence is plain, (I use the same words that the opponents do, for proof of the consequence of their argument, only mutatis mutandis): for baptism was to them what circumcision was to them; their circumcision was to them a seal of the righteousness of faith, and so was baptism. Now, the grace of God is not more narrow under the New Testament, but more large than under the Old. This argument hath the advantage of the other, in that it proceeds from the Jewish parents and children under the old dispensation, to the same under the new; whereas the other proceeds from the Jews under the old, to the Gentiles under the new. If those things alleged by them prove their consequence, they must also prove ours. Yet I suppose they will not grant the conclusion of this argument, viz. that the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents, did not exclude their children from baptism: that the children of the Pharisees and Sadducees, impenitent murderers of the Lord of life, had a visible right to baptism. However, I think Peter judged not so, when he does so peremptorily require repentance antecedently to baptism. One of the premises must then be false: the minor is their own in terminis; they must then stick at the sequel of the major. If there be any just ground so to do, we have the same reason against theirs, as we shewed before. And let me add, that it is certain it is one and the same covenant to which both baptism and circumcision were appended as seals; it is one and the same church in which the Jews were under the Old Testament, and we are now under the new. The believing Jews were not taken out of one church and put into another; but only others were grafted in amongst them, and they continued still in the same olive, Rom. 11. God did not pull down his old house, and build a new one; but only took down the partition wall, and so made more room, Eph. 2:14. Say then, that the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents did not exclude their children from circumcision, and see if it will not follow, that these things did not exclude them from baptism either. I am not concerned either as to the truth of the antecedent, or of the consequent; it is only the connection betwixt the two. It is as true a proposition *Si equus esset alatus, esset volabilis*; as *Passer est alatus et volabilis*. I do indeed think the consequent false, and therefore am led by the hand to question the truth

of the minor of the argument proposed. I cannot but observe, that (so far as I have read or remembered) our divines against the Anabaptists do still set themselves to prove, that the children of the faithful ought to be baptized; and, In their arguing from circumcision, do hold the conclusion in the same terms: and so indeed the argument is not liable to the former exception, if it be so proposed, the children of the faithful under the Old Testament were circumcised; Ergo, the children of the faithful under the New must be baptized. Now, although I should not answer the argument propounded to mine own satisfaction, these seem to me such lawful prejudices against it, that until I be rid of them, I cannot fall under the force of the argument.

To come now to answer directly to the argument, I deny, the minor, viz. That the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents, did not exclude their children from circumcision. The grounds whereupon I deny it, besides that in the third prejudice, are these, 1. God threatens the Jews as well as others, in his law given on Mount Sinai, that "he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation;" which was already shown, that it extends to the seal of the covenant. And judicious Calvin\* understands it of "the Lord's taking away from the house of the wicked his grace, the light of his truth, and other helps of salvation." He doth also declare the seed of the wicked to be a cursed seed, Deut. 28:18; of which before. 2. It was a positive law that God gave unto the Jews, that in case a city were withdrawn to serve other gods, that city was utterly to be destroyed, and all that was therein; no not the infants were to be spared, Deut. 13:12, 13, 14, 15. Now, if the idolatry of the Jewish parents excluded their infants from the church and life, it excluded them also from circumcision; and so the impiety and profanity of the Jewish parents excluded their children from circumcision. So Achan's sons and daughters were stoned and buried with him, Josh. 7:24, 25, 26. How hard is it to believe, that the impiety of wicked parents amongst the Jews did go so far, as to cut them off, even from the church and life; and yet not to cut them off from a visible right to the seal of the covenant? 3. The Jews were to be excommunicated for heresy, impiety, and profanity. This must needs be granted, unless we say, that there was no such thing as excommunication amongst them; for who could be excommunicated but such? Now, even those amongst them that were



excommunicated with the least degree of excommunication, called NIDDUI, those who were the aposynagogoi, their male children were not circumcised, as Goodwin tells us.\* And truly, whoso considers how usually the children smarted with their parents in their impiety, will not easily conceive of it otherwise. 4. This further appears, if we consider how God visits the profanity of the Jewish parents in their contempt of circumcision, not only upon I themselves, but their seed; as we may learn from that, Gen. 17:14. "And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant." To understand this place, so as that the parent only was liable to this punishment, and not the child, till he come to the years of discretion, as Goodwin doth, seems to me a commentary destroying the text; which passeth a sentence on all Jewish male children, whose flesh of their foreskin is not circumcised, that these shall be cut off from their people, and not that they shall be cut off when they are past the age of childhood. Till the eighth day they were not obliged, yea they might not be circumcised; but when that was over, and the child not circumcised, through the parent's contempt, he is then an uncircumcised man-child, and so liable to this sentence here passed against all such. Now, a parent might be guilty of this profane contempt two ways; either by reason of continuing impenitently in an openly wicked course, whereby his seed lost visible right to that ordinance; or by a profane slighting of it, though otherwise his child's title to it could not be denied: however, the child by this profanity of the parent, is cut off before he be capable to cut off himself; and no less can be meant by it, than a cutting off from visible church membership. "If any object, (these are Calvin's words),\* that the infants were not to be blamed; I answer, that even as God adopts the infant son in the person of the father, when the father rejects such a benefit, the infant is said to abdicate himself from the church; for so much signifies that word, "To be put out from among the people whom God had chosen for himself." That some expound it, they shall not be Jews, is too coldrife: we must go further, to wit, that God will not acknowledge among his people those who will not bear the mark and badge of adoption." However this text directly toucheth the cutting off of the child, yet it seems plainly to follow thence, that much more the parent was to be cut off. From which it appears, that the profanity of the Jewish parents did render their children no visible church members, and

consequently excluded them from circumcision, as Jewish children, or children of such profane parents: which hath the more weight, if it be considered, that the Lord doth not here command others to see to the circumcision of such a child, which might have been expected if he had any visible right thereto, but precludes this, while he tells us, "he shall be cut off, or not acknowledged among his people:" so that should such a one afterwards be admitted, he comes in as a stranger doth, but not by birth privilege.

I come now to consider the reasons adduced to prove that the heresy, impiety, or profanity of the Jewish parents, did not exclude their children from circumcision. The first, which is taken from the universality of the command, is answered already, in taking off an objection made against our first conclusion. The command does indeed oblige all to be circumcised; but it doth also at the same time oblige them to be subjects theologically capable of that ordinance; as is above more fully declared. And, by the same labour, the force of the second reason, taken from the punishment to be inflicted on them, is removed also. And that Scripture we have spoken to before, and improved it for our purpose. To the third, taken from the practice of Joshua, in circumcising all the people at Gilgal, at the command of God; I answer, It can no no more be proven from hence, that Joshua circumcised every individual male among this people, than it can be proven from Matt. 3:5, 6. that every individual person of Judea, and the region round about Jordan, was baptized of John, confessing their sins; for there it is said, "All Judea, and all the region," &c.: yea it is certain, neither Joshua himself nor Caleb were then circumcised, being circumcised before. But the persons that were the first subjects recipient of that ordinance there, were men at age standing in their own right, capable to answer for themselves; and for the infants among them, they stood by the right of their parents, who are, without all possible proof, denied to be all visible believers. How can it be proven, that such were there circumcised as were not visible believers? The contrary is rather manifest, that being men at age, they were circumcised at God's command. But if men will hold by this, that such as were heretics, impious, and profane, were circumcised by Joshua, then we see more how far on this argument does lead us, not only to admit the children, but even such persons themselves at age, to baptism. That is

observable in Joshua's commission,\* "Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time." With respect to Abraham and his family, their being circumcised, which was the first time, where the first subjects recipient of the ordinance were men at age, and then the infants by right derived from them; and so to be continued in the church, the males always to be circumcised in their infancy: but this order was broken off by the generation of adult persons who came out of Egypt, Josh. 5:5; so that it is now a second time to be set on foot, and so to go on as at first was appointed; first men at age to be circumcised, and then their infants. But in Old or New Testament it cannot be instanced, where the first subjects recipient of the seal of the covenant, were not visible believers. And is it not expressly said, that all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, and obeyed not the voice of the Lord, were consumed in the wilderness? and after their circumcision, before they removed from Gilgal, these people kept the passover? ver. 10. Either then we must say, they were not heretics openly impious and profane, or else let us admit such as these to the sacrament of the Lord's supper too under the gospel: As Ursin observes from these two places, Numb. 15:28; Deut. 17:12. "God commandeth the contumacious to be taken away out of the commonwealth, nor does he allow them to be members of his people; much less then will he have them to be holden for members of his visible church, and to be admitted to the sacraments." And it appears, that in the wilderness, in a special manner, God acted himself the part of the magistrate, and put his own laws in execution. As to the fourth and last reason, That we never read of any of them excluded; I answer, A non scripto ad non factum non valet sequela. We read of children excluded from the church and life by their parents' impiety, and it would seem there were laws for the excluding of them; so that, by the word of God, they were excluded de jure. And we have heard, that the children of excommunicated parents were actually excluded.

IV. As to the fourth argument, taken from Acts 2:38, 39. we have already explained and improved that Scripture against the doctrine of the opponents. Whether by the promise be meant that, "I will be your God, and the God of your seed," or not, is not very certain. Some learned men\* understand by the gift of the Holy Ghost, the extraordinary gifts of the

Spirit, peculiar to the first times of the church; and by the promise, the promise of the same, cited by Peter out of Joel, which he did repeat at large, ver. 17, &c. But howsoever it be understood, it is clear, that this promise being to them gave them not a right to baptism, but that repentance was necessarily pre-required of them in order thereunto; as we have proved before; which quite invalidates any argument taken from hence for the cause that is pleaded. Again, there is another thing in this text that makes it, as explained for this cause, altogether useless to the purpose; and that is, that the promise is no less said to be to those whom the Lord shall call, who as yet were afar off, than it is said to be to those to whom he spoke; but had the Gentiles yet uncalled a right to baptism too? Finally, it is to be marked, that those to whom the apostle speaks here, were not all Jews, but many of them were Gentiles, neither were they all proselytes, as Aretius observes; yet to them is this spoken as well as to others. I have seen nothing as yet that satisfieth me as to that, in what sense the promise is said to be to those persons; but from what hath been said, it plainly appears, that in whatever sense it be said to be unto them, it doth not follow, they had thereupon a right to baptism.

V. The fifth argument is, That John the Baptist, and Christ's disciples, baptized all that offered themselves. This plainly concludes, that we are to baptize all that offer themselves; which I doubt if any sober man will affirm, seeing Turks and pagans may offer themselves in mock to be baptized: nor would ever this have come into my head, that they baptized all that offered themselves, as an argument for this cause, unless I had seen it among the arguments offered, as Mr. Fulwood says,\* by divines, (what divines he means, unless it be Mr. Prin, I cannot conjecture), which to him were never satisfactorily answered. I grant indeed, that John and Christ's apostles did baptize whosoever, being visible believers, offered themselves; but I utterly deny it in any other sense. The proofs adduced are lame, and not to the purpose; for it is plainly said of the persons whom John baptized, that they were baptized "confessing their sins." Whether or not he did baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees, of whom mention is there made, is a question, the negative whereof I think is most probable; seeing it is expressly said, Luke 7:30, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." And in Luke 3 while the Evangelist is speaking of those

whom John baptized, particular mention is made of the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, their asking questions of John as to what they should do, and each of them gets their directions; but there is not one word of the Pharisees and Sadducees asking what they should do, nor any particular directions, given to them; for which no satisfying reason appears, if we admit that they were baptized as well as the rest: Matth. 21:32, "Ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him." Ver. 45, "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." As for that saying of John, "I indeed baptize you with water," ver. 11, it will no more prove that he baptized every individual person to whom he spoke, than it will prove that Christ baptized every individual among them with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; for this, as well as the other, John speaks to the same persons. Luke tells us the occasion of this speech, and to whom he said it, Luke 3:15, 16, "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not; John answered, saying unto them all," (amongst whom the Pharisees and Sadducees were, as Matthew must be understood,) "I indeed baptize you with water;—he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Will any from hence infer, that he baptized every individual person that heard him? if they will, we shall infer on the same ground, that they were all baptized with the Holy Ghost. So then that word, Luke 3:21, "When all the people were baptized," must needs be understood of all those of them who were baptized by him at that time; as the forecited word, vers. 15, 16, "All men mused—and he said to them all," viz. that heard him at that time. But grant he did baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees, how will it be made appear that they were not visible believers, or that they did not with the rest confess their sins? That he calls them "a generation of vipers," will not prove it; for that he said to all the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, as well as to them: and it is to be specially noticed,\* he calls them not vipers, but "a generation of vipers," gennemates echidnon, those come of vipers, or the offspring of vipers: this they might be, and yet not be vipers themselves. That word, John 4:1, doth indeed bear, that Christ by his disciples baptized more than John; yet neither John nor Christ's disciples baptized any but visible believers; for it is expressly said, "that Christ made and baptized more disciples than John," *ibid.*; so that both made them disciples before they baptized them. Finally, I deny

that the apostles baptized any on a bare profession, or on a profession which was not a probable profession, or a probable evidence of true faith; as is clear from the Scriptures instanced, of which before.

VI. As to the sixth argument, taken from Ezek. 16:20, 21, that the children of the idolatrous Jews are called "God's children," and "born to God?" I answer, this will not prove that they had a visible right to the seal, no more than that magistrates have such a right, because they are called "the children of the Most High;" as specious a character as is given here to the seed of these idolatrous persons. These might be God's children, as being heirs of God and the kingdom of heaven, though thus barbarously slain by their parents; yet no visible members of the church, nor having any visible right to the seal. What if I say, they were the first-born whom God challengeth a special propriety in, upon the account of the deliverance their fathers met with when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain? according to that law, Exod. 13:2. "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb,—both of man and beast: it is mine." It will not thence follow, as Mr. Fulwood says, that he owneth their parents yet to remain in his covenant; for this law would have obliged the children of Israel, though they had openly renounced God's covenant, and turned entirely apostates. It was the whole nation of Israel that had this mercy conferred on them, and so it obliged those that were of that nation, though not of the church. Wherefore, howsoever the parents should apostatize and renounce the covenant, by this law their first-born was the Lord's; unless we will say, that men by their iniquity may free themselves from being under the law of God once given to them. But truly I think, if we consider the context, we may plainly perceive the reason of this designation given to those children; and that is this: because God gave them those children, but, in the giving of them, reserved still his propriety in them, and made them not absolute lords over them, to dispose of them what way they pleased; but they were obliged to make use of them for God's honour, under whom they had their right to them. So that herein, not only cruelty, but robbing of God, and disposing of what was his, contrary to his revealed will, is objected to them. Now, view the context, and see how it favours this exposition, ver. 17. "Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images." vers. 18, 19. "Thou hast set mine oil and mine

incense before them." "My meat also which I gave thee, fine flower," &c. ver. 22. "Thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare." Nothing more ordinary with the wicked and idolaters, than to forget God's propriety in what they have, and thence to take liberty to dispose of it at their pleasure, and to thank their idols for them rather than God; therefore God will vindicate his propriety in what they have, that they may see their sin, in abusing God's gifts to them towards his dishonour. Hos. 2:5. "I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." ver. 8. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil,—which they prepared to Baal." Ver. 9. "Therefore will I—take away my corn,—my wine,—my wool, and my flax."

VII. The seventh argument is taken from the following absurdities, that are supposed to accompany our doctrine.

1st, Families, parishes, &c. should soon be paganized. ANSWER. Fiat justitia, et ruat mundus. A man, say some, had better be a beast than like a beast. Sure I am, it had been telling some they had never been baptized, nor acknowledged to be church members. But truly I think the quite contrary would follow most probably, viz. that this would be a mean to bring them to be visibly christianized, as was above declared. It is truly a sad matter that people have nothing but their baptism to discern them from pagans. I confess, if the church should give over all dealing with them, there were some shew for the absurdity, or rather bad consequence, before mentioned; but while it is still the church's duty to preach to them in order to their conversion, there is no reason for it; yea, if it were so, by all probability, preaching would have more influence on them than now it hath. Though I dare not say, it is more for the honour of Christ to have no more in his visible kingdom than only such as are real believers, and rather to want close hypocrites than have them; yet I confess it is my settled judgment, that as it is a greater credit for a master of a family to have a few servants of entire fame in his house, than to have a great many rogues; so it is more for the honour of our holy head in the world, to have a few visible believers or saints, visible members of his church, than a great number of profligate wretches amongst others, members of the same.

2dly, Many infants of believing parents should be deprived of this ordinance. I answer, Baptism is not due coram ecclesia to the infants of any but visible believers: if therefore a parent be a believer, and yet not a visible believer, his child hath no right before the church to baptism; for *de occultis non judicat ecclesia*. But whatever men may speak of people's going to heaven, the sound of their feet not being heard, it seems to be no very difficult question, Whether or not a person come to years, can be a real saint, and yet want a form of godliness? "Although," says a grave author,\* "we cannot say, every one that hath a form of godliness, hath also the power of godliness; yet we may truly say, that he who hath not the form of godliness, hath not the power of godliness; though all be not gold that glistereth, yet all gold doth glister." Our Lord tells us, "By their fruits ye shall know them." I shall add, that if a person be a real believer, and yet not appear so to be, he that judgeth him a visible believer, judgeth amiss, for he is not so.

3dly, As to the third, That ministers have no certain rule, &c.; it equally militates against the ordinary practice of admitting to, and debarring from the Lord's table those that are baptized, and not excommunicated; the same flourish of words might be used in that case. But I deny that we have no certain rule here, or that we stand on uncertainties. The rule is certain, because laid down in God's word, viz. That we are to take that person for a visible believer who makes a credible profession, and are to deal with him in the dispensing of the seals, as such. This rule we learn from all those Scriptures that shew us on what grounds ministers did baptize persons who offered themselves, Matt. 3:6. Acts 2:41. and 8:12, 37. and such like. And what though the person whom we take for a visible believer be not a believer indeed, we are not mistaken in our judgment, unless we go to judge so as we have no warrant, that is, to judge him to be certainly a true believer: if men judge so of others, what wonder they be mistaken, when they arrogantly thrust themselves into that which the Lord hath not revealed. But we are to judge according to the rule, that a person making a credible profession, is probably a true believer, that is, certainly a visible believer: and herein we are not mistaken, though the person we so judge of be really "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity;" for it is certain he appears and seems to be a true believer, though indeed he is stark naught before the Lord. As for that which is



added, viz. "That one thinks so much enough to make one a visible believer, &c.;" ANSWER. The Lord hath plainly told us in his word whom he accounts real saints, and whom the church hath accounted visible saints. If we swerve from the rule in our application, it is no doubt our sin: who can help it, if men will needs close their eyes when the works of the flesh are manifest? It is certain we are commanded to separate the precious from the vile, to put difference betwixt the holy and profane, and to judge of the tree by its fruits. And for infallibility of our judgments in the application, as none will pretend to it now, so it can as little be had the other way as this way. Suppose it be, that such a parent was baptized; that such a one hath had godly remote parents amongst us Gentiles; unless we go up to Noah or Adam, no greater certainty can be here than what we have from our eyes and ears, which doth not reach to an infallibility; yea, for the most part, we have not so great certainty the other way, as in the way we plead for. But enough of this.

VIII. We come now to the last argument, viz. That the children of many openly scandalous and wicked parents, are the children of baptized church members. ANSWER. I conceive there is a vast difference betwixt an openly scandalous, and an openly wicked person; so that they ought not to be confounded. David and Peter in the hour of temptation were openly scandalous, but not openly wicked persons. And therefore as to many openly scandalous I yield the argument, concluding that the children of many openly scandalous ought to be baptized; but then there is *ignoratio elenchi*. Laying aside this then of many openly scandalous, and the argument being made to proceed only as to the openly wicked, I distinguish betwixt church members *de jure*, et *de facto*. It is plain we speak now of visible church members. Those that are church members *de jure*, are those who have not only a possession of church membership, but a right and lawful possession of it. Those are church members *de facto* (only), which have a visible possession of that privilege, but no rightful possession; and therefore ought to be cast out and deprived of that possession. Now, such a possession can give no right either to the parent or child as to church privileges, for *nullum jus fundatur in injuria*: even as an usurper, though he hath the crown, yet neither he nor his have right to the revenues of the crown. Wherefore I distinguish the major of that argument. The children of baptized church members, who are visible

members in point of right, ought to be baptized; and thus the minor is false: the children of baptized church members, who are such only de facto, and not de jure, ought to be baptized, I deny. And in this sense only are the openly wicked (some of them, I say) baptized church members.

## MONERGISM BOOKS

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