

A N
I N Q U I R Y

I N T O

The Constitution and Discipline

O F T H E

Jewish C H U R C H ;

In order to cast some Light on the Controversy, concerning Qualifications for the Sacraments, of the *New Testament.*

Joseph

W I T H A N

Kitchel's Book

A P P E N D I X.

By J A C O B G R E E N, A. M.

I had planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed: How then art thou turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine unto me,
JER. ii. 21.

Thou Son of Man shew the House, to the House of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their Iniquities, and let them Measure the Pattern,
EZEK. xliii. 10.

N E W - Y O R K :

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M, D C C, L X V I I I.



P R E F A C E.

SINGLE Words, or short Phrases, to express complex Ideas, are exceeding useful, if not quite necessary, in writing and speaking. Calvinist, Arminian, Papist, Protestant, &c. are single Words to express very complex Ideas. If no such general Terms could be used, we must write a Page or more, to tell what we meant every Time we had occasion to mention a Calvinist, Arminian, &c.

I have had considerable Difficulty to know what Word, or Words, to use, when I would express in brief, the Scheme of Sentiments which I maintain, or when I would mention some distinguishing Character of the Persons that hold those Sentiments: And also when I would represent, or express those Persons, that hold different or opposite Sentiments. If when I had Occasion in the ensuing Discourse, to mention one Set of Sentiments, I had called it my Scheme, or my Sentiments; and when mentioning Persons who held opposite Sentiments, had said those that differ from me, or that oppose me, or my Opponents; this would have been like mentioning myself, or Sentiments as a Standard, in a very unbecoming and disagreeable Manner, far from the Intent, or Thought of my Heart. I had some Thought of using the Words Stoddardians and Edwardians, (after sufficiently explaining my meaning) as Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Edwards, have been the two most noted Men in our Part of the World, who have writ on opposite Sides of the Question. But I think there was sufficient Reason for declining the Use of those Terms. It has been proposed to me that I should use the Terms Arminian and Calvinist, or Semi-Arminian and thorough Calvinists, to express the two different Parties. I suppose this would have been in a Measure just, as I fully believe the Sentiments I oppose, are properly Arminian, or derived from some of the worst Arminian Tenets: Yet I know that many who hold the Sentiments I oppose, pretend to renounce Arminianism with Indignation, and would have thought it very injurious, had I given them that Character. On the whole, as I could find no single Word that suited, I have chose the following Terms, viz. (1) Those that admit graceless Persons. (2) Those that admit only gracious Persons. And yet these Terms would be very improper, without a suitable Explanation. Therefore, by those that admit graceless Persons, into the Church, I do not mean, those that would admit scandalous Sinners, but those that suppose some unregenerate Men, of Knowledge, Orthodoxy, Civility and Thoughtfulness about Religion, yet having Evidence, and fully

believing themselves to be unregenerate, and without professing what implies the contrary, may enter into Covenant, and come to one or both the Sacraments, at least have a Right to claim Baptism for their Children. On the other Hand, when I mention those that admit only gracious Persons, I by no Means intend, any that think they can know the Hearts of others, or infallibly determine who are gracious, but contrarywise, they know they are liable to be imposed upon, and must often admit Hypocrites: Yet I mean, such as suppose that, none have a Right to enter into Covenant, and go into the Church, to use either of the Sacraments, or claim Baptism for their Children, unless they are truly gracious. And that Church-Officers, ought not to admit any to covenant, or thus to use and enjoy either of the Sacraments, unless they exhibit scriptural Evidence, that they are truly gracious Persons.

Many of our common People hold one set of these Sentiments, with Respect to the Lord's Supper, and the other with Respect to Baptism. They think, some Persons without Grace, may be baptised, or have their Children baptised, when yet they must not approach the Lord's Table without true Grace. I have been told, there are some Ministers of these peculiar Sentiments, or of this Way of thinking, but I have never yet talked with one that would acknowledge it. I know many Ministers that tolerate People in this Way of thinking and practising, but I never found one that would pretend to justify the difference People make between the Sacraments. 'Tis strange if they would!

'Tis possible some may think I have used too much Freedom (not to say Severity) with the Ministers of Christ's Church: Or represented the Sentiments and ecclesiastical Proceeding of some of them, in a Manner that may tend to lessen them in the Minds of the People, at a Time when the gospel Ministry is by too many in contempt. I can truly say, 'tis with Concern, that I have said any Thing that seems to fault them. I would consider what an unbecoming unchristian Thing it is, to be found beating any of my Fellow Servants. If I have done any Thing contrary to what David says, Psalm cxli. 5. Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness, &c. I hope I shall be convinced of it. I compassionate some of my Brethren, with my whole Heart, whose peculiar Circumstances are such that they know not how to obtain what they think ought to be in the Church of Christ. These I trust will not blame me as being severe. With Respect to others, I hope I have said nothing more than the Nature of the Case requires. Not to suffer Sin on any, without acquainting them with the Danger, cannot be deemed unkindness. I cannot but think 'tis high Time the Churches had some faithful Warning, and something like an Alarm sounded in their Ears. I cannot say I have
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dared to attempt this. I have said but few Words of this kind. But I could wish, that much more than I have attempted, might be done by some more advanced in Years, much better able, and every Way more acceptable to the Publick than I am. On Supposition the Sentiments I maintain are true, our Churches being in the State they are, I think I have said but very little that can be called Application.

If the Sentiments I have attempted to maintain are not the Truth, I hope I shall by some Friend, or some Means, be convinced and set right. If I shall be convinced of Error, I shall be willing to retract. I profess to lie open to Conviction, and to be inquiring after Truth. I have always thought it honourable to retract when wrong, and a favour to receive Light and Truth from an Opponent, yea, from an Enemy. I am (be sure) at present fully satisfied of the Truth of the Principles I maintain. I may be mistaken and need correcting in some Circumstantials of the Scheme, and yet the Foundation remain firm.

Some may differ from me in Sentiments, as to some Circumstances in the Covenant of Grace, represented in the first Chapter of this Enquiry: And allowing their Sentiments in these Circumstantials to be right, it affects not the Reasoning or Arguments in the following Chapters.

That Part of this Publication called the Appendix, is much larger than I at first designed. But by conversing with some of my Brethren in the Ministry, I was led to make considerable Additions: By this Means, I know 'tis something disproportionate for an Appendix, but to that Impropriety I submit, rather than suppress any Part of it.





INTRODUCTION.

WHAT are the Qualifications for Church Membership, or who have a Right to use and enjoy the Sacraments? Is doubtless an important Enquiry. 'Tis well known there are different Opinions respecting this Matter, and there have been some controversial Writings upon this Subject. The Dispute is, whether any beside truly gracious Persons have a proper Right in the Sight of God, to come to Sacraments; and whether Church Officers ought to admit any but such as give Reason to hope, they have a supreme regard to God's Glory, and love to Holiness.

Different Persons hold different Sides of this Question, or have very different Sentiments in this Matter. 'Tis known that I agree in Sentiments with those who think no Person has a Right to use the Sacraments without true Grace; and that Church Officers are not to admit any without the Appearance or credible Evidence of Grace, judging by their Profession and Practice.---That Parents offering Children to Baptism, must profess Religion, Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, their Life and Conversation being agreeable;---That they must as they have Opportunity walk in all the Ordinances of the Lord blameless.---That unless they use and improve both the Sacraments, they cannot in Truth profess Obedience to Christ.

I know Church Officers cannot discern Grace in others, or know certainly who are gracious. 'Tis Persons Profession and Appearance of Grace, that they are to be guided by. The Church may have Reason to admit a Man that has no Right to come, and who, as he is, ought not to come. A Man may not believe the Scriptures, or that there is a future State, and yet for some Ends or other may make such a Profession, and exhibit such Appearance of Religion, that it may be the Duty of Church Officers to admit him. The same may be observed of the Appearance of true Grace where there is none. But such Persons are Intruders and not such as God directs to come.

Those who hold the other Side of the Question, suppose that God requires some unregenerate Men, knowing themselves to be such, to profess Faith, enter into Covenant and use the Sacraments as Means of obtaining Grace: And that Church Officers may admit some unregenerate Persons appearing to be such, or
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without any credible Evidence of true Grace, or a Profession that implies it. But those who espouse those Principles, seem to have no clear consistent Notions of entering into Covenant, or in what Manner God can make promises to the unregenerate, or seal the Covenant of Grace to them. They talk something of an external Covenant, that God can enter into with the Unregenerate ; but they will not explain themselves, or tell where such a Covenant is mentioned in Scripture, or how God does, or can make or seal Promises to the Unregenerate, or in what Sense unregenerate Men can perform any Conditions of the Covenant of Grace. Indeed 'tis evident to me, there can be no consistent Notions of this Sort.

I think 'tis granted by all *Protestants*, especially by the *Presbyterians*, that some covenanting, or being in covenant, is necessary in order to enjoy the Seals, or the Christian Sacraments. I have indeed known some, who pinched with an Argument, have occasionally denied the Sacraments to be Seals of the Covenant of Grace, and that being in Covenant was not necessary in order to come to Sacraments : But I trust, there is no *Presbyterian* Divine will attempt to maintain this. The principal Argument for Infant Baptism, is taken from their being in Covenant ; they being in Covenant the Seal of the Covenant belongs to them, and therefore they are to be baptised. This Argument fails, if Baptism is not a Seal of the Covenant.

I cannot but view the Subject I write upon as very Important. The admitting unregenerate Persons as such, into the Church, to covenant with God, and enjoy the Seals of the Covenant, has a Tendency to flatter them with vain Hopes, ease their guilty Consciences, and build them up in Self-Righteousness. They that are for admitting graceless Persons, (in order to make their Scheme as consistent as they can) hold, that the Duties of some unregenerate Men have a Sort of Acceptableness in the Sight of God : That he in a Degree approves of their Duties, so as to treat with them in a covenant Way, and thus lead them on nearer to himself, and the like. Now this flatters the Sinner, deceives him with vain Hopes, and holds him in carnal Security. All unregenerate Sinners ought to know, that while they are in that State, they are Enemies to God and Holiness, that they hate the Way of Salvation by Christ, and that consequently God abhors them*. They should be convinced that they are opposing God

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* In my Opinion, this whole Controversy concerning the Sacraments, depends upon the following Principles or Sentiments, *viz.* That many unregenerate Persons have some good Principles, mean well, and have some sincere Regard for,
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and the Methods of his Grace; and that all they do in Religion is so far from being a Compliance with God's Will, that 'tis on the contrary an Endeavour to establish a Way of Salvation by their own Righteousness, contrary to God's Method. That all they do in Religion is to guard themselves against God's Justice, to screen themselves, or some Way escape Punishment, without coming so low as to submit to the Soul humbling Terms of the Gospel. To suppose that Man in a State of unregeneracy can do that which is in a good Degree pleasing to God, is so contrary to the Doctrine of Man's total Depravity, and passive Regeneration, that it does, in its Consequences, set aside the gospel Method of Salvation. That many unregenerate ones are flattered and supported by these soothing Principles, is evident from their Conduct respecting Baptism. When they have at first some serious Concern, Conviction of Sin, and Thought of future Misery, or the Loss of their Children, they presently propose Baptism: And having covenanted and obtained the Seal of the Covenant, they are easy. We shall afterward ordinarily hear little of their Religion, except the offering their Children to Baptism as oft as they have them. Any Minister who will impartially observe, will find Peoples Minds and Consciences often quieted by proceeding thus far, whereas they could not be easy without. How many might have been led on further, if they had not got some Rest and Relief here? 'Tis lamentable that Ministers should encourage unregenerate Persons in those Sentiments and Practices, which naturally tend to quiet their Consciences, short of an Interest in Christ. Far be it from me to think, that all Ministers who teach People these Principles, design to encourage or support the natural Consequences of their Doctrine. No, they do not see its Tendency, any more than some others have done, who have maintained the Will to be a self determining Power, which

and liking to God in his proper Character; are in Heart friendly to the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, have some real proper Desires for Holiness and an Interest in Christ; and that God in a Degree approves of them and their Duties. These are *Arminian* Tenets, very agreeable to natural Men. On the contrary, thorough *Calvinists* maintain, that fallen Man is totally depraved, has lost all God's moral Image, and while unregenerate, does nothing from better Principles than selfish Idolatry, wholly at Enmity with God, so far as they view him in his proper Character, and have nothing in them friendly to the true gospel Method of Salvation. Now the Notion of God's entering into Covenant with the unregenerate as such, treating friendly with them, and directing them to come and enjoy the Seals of the Covenant, is built or depends upon the fore-mentioned *Arminian* Tenets. And I think this Controversy, concerning Qualifications for Sacraments, must turn according as those Tenets stand or fall.

which is the Fountain of *Arminianism*, and in its Consequences, sets God aside, and makes the Creature all.

Further, the Principles that I oppose have a bad Tendency, in that they open the Church to the World of ungodly Men, so as greatly to profane gospel Ordinances: And take in so many carnal Ones, as to interrupt, if not to destroy, Brotherly Love and Christian Communion. They open the Mouths of Adversaries, and cast a Stumbling-Block in the Way of many.

The following Chapters are designed to cut off some of the principal Arguments for admitting graceless Persons to either of the Sacraments. Our Adversaries take most of their Arguments from the Covenant with *Abraham*, and the State of the *Jewish* Church. I have in the following Treatise attempted to shew, that those Arguments, are without any proper Foundation.

An Inquiry into the Constitution and Discipline, &c.

C H A P. I.

Of the Covenant of Grace: Its internal and external Administration.

TIS not necessary, nor do I propose, to consider the Covenant of Grace, fully or largely. This is not the principal Subject in Hand, yet some View of it will be here needful.

I suppose that for a Person to be properly in the Covenant of Grace, is the same as to be in a State of Grace, or truly gracious. When God speaks of the Covenant, he sums it up in this; *He will be their God, and they shall be his People: He is to them a Father, and they are his Sons and Daughters.* So that when a Person takes God for his God, loves him supremely, and heartily submits to him, in, and thro' Jesus Christ, he then complies with the principal Terms of the Covenant, and is really and truly in the Covenant of Grace. What I would now say of the Covenant of Grace, is contained in the following Observations.

1. 'Tis common in Covenants, for one Person, or Party, to propose Terms, lay the Plan or Scheme, and make all the Articles of it, and then offer it to
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the other Party. So in the Covenant of Grace, God makes the Articles, represents the whole Plan, proposes it to fallen Sinners, and in his wonderful Condescension, invites them to comply, or become Parties in it.

2. In Covenants among Men, one Party has a Right to refuse Compliance, if he does not like the Terms ; and he may propose new Articles or Alterations. But 'tis not so in the Covenant of Grace. The Creature has no Right to refuse, or propose new Articles, or Alterations. God plans and proposes every Thing most equitably, reasonably, benevolently, and every Way for the best, and Man is under indispenfible Obligations to comply with the Terms of the Covenant, and become a Party in it, as God requires.

3. The Covenant of Grace then, for Substance, I view as follows ; God discovers to fallen guilty Sinners, a glorious Way of Salvation. Lets them know, that he is willing to beat Peace with them ; that he has provided a glorious Saviour for them ; and that he is willing to accept repenting Sinners in him : That they must hate and forsake Sin ; give their Hearts to him : Believe in, and cordially accept of Christ, and live Lives of Faith and Obedience ; opposing Sin, and serving him in Love all the Days of their Life. That upon their repenting, and believing, he will justify them, adopt them into the Number of his Children, and become their Father, and their God : That he will give them the Influence of his Spirit ; afford many Privileges in this World, and give them Heaven at last. Now when any Person accept of God's Proposals, so as

to give him their Hearts ; repent and believe in Christ, they become Parties in the Covenant. There is really and properly, a Covenant between God and them ; and they are really and truly in the Covenant of Grace.

4. In this Covenant (as well as in many among Men) some Articles are fulfilled, and complied with, and some others are yet to be complied with. Both Parties have fulfilled the conditional Articles, so far as really to enter into Covenant. The Believer has given his Heart to God, and taken him for a Portion ; has repented of Sin, and trusted in Christ. God has justified, and adopted the Believer ; given him the Influences of his Spirit, and made good many Promises to him. But the Believer has yet to live, a Life of Faith, and Self-Denial, to promote God's Glory, and serve him in Love. And God has many Promises yet to fulfill to the Believer thro' Life, at and after Death.

5. God may treat with any Number of Believers ; or any particular one, as *Abraham*, for Instance ; to whom, and to his, or their Posterity, he may grant many Privileges, and make many peculiar Promises ; and of them may require particular Actions, or Duties, and institute what we call Titles or Ceremonies, for them to comply with, in Obedience to him. All which Things, those that love God, will gladly submit to, and gratefully receive the Privileges which were promised. And all these Things may properly be said to belong to the Covenant of Grace. For the Covenant on God's Part, comprehends all the Privileges, temporal as well as spiritual, which he shall think proper to bestow upon

upon them: And on their Part it implies, their Compliance, or Readiness to comply, with all the Duties and Services which he is pleased to require of them.

God may appoint Communities to be formed of such Believers, order them to join in social Worship, and hold Communion for their mutual Edification. In these Communities, he may appoint Officers, and Office Work: May appoint Seals or Tokens, which may represent and confirm Privileges granted by him, and which may be also Tokens and Seals of the Believers Compliance with God's Will. And the ordering or dispensing of many of these Things, may be committed to the Officers that God appoints.

6. God may make it the Duty of all that love him, to join in such Communities, and jointly comply with instituted Duties. May command and require them to confess him before Men, or publickly, in a Manner that shall express their supreme Regard for him. May require and command them to use Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in these Ways be distinguished from the rest of the World. And while he promises and conveys Privileges and Blessings in and by these Means, he may strictly require them to observe or use these Means in Token of their Obedience and faithful Subjection to him. In this Case it might be taken for granted, that none were true Lovers of God or his obedient Children, but such as thus publickly gave themselves to him, and complied with these plainly commanded Duties: Except there was some very special Reason, Impediment, or
Difficulty,

Difficulty, that might prevent their thus joining with the People of God, in the Duties and Privileges which they performed and enjoyed. Now in this Case, there is Propriety in saying, that those who act thus, enter into Covenant with God; because he requires this Profession, and Dedication of themselves to him, as being his Covenant People, and their Compliance with these Things, in Token of their Obedience and Subjection to him.

7. God has not given to this Community, or to the Officers of it, the Knowledge of the humane Heart. They cannot see internally who have Grace, and who have not. God has only given us Marks or Signs which may exhibit credible Evidence; and by which we may have a prevailing Hope, and Reason to think Persons are gracious. Therefore, if Persons offering to become Members of this Body, exhibit the credible Evidence, when yet they are not truly gracious, (which is often the Case) they may be admitted into this Community. And as God has committed the Dispensation of Ordinances to those Men who know not the Hearts of others, they will dispense them to these Hypocrites, or graceless Persons that intrude among them, as well as to others; thus they have the external Privileges of the Covenant administered to them.

We see then, what 'tis to be really and truly in the Covenant of Grace, and what 'tis to be in, or under the external Administration or Dispensation of it. When Persons truly repent, and believe they are really in Covenant with God, and have the internal and spiritual Blessings of the Covenant dispensed

to them. But when unregenerate Persons are admitted, upon their Profession and Appearance of Religion, and enjoy the Sacraments, and other external Privileges, these are under the external Administration of the Covenant of Grace. As to what is outward and apparent, they enjoy the same, that true Believers do.

In the Senses that have been mentioned, Divines often speak of being in Covenant, as to its internal Administration, or saving Efficacy; or being only in, or under, the external Administration of it. In the same Sense, as they speak of Persons belonging to the invisible Church, or only to the visible. Those that are savingly united to Christ by Faith, belong to the invisible Church: And those that appear to belong to Christ, and as such profess their Faith and Obedience, they belong to the visible Church, whether gracious or not.

Hence 'tis evident, 1st. That Persons may belong to the invisible and not to the visible Church. They not having had Time or Opportunity to manifest their Repentance and Faith, and make a Profession of Religion. They have the internal Blessings of the Covenant administered or communicated to them, when yet they are not in or under the external Administration of it. 2d. Persons may belong to the visible Church, and not to the invisible, may be under the outward and not inward Administration of the Covenant. 3d. Persons may belong both to the visible and invisible Church, or be under both the external and internal Administration of the Covenant of Grace. These Distinctions are easy; and this has been the general Sense of the
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Protestant Church. Hence graceless Persons in the Church have been called Hypocrites, as appearing to be what they are not. But there is no such Thing as an external Covenant of Grace; that unregenerate Men, as such, may be admitted into; for there is but one Covenant of Grace with Man, and unregenerate Men can be in it no other Way, than by professing Religion, or what is equivalent, and appearing as the true People of God; and thus they may be in the external Administration of it.

C H A P. II.

God as Head of the Jewish Church, and governing and ordering the same, acted not as the Searcher of Hearts, or treated them not according to the secret invisible Disposition of their Souls, but according as they appeared in the Eyes of Men.

I DO not mean, but that God let them know, and would have them consider that he was the Heart-searching God; and that he required inward Sincerity, and hated Hypocrisy. And upon some few Occasions for special Reasons, he might discover their secret Abominations. But in general, while a Family, Tribe, or the Nation appeared to have a supreme Regard to him, and to submit to his Laws and Government, he outwardly treated them as if they were sincere. So he took *Israel* at *Sinai*, as his true Covenant People, loyal and obedient. Never (it may be) was there a greater Appearance among a People, of Regard to God and
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his Laws. They made the most full and free Profession of Obedience and Subjection, as will be shewn further on. And God received and treated them accordingly, as his precious Saints. *I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness.*—*Israel was Holiness to the Lord.* Jer. ii. 2, 3. So God received *Israel* after they had served Idols, Judg. x. 15, 16. God refused to accept them upon their common slight Confession of Sin, but would bring them at least to appear as true Penitents. *The Children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned, do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee,—And they put away the strange Gods from among them, and served the Lord.* They confessed, they submitted, they practised right, they appeared as true Penitents, and then God apparently accepted them; and raised them up a Deliverer. But they soon fell to Idolatry again. So our Saviour took *Judas*. He chose him for one of the Twelve, to stand in a peculiar Relation to him. No doubt *Judas* then appeared as one of Christ's most zealous Followers, and Christ's choice of him appeared to Man, a most suitable Choice, as taking one eminently Religious. So he made him the Treasurer or Steward of his Family, in which Case especially, 'tis required that a Man be found Faithful. No doubt this appeared a suitable Appointment to all that were acquainted with it; *Judas* appearing to be one that was not only punctiliously just, but also kind and beneficent, having a tender watchful Care for the Poor, &c. *Mat.* xxvi.

8, 9. When yet our Saviour knew what was in *Judas's* Heart, and what he would be in Event.

The Reason that God treats Men according to the Appearance of their Grace and Goodness, and not according to his secret infallible Knowledge of their Hearts, is, that it has never been his Design to distinguish Saints from Sinners, in this World, by any Thing but by their Conduct, or their Fruits. Not by immediately revealing the Secrets of the Heart, by a constant Course of Miracles, as he must have done if he had treated them as the Searcher of Hearts, not according to, but different from their outward Conduct. God treated them as good Men would, and must have treated them, if they had been appointed to manage and govern them, as was often the Case. Had he not treated them according to their outward Conduct, but as the Heart-searching God, they would have complained much more than they did, that *the Ways of the Lord are not equal*. For they could not have seen the secret hidden Grounds and Reasons of the divine Conduct.

God required of all, true Sincerity and supreme Love to himself: And if the People professed this, and their visible Conduct was agreeable, God, (as to his visible Conduct to them) treated them as being what they appeared to man to be. At the same Time, he hated their Falshood, hypocritical Professions and Want of Sincerity.

I have added this short Chapter to preclude the Objections and Arguments, that are often advanced by Opponents, for Want of having in view, or considering what is here observed. They say, God

himself took unregenerate Men into Covenant, knowing them to be such, and admitted them to the Seals of the Covenant, &c. And then they ask, does not God approve of his own Conduct? And would he not have his Ministers do, in this Respect, as he has done? Yes, say they; therefore unregenerate Men, as such, ought to be admitted, is their Consequence. But by considering what has been observed, it appears, there is not Ground or Foundation for their Objections or Arguments. For the Question is not, whether Church Officers may not admit unregenerate Men, if they profess Religion, and appear to be gracious, but whether they may admit them without their professing a supreme Regard to God, and without loving those Marks and Characters, which the Word of God lays down as the visible Characters of true Saints. What God has done with Respect to *Israel*, is no Argument for such Admission, for he did not receive any but such as appeared to be truly gracious, and to their fellow Creatures exhibited credible Evidence of their being the obedient Children of God: And his knowing them to be Hypocrites, was owing to his Omniscience, which Church Officers have not, and which he did not design to use, for the Discovery of secret Hypocrisy.



C H A P. III.

Of Israel's Covenanting in Moses's Time.

HERE I would shew, that God received and owned that People only according to their Covenanting,

Covenanting, and their outward visible Conduct in complying with, or acting according to the Covenant.

1. *Israel were led to covenant at Sinai, in a very solemn affectionate and devout Manner.* They heard their duty enjoined in a solemn Manner, with awful Voice from the Top of the Mount: Jehovah declaring that he was their God, and that they should love no other, *Exod. xx.* In the three following Chapters, we have a Summary of the Laws and Ordinances required of them by the Lord. Then in the Beginning of the next Chapter we see their Manner of Covenanting. *Exod. xxiv. 3.—8.* *And Moses came and told the People all the Words of the Lord, and all the Judgments: And all the People answered with one Voice and said all the Words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the Words of the Lord.—And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the Audience of the People: And they said all that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. And Moses took the Blood and sprinkled it on the People and said, behold the Blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these Words.*

2. *They broke the Covenant by their making and worshiping the golden Calf.* Idolatry was the most direct Breach of the Covenant. The first, the greatest and most important Article in the Covenant was, that Jehovah should be their God, and be worshiped and served without Images. A violation of this fundamental Article was a Breach of the whole Covenant. When *Moses* saw the Calf and their idolatrous Worship, he broke the Tables, which

which are often call'd the Tables of the Covenant. By this he signified that the Covenant was broken. God threatened to treat them as covenant Breakers, to consume them, and not lead them to *Canaan*, which was one Article in the Covenant with their Fathers.

3. *God was pleased to renew Covenant again with that People at Sinai, and led them to renew Covenant. Moses entreated for the People, that God would remember his Covenant with Abraham, &c. God was pleased in his infinite Condescension, yet to favour that People and renew Covenant with them. But not till he had exercised proper Discipline. He purged out some Thousands of them by the Sword. Exod. xxxii. 26--28. And after that brought the Remainder of them to be most submissive and resigned. Exod. xxxiii. 5, 6. For the Lord had said unto Moses, say unto the Children of Israel, ye are a stiff necked People: I will come into the midst of thee, in a Moment, and consume thee; therefore now put off thy Ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the Children of Israel stript themselves of their Ornaments by the Mount Horeb. After this we have an Account of their covenanting in the next Chapter. Exod. xxxiv. The Lord said unto Moses hew thee two Tables of Stone like unto the First, and I will write upon them, &c. And he hewed two Tables, &c. And Moses went up into Mount Sinai. And the Lord passed by, and proclaimed the Lord God merciful and gracious, &c. And he said behold I make a Covenant, &c. Behold I drive out the Amorites, &c. Take heed that thou make not a Covenant with*
the

the Inhabitants, &c. Ye shall destroy their Altars, &c. The Feast of unleavened Bread shall ye keep, &c. Thrice in the Year shall all your Males appear, &c. On the seventh Day ye shall rest, &c. And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these Words, for after the Tenor of these Words, I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel. What follows in this and the next Chapter shews, that the People were led to their Part in the Covenant. Then after that God instituted the Tabernacle Worship, accepted their Offerings, and ordered them to keep the Passover as his Covenant People. Which they did for once, in the Beginning of the next Year, after they came out of Egypt. See Numb. ix.

4. *They broke Covenant again when the Spies returned from searching the Land. This was about ten Months after they departed from Mount Sinai, and in the End of the second Year after they went out of Egypt; as is easily seen by comparing the several Parts of the History. They disbelieved God, and said they were not able to overcome the Inhabitants of Canaan. They refused to trust Jehovah, faulted his Dealings with them, rose into open Rebellion, and attempted to appoint a Captain or General of their own to lead them back into Egypt. They bad Stone Caleb and Joshua, for interposing to the contrary, &c. God considered their Rebellion as a Breach of Covenant, and upon this Occasion swore in his Wrath, that they should not enter into his Rest. He refused to fulfil to that Generation, the Promise in his Covenant with Abraham, of giving his Seed the Land of Canaan. God says, ye shall bear your Iniquities, and ye shall know*

know my Breach of Promise, I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil Generation that are gathered together against me: In this Wilderness shall they be consumed. Numb. xiv. 34, 35.

5. God never more renewed Covenant with that Generation. For the Space of Thirty-eight Years after, 'till all that Generation were dead, he looked upon and treated them as a People out of Covenant. He fulfilled not, but with-held the Promises of the Covenant from them. As they had broke Covenant he regarded them not. Heb. viii. 9. *Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, when I led them out of the Land of Egypt, because they continued not in my Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.* After this he allow'd them not, or required them not, to keep any Passover; he accepted no Offering or Sacrifice of them the Remainder of the forty Years in the Wilderness. See Amos v. and Acts vii. In all this Time he allow'd them not to circumcise their Children, which Rite was a Token of the Covenant. Their not being allow'd to circumcise their Children, was, because they had broke Covenant and God treated them accordingly; as appears in the Account given of it, Joshua v. 6. After their not being circumcised is mentioned; 'tis added as a Reason. *For the Children of Israel walked forty Years in the Wilderness, 'till all the People, that were Men of War which came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the Voice of the Lord.*

God in all Respects treated them as a People out of Covenant, destined to Destruction, as is evident in
many

many Places in *Deutronomy*, where *Moses* speaks of them.

6. *With their Children, the next Generation, God entered again into Covenant in the Plains of Moab just before they went into Canaan. This was a solemn Transaction. Some Account of it we have Deut. xxix. 1, 10—13. These are the Words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Children of Israel in the Land of Moab, beside the Covenant which he made with them in Horeb.—You stand all of you this Day before the Lord, &c. That thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his Oath, &c. The express Nature of the Covenant we have more fully in Chap. xxvi. ver. 17, 18. Thou hast avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God, to walk in his Ways, &c. And the Lord hath avouched thee this Day to be his peculiar People, &c.”* *Moses* leading the People thus to covenant, was one of his last Acts. Soon after this by God's Direction, the People were circumcised, and kept the Passover. *Jos. v.*



C H A P. IV.

What was the Nature of the Covenanting that God required of that People? Whether gracious Sincerity was implied in it?

TH E Question is not, how they did actually covenant, but what God required and insisted on, and what they evidenced to Man. They might covenant in Hypocrisy, when God required Sincerity. And his receiving and treating them as a covenant People after they had covenanted in Hypocrisy.

poctify, is no Evidence that he did not insist on their covenanting with gracious Sincerity. This is evident by what has been observed, of God's treating them according to their Appearance, and not as the Searcher of Hearts. Now to prove that gracious Sincerity or supreme Love to God was required in their covenanting, that it was implied in it, and that there was the proper Appearance of it, I offer the following Arguments.

1. *God does and must require the Heart in every Duty.* Especially must he do this in covenanting; when People enter into the Covenant of Grace in order to receive and enjoy the Seals of the Covenant. For God not to require the Heart, in covenanting with People would be to give up his Right, and deny and contradict himself. He is most worthy to be loved, supremely by every rational Creature: He is most excellent and amiable, and 'tis infinitely fit that all Creatures should love him supremely, and 'tis infinitely fit and proper that he should require and insist on this. For him to treat with Creatures in a covenant Way without requiring this, would be to under-value himself, deny himself, and implicitly countenance or tolerate the Breach of the first and greatest of all Commands, which is to love him with all the Heart. God will, yea, must maintain his Character and Dignity. I think 'tis nothing short of Demonstration, that God maintaining his proper Character, his Laws, and Government must require the Heart of all People in their covenanting with him. God cannot deny himself, or reflect dishonour upon his Laws and Government: Cannot with Dignity treat or
covenant

covenant with those that do not deny, but let it be known, that they love something else more than God: 'Yea, have a prevailing Dislike to God, his Laws and Governments, which is the least, (and most favourable) that can be said of any unregenerate Person. Accordingly we do not find any the least Appearance in Scripture of God's proposing that any should come into the Covenant of Grace, and enjoy the Seal of it, without giving him the Heart.

2. *The Ten Commandments were the Matter of their Covenant: Now the Sum and Substance of these is to love the Lord with all the Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength, and our Neighbour as ourselves. The Substance of what God required of the People in their covenanting, and which they agreed to, was contained in the Ten Commandments. These are often call'd their Covenant. And the Covenant which God made with them. They are often minded of this, 'tis inculcated upon them. The Tables of Stone upon which they were wrote, are called the Tables of the Covenant. Exod. xxxiv. 28. And he wrote upon the Tables the Words of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments. Deut. iv. 12, 13. And the Lord spake unto you out of the Midst of the Fire, &c.—And he declared unto you his Covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments, and he wrote them upon two Tables of Stone. Deut. ix. 9. When I was gone into the Mount to receive the Tables of Stone, even the Tables of the Covenant which the Lord made with you. Verse 11. And it came to pass at the End of forty Days and forty Nights, that the Lord gave me*

the

the two Tables of Stone, even the Tables of the Covenant. Verse 15. So I turned and came down from the Mount, and the two Tables of the Covenant were in my two Hands. Much more to the same Purpose might be added, but this is sufficient. Now the Substance of these Commands were to have Jehovah for a God, and to love him with all the Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength, and our Neighbour as ourselves. Thus 'tis held that our Saviour summed them up. Mat. xxii. 39—42. Since therefore these Commands were their Covenant or what they did covenant, and their meaning is to love the Lord with all the Heart, &c. Nothing less than gracious Sincerity was required in their covenanting. And this was implied in what they professed and manifested.

3. 'Tis impossible any Words should be used, that more fully imply, giving the Heart and Soul to God, and serving him in Love and Sincerity, than those used by Moses and Israel in their covenanting. When God told the People what he required of them, and that they should obey his Voice indeed. Exod. xix. 8. *All the People answered together and said all that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* And again, Exod. xxiv. 7. *And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the Audience of the People, and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.* Deut. xxvi. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God, and to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Statutes and his Commandments, and Judgments, and to hearken unto his Voice.* In Deut. vi. 4, 5. *Moses inculcates their Duty as God's covenant People. Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one*

one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might. Words of just the same Import with the Ten Commandments which were their Covenant. Much more to this Purpose might be produced. Now 'tis certainly an abuse of Language, and an awful Detraction from the Energy, Spirit, and Copiousness of Scripture, to suppose that these Phrases do not imply the Heart and gracious Sincerity. Or that their natural Import or Meaning can be short of this. Our Saviour says, there is no greater Command than that which *Israel* agreed to as their Covenant, it must therefore certainly imply the Heart and true gracious Love, otherways there would be something more added to the Command to make it greater.

4. *That Israel at that Time exhibited the Evidence of gracious Sincerity or true Holiness, and that in an eminent Manner is evident from many Passages of Scripture.* Jer. ii. 21. God speaking of the Time when they came out of *Egypt*, when he had broken their Yoke and burst their Bands, says, *I had planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed: How then art thou turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine unto me.* According to the divine Institution at first, they were wholly a right Seed: They appeared to be so. This is emphatically expressed in the 2d and 3d Verses of this Chapter. *Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown.* *Israel was holiness unto the Lord.* How eminent their Appearance of Holiness was, may be seen
also

also in Hosea ix. 10. *I found Israel like Grapes in the Wilderness ; I saw your Fathers as the first ripe in the Fig-tree, at her first Time.* (Peculiarly Delicious) *But they went to Baal-peor and separated themselves unto that shame.* Hither also may be refer'd that in Numb. xxiii. 21. *He hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel.* There is much in Scripture that shews, that while they remained in Covenant, there was great Appearance of eminent Holiness and Goodness in that People ; even such as God approved and delighted in, and was very precious to him, if it had been real. And their being secretly otherways in Heart, is nothing against my Argument, as is shewn in the second Chapter.

I think these Arguments abundantly prove the Point. There are other Arguments which if not so full and conclusive in themselves, yet added to those, serve to confirm the Truth. Thus, *The Israelites* were shut out of Heaven, and out of *Canaan*, for unbelief. Heb. iii. and iv Chapters. *To them was the Gospel preached, but it did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith—We see they could not enter in because of unbelief, &c.* They were shut out of *Canaan*, and Heaven, for covenant Breaking, *Obstinacy* and Unbelief. Therefore saving Faith, Love and Obedience, was implied in their Covenant : For God led them to *Canaan* as a covenant People and no otherways. Again,

Circumcision was the Seal of the Covenant : And God often shews, that what he requires is the Circumcision of the Heart, and blames, them and
ranks

ranks them among the Heathen, for being of uncircumcised Hearts. Jer. ix. 26. Lastly,

That gracious Sincerity was required in eating the Passover, and not to be eaten without, may be argued from their being so strictly and repeatedly forbid the Use of Leaven, compared with what is said by our Saviour and St. Paul upon it. Exod. xii. 8, 15, 18, 19. *They shall eat the Flesh in that Night, roast with Fire and unleavened Bread.—Seven Days shall ye eat unleavened Bread.—The first Day shall ye put away leaven out of your Houses.—Whosoever eateth leavened Bread, that Soul shall be cut off from Israel. Seven Days shall there be no leaven found in your Houses, whosoever eateth that which is leavened, that Soul shall be cut off.—Ye shall eat nothing leavened in all your Habitations, ye shall eat unleavened Bread.* This is abundantly and often repeated and inculcated as a Matter of great Importance. See Exod. xiii. 3, 6, 7. Deut. xvi. 3, 4. and *alibi*. It was the most important Thing in this Feast, so that it came to be call'd the Feast of *unleavened Bread*. And we find this enjoyned in all their Sacrifices, for God required them all to be offered in Faith and Sincerity, without Hypocrisy and prevailing Fraud and Wickedness. I am far from encouraging a mystical Interpretation of Scripture; I look upon it dangerous. But we ought to compare Scripture with Scripture, and allow it to expound its self, especially to use the New Testament to understand the Old. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *Purge out therefore the old Leaven, that ye may be a new Lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the Feast not*
with

with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth. In the Apostles Sense, leaven signifies Malice and Wickedness, and other Lusts that we must purge out: And by unleavened Bread, he means Sincerity and Truth. And these Things he speaks with a direct Reference to the Lord's Supper and the Passover, and the Jewish Custom of purging out their Leaven. And he seems to speak it in a Manner that was familiar and well understood by the Jews. Our Saviour also shews, that Leaven was used to signify Hypocrisy and Wickedness. The Leaven of the Pharisees was Hypocrisy. And the Leaven of Herod, was be sure something very bad.



C H A P. V.

Whether the Jews were required to covenant in such a Manner from one Generation to another?

MR. Edwards*, has considered this Point largely, and with great Evidence: Nor can I hope to do it better. Nor will this be disputed if the other Things which I have attempted are properly proved. I shall therefore pass this briefly. Their Law as their Covenant, was to be read to them every seven Years, with a Design that it might be submitted to and complied with. Deut. xxxi. 9,—12. *And Moses wrote the Law and delivered it to the Priests, &c. And Moses commanded them saying, at the End of every seven Years, in the Solemnity*

* See his Inquiry into the Qualifications for full Communion, &c.

lemnity of the Year of Release, in the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the Place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this Law, before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the People together, Men and Women, and Children, and thy Strangers that is within thy Gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the Words of this Law. All their Males appearing thrice every Year before God, in Obedience to his Command, was an implicit Subjection and Dedication of themselves to him. Every First-born being solemnly dedicated to him, and redeemed with a certain Price, was an implicit Covenanting. 'Tis most evident, that some of their sacrificial Transactions, which were often repeated, plainly expressed or implied covenanting, or a solemn Dedication of themselves to God, especially on the great Day of Atonement. Any one that will carefully read the xxvith Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, will evidently see, that a Renewing of Covenant with God, was required, or implied, every Time they offered the first Fruits. *Israel* were won't to apostatise and depart from God : And we find that when they returned, came to Sense of Duty, and reform, they renewed Covenant, or entered solemnly into Covenant with God. Which if it does not prove, that this ought to have been done, had they not apostatized, it will prove that without such Apostacy, they would have been considered as God's Covenant People. Instances of their renewing Covenant after Apostacy, we have in 2 Chron. xv. in *Asa's* Time, and 2 Chron. xxiv. in *Josiah's* Time.



C H A P. VI.

Of the Discipline and Censures of that Church.

SINCE Man is in a fallen depraved State, no humane Society will be kept regular and in due Order, without a proper Discipline. If God constituted the *Jewish* Church in such Holiness and Regularity as we have observed, we have Reason to think, that he who is uniform in all Things, would appoint such a Discipline, which if properly exercised, would keep it so. Here then we are to enquire into this Matter. And we shall find such a Discipline appointed, that if it had been exercised as was ordered, there would have been none allowed or tolerated, among them, but such as exhibited credible Evidence of a prevailing Regard to Jehovah and his Laws, or in other Words, such as appeared to be truly good People. For we find,

1. *That all gross, scandalous, presumptuous Sinners, were expressly and positively ordered to be cut off, yea, put to Death.* This was design'd that others might not be corrupted, but that all might fear and do no more such Wickedness. Those guilty of,

Idolatry. Exod. xxii. 20. *He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.* Deut. xiii. 6,—10. *If thy Brother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend, which is as thine own Soul, shall entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other Gods—Thou shall not consent unto him.—Neither shall thine Eye pity him, neither shall thou spare him, neither*

neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him.—Thou shalt stone him with Stones that he die.

Blasphemy. Lev. xxiv. 15, 16.—Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his Sin. And he that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to Death. All the Congregation shall certainly stone him.

Murder. Lev. xxiv. 17. He that killeth any Man shall surely be put to Death.

Adultery. Lev. xx. 10. The Man that committeth Adultery with another Man's Wife.—The Adulterer and the Adulteress, shall surely be put to Death.

Incest. Lev. xx. 11, 12. The Man that lieth with his Father's Wife—both of them shall surely be put to Death. If a Man lie with his Daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to Death.

A Rape. If a Man find, &c. and the Man force her and lie with her, then the Man only shall die.

Whoredom. Deut. xxii. 21. Then they shall bring out the Damsel—and the Men of the City shall stone her, with Stones, that she die, because she hath wrought Folly in Israel, to play the Whore in her Father's House.

Unnatural Lusts. Exod. xxii. 19. and Lev. xxiv. 13. Whosoever lieth with a Beast, shall surely be put to Death.—If a Man lye with Mankind, as he lieth with a Woman,—both of them shall surely be put to Death.

Witchcraft. Exod. xxii. 18. Thou shalt not suffer a Witch to live.

Man-Stealing. Exod. xxi. 16. He that stealeth

a Man and selleth him, or if he be found in his Hand, he shall surely be put to Death.

Sabbath-Breaking. Exod. xxxi. 14. Ye shall keep the Sabbath, for it is Holy : Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to Death. And Exod. xxxv. 2. Whosoever doth work therein, shall be put to Death.

Childrens Wickedness and Disobedience to Parents. Exod. xxi. 15, 17. He that smiteth his Father or his Mother, shall surely be put to Death.—He that curseth his Father or his Mother shall surely be put to Death. Deut. xxi. 18. If a Man have a stubborn and rebellious Son, that will not obey the Voice of his Father, or the Voice of his Mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them.—They shall bring him out to the Elders of the City, and say, this our Son, is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our Voice, he is a Glutton and a Drunkard. And all the Men of the City, shall stone him with Stones, that he die†.

2. In all other Offences that were not Capital, they were to make Satisfaction, offer Sacrifices, seek and obtain Atonement, and so come into good Standing. When they had injured any of their Brethren, they were to make Restitution, or Satisfaction, that they might be in Charity with them; and beside this, they were to bring their Offering to the Lord, and seek an Atonement, thereby acknowledging their Sin, and applying for Mercy. And what more could be done to restore them to good Standing, as
true

† While transcribing these Punishments, it appeared to me in so strong and clear a Manner, how impossible 'tis for unregenerate Persons, or any that do not love God, above Father and Mother, Wife and Child, to comply with these Directions, that I could not help inserting it in this Note, as an Argument, that gracious Sincerity or true Love to God, was required of them, in order to be Members of this Church, since none would ever be likely to comply with many of these Directions, if they had not a supreme fervent Love to God, and Regard to his Glory.

true Penitents, or the real People of God. So for Stealing, Exod. xxii. 1. *If a Man shall steal an Ox or a Sheep, and kill it or sell it; he shall restore five Oxen for an Ox, and four Sheep for a Sheep.* Lev. vi. 2,—7. *If a Soul Sin, and commit a Trespas against the Lord, and lie unto his Neighbour, in that which was delivered him to keep, or in Fellowship, or in a Thing taken away by Violence, or hath deceived his Neighbour; or that found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and swear-eth falsely; in any of all those that a Man doth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or that Thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost Thing which he found.—He shall even restore it in the Principal, and shall add the fifth Part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the Day of his trespass Offering: And he shall bring his trespass Offering unto the Lord, a Ram, &c. And the Priest shall make an Atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him, for any Thing of all that he hath done, in trespassing therein. I could produce other Instances of making Satisfaction for Injuries, and seeking Pardon of God by Sacrifice, but 'tis needless. In Lev. xix. 20,—22. is mentioned an Instance of Uncleanness, that was not Capital. Here was no Occasion for Restitution, but 'tis added,—*He shall bring his trespass Offering unto the Lord.—And the Priest shall make an Atonement for him.—And the Sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.* Thus were they to do for rash Words, and sudden*

passionate

passionate profane Speaking. Lev. v. 4,—6. *If a Soul swear, pronouncing with his Lips to do Evil, or to do Good, whatsoever it shall be that a Man shall pronounce with an Oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these.—And he shall confess that he hath sinned; and he shall bring his trespass Offering unto the Lord, for his Sin, &c.* Their Sins of Inadvertency or Ignorance, were to be acknowledged by Sacrifice, when they came to know what they had done. Lev. iv. 1,—5.

3. *Persons that neglected to make such Satisfaction, and turn to God by Sacrifice, seek Atonement and come into good Standing, were to be cut off. And if they neglected to observe the Sacraments, they were to be cut off.* On the great Day of Atonement, they were to have all Things set right between God and them, and their Fellow Creatures; they were to offer Sacrifice and afflict their Souls. Lev. xxiii. 29. *Whosoever Soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that Day, he shall be cut off from among his People.* He that would not do the Things that have been mentioned, was bound under a Curse. Deut. xxvii. 26. *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the Words of this Law to do them. And all the People shall say, Amen.* Numb. xix. 20. *The Man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that Soul shall be cut off from among the Congregation.*

For not observing the Sacraments. Numb. ix. 13. *The Man that is clean, and is not in a Journey, and forbeareth to keep the Passover; even that Soul shall be cut off from his People, because he brought not*
the

*the Offering of the Lord in his appointed Season :
That Man shall bear his Sin.*

*Of Circumcision. Gen. xvii. 14. The uncircumcised Man Child,—shall be cut off from his People :
He hath broken my Covenant.* In such Duties were they to renew their Covenant, and keep up their Religion.

Now what more could be requisite to constitute a Church, or people the true visible Church of God, giving all the Evidence that the Nature of the Case will admit, of their being sincerely devoted to him, true Lovers of him, and his obedient Children ; all that appeared otherways being cut off.

Let us conceive a Church in our Day, as holy, strict and regular as possible, exhibiting proper Evidence, of being a true spiritual Church of Christ, *viz.* They in the first Place, solemnly give themselves to God in Covenant, their lives being agreeable, having received the Sacrament of Baptism, they observed the Sacrament of the Supper, and renew Covenant there, with the greatest Impartiality ; they cut off all scandalous Persons from their Communion ; when any lesser Injury is done or Offence given, they carefully heal the Breach, the Offenders make Satisfaction for Injuries, confess their Fault publicly, and as publicly seek Pardon of God, joining in solemn Acts of Devotion, in Token of Love and Christian Fellowship, careful in bringing up, instructing and disciplining their Children. As much, yea, more than I have here particularised, was commanded, and by God required to be observed and practised, by the Church of
Israel.

Israel. What more could be required in any People, to exhibit the Evidence of gracious Sincerity?

Whether the Discipline that God appointed, was properly observed, or sinfully neglected in the Church of *Israel*, is not to our present Purpose; we have been considering how God appointed and commanded Things to be.



C H A P. VII.

Of God's Covenant with Abraham and his Seed.
Gen. xvii†.

GOD's Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed, has always been considered as an important Subject, that affords considerable Light, with Respect to the Nature and Constitution of the visible Church; not only *Jewish* but *Christian*. Especially has it been so considered by *Presbyterians*, who hold it right to baptise Infants.

It has been allowed by most Divines (even by them that are for admitting graceless Persons) that the Covenant with *Abraham*, may properly be called a Covenant of Grace. 'Tis evident God covenanted with *Abraham*, as a true Believer, a truly gracious Person.

What I have to observe, is, that true Grace was necessary for a Person, in order to be really and properly in this Covenant: True Faith or a hearty Submission to God, was the Condition of being in
this

† As my design was to inquire into the Constitution and Discipline of the *Jewish Church*, it was not improper to consider what I have already said, before I took Notice of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, altho' this properly belongs to the *Jewish Church*, and must have a brief Consideration.

this Covenant : And the Appearance of Grace or outward Evidence of it, was the Condition of being in the external Administration of it. God ordered and appointed all to be cut off from it, who did not appear thus. It has already been shewn, that God requires the Heart and Sincerity, in every Covenant ; and that he cannot, consistent with his Honour and Dignity, Laws and Government, covenant with Man, without requiring or making this the Term of the Covenant. This, and other Things, said in the fourth Chapter, are equally true, with Respect to *Abraham's* Covenant. As such Sincerity was necessary in the Nature of Things, so there is nothing in the Condition, or Circumstance, of *Abraham's* Family, that contradicts it, but much to confirm it. There is all possible Reason to conclude, that *Abraham* and his Family were, what *Joshua* said, he and his House would be, *viz.* That they served the Lord. God himself gives this Testimony of *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* Here we see that *Abraham* took Care to have, not only his Children, but his Household to serve the Lord. In this Account, there is all that is implied in the Character of true Saints. I do not say, that all *Abraham's* circumcised Servants had true Grace : I know not but they had, and I know not that they had. But what I maintain is, that they had the Appearance of it, or gave Evidence of having a supreme Regard to *Jehovah*. So far

as we can come to Particulars, as to his Servants, they appeared to be eminently good. What remarkable Piety and Fidelity appeared in the Servant that went for *Rebecca*, Gen. xxiv. *Ishmael* was admitted and circumcised as a Child of the Family: But as soon as Profaneness and Irreligion appeared in him, he was cast out, and that by God's express Command.

I know some are ready to ask, *Can we suppose that all the numerous Family of Abraham's Servants were truly pious.* To which I answer, (1) that there is not the least Appearance to the contrary. But (2) none pretend to assert, that they were all pious; we know not the State of their Souls: But what is contended for is, that they were of a good moral Character, and submitted to Jehovah as the true God, and professed a supreme Regard to him, by worshiping him, and observing his Commands.

As to *Abraham's Seed*, they were expressly required to love God in Sincerity, and serve him with their Hearts; and any publick Evidence to the contrary, cut them off. God required them all, on Pain of eternal Damnation, as well as of temporal Disadvantages, to love him in Sincerity; to keep and seal his Covenant, which was that he would be a God to them, and that they should be his People; and that those that would not Seal his Covenant, should be utterly cut off. Gen. xvii. 7, 10, 14. Accordingly we find, when *Moses* had neglected the Seal of the Covenant, the Lord met him and was about to kill him, nor would he let him go, till his Wife, knowing the Cause, in haste circumcised his Son.



C H A P. VIII.

How Israel were admitted to the Passover in Egypt.

SOME have endeavoured to deduce an Argument against the Principles I maintain, from the Children of *Israel's* being admitted to the Passover in *Egypt*. They say, there is no Account of covenanting when they were admitted to the first Passover; and yet many of them had been guilty of Idolatry, and other Vices, so as not to have the Appearance of true Religion. (Not now to urge this against themselves, since it argues as much for the Admission of scandalous profane Sinners, as for any unregenerate ones) I observe, that if there was no account or mention made of it, yet it would be no Evidence that they did not Covenant in order to partake of the Passover. We have often some brief historical Accounts of the principal Parts of an Affair, when yet many important Circumstances are omitted, which may notwithstanding be gathered from other Parts of Scripture. Thus in this very History, we are told, that *Moses* was brought up for *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and became her Son: But 'tis in the new Testament, that we are told, he was learned in all the Wisdom of the *Egyptians*; and that he refused to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter. So in *Exod.* we are told of his smiting the *Egyptian* that oppressed the *Israelites*; but 'tis from the New Testament that we learn that he supposed they would have understood, that God would deliver them by his Hand. As to the

Passover, we are in Scripture, sufficiently told what covenanting God requires. But if we attend to the historical Account in *Exodus*, we shall find sufficient Reason to conclude, that *Israel* were led to re-new Covenant in *Egypt*; as no doubt there was Reason for it, when many of them had yielded to the Idolatries of *Egypt*, and other Vices.

God appeared to *Moses*, as the God of *Abraham*, as he tells him; and as such, sent him to the Children of *Israel*; tells them he remembers his Covenant, and was about to fulfil it, in giving *Abraham's* Seed the promised Land; tells them that they should come out of *Egypt*, and worship and Sacrifice to him, &c. This was certainly a Call and Encouragement to them to repent and turn to him. And when *Moses* and *Aaron*, went and acquainted the People with all this, 'tis said, *Exod. iv. 31. The People believed: And when they heard that the Lord had visited the Children of Israel, then they bowed their Heads and worshiped.* In what God said, was implied and proposed the principal Terms of the Covenant, in what the People do, is implied their Consent, in worshipping *Jehovah* as distinguished from all false Gods. By his Name *Jehovah*, he revealed himself to them, and as such they believed and worshiped him. But more full to the Purpose, is that in the sixth Chapter, Verses 2, — 9. *God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord. — I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty. — And I have established my Covenant with them. — And I have heard the Groaning of the Children of Israel — and I have remembered my Covenant. Wherefore, say*

not an explicit covenanting. God had be-
 and all along told them, that what he was a-
 for them, and required of them, was as
 Peop'le, the Seed of *Abraham*. Now
 duct: They not only bow the Head
 dedicating themselves to God, but
 as directed. They practically
 thority, believe what he says,
 re for travelling, their Goods
 girt, their Staves in their
 ing their Trust and De-
 they attend the Passover,
 od, that he would do
 venant keeping God)
 of Promise. They
 enant People, who
 bey him, and for-
 ir covenanting in
 e consider what

—7. *Say unto
 the Day that I
 unto the Seed
 if known unto
 lifted up mine.
 and your God:
 unto them, to
 ypt.—Then
 Alan the A-
 t yourselves
 l your God.
 at I made
 ok them by
 of Egypt.
 And*

And Hag. ii. 5. *According to the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt.*



C H A P. IX.

Concerning the whole Jewish Nation as an ungodly People in later Times, being considered and treated as the Church and People of God, enjoying the Sacraments of Circumcision and the Passover.

WHAT was done or practised by *Israel*, after *Moses* and *Joshua's* Time, while they were considered as God's Church and People, has been improved, and tortured into an Argument, to shew that graceless Persons, as such, have a Right to come to christian Sacraments. But let it be considered, that if God did require such covenanting as has been shewn, and appointed such a Discipline as has been mentioned, we cannot argue, that he allowed any covenanting short of what he appointed, or that Persons might attend and use the Sacraments without the Qualifications he required, or that those might acceptably come, whom according to his Discipline, ought to have been cut off. We cannot argue, that God allowed People thus to act contrary to his primitive Institutions, meerly because we find they did act thus. God's Institution, and not Men's Practice, is to be the Rule of our judging and acting. Yea we are not to conclude a Thing's Right, because good Men, eminently good, have allowed or practised it; for so we should justify the having Plurality of Wives, and other evil Practices. To know what is right for a Church

Church to practise, we are to look to the divine Institution. To argue a Thing is Right, because a Church, that is, the Church of Christ practises it, is a weak fallacious Way of arguing. Suppose any should view the Church of *Rome* before the Reformation, even so long before, that it will be granted, it was Christ's visible Church, and thence should argue, that such and such Things were right, because found in, and practised by the Church of Christ; what miserable reasoning would this be? I suppose, there are but few of my Opposers, but what will grant, that the *Episcopal* Church of *England*, is essentially a visible Church of Christ; but will they think 'tis a convincing Proof, that all the Rites and Ceremonies of that Church, are agreeable to God's Will, much less of his Appointment, because they are used by, or found in a Church of Christ? Suppose any one in the Apostle *Paul's* Time, should have view'd the Church of *Corinth*, as to their Manner of attending the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, where some eat and drank before others came, and some eat and drank to excess, &c. and should thence argue, that this was right, because practised by a Church of Christ, where there were Persons endowed with extraordinary Gifts, of Prophecy and the like. This Argument deduced from the Practice of the *Jewish* Church, is most absurd, and truly astonishing; and yet 'tis the great Argument of some, who plead for the Admission of unregenerate Persons. It has often been observed to them, that they may as well argue for the Admission of grossly scandalous and profane Sinners, for such were many of the *Jews*,
if

if not the Body of the Nation, in the Times they speak of. When this Difficulty is proposed to them, they never can answer consistently, for any Answer to that, would be an Answer to themselves against their Argument, for the Admission of the Unregenerate. Some think 'tis strange, there are so many Expressions importing, that People, to be God's peculiar favourite People, in the dearest Relation to him, and his Church; and its Ordinances to be precious and agreeable to him, unless he did in a good Degree approve them, and their using the Ordinances, as they did. But let it be considered, that most of these Expressions respect the first Institution of that Church, and those Ordinances. Jer. ii. *I planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed, how then art thou turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine. I remember thee, the Love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, &c.* Hosea ix. 10. *I found Israel as Grapes in the Wilderness, &c.* And many other Scriptures to that Purpose. God's not utterly unchurching them, or his allowing them to continue in the Relation of a Church to him, doth not prove, that according to his Will, they might come to Sacraments with such Qualifications as they had. 'Tis indeed wonderful, that God will own a People as his Church, with so much amiss among them, as he has often done; but his Goodness and Longsuffering is beyond our Conception, nor are we able to fathom his Designs. But with Respect to the Expressions of God's Regard to them, and their Relation to him, it ought to be considered, that he regarded them as a Body Politick, when he did not

Regard them as a Church. So he led, provided for, and governed *Israel*, Thirty-eight Years in the Wilderness, when he did not properly consider the Body of them as his Church. So he in some Respects, favoured *Ahab* and *Jehu*, the latter of which, he treated with some distinguishing Privileges, when yet, he did not view him as one of his Church, for he remained an Idolater all the Time, and departed not from the Sins of *Jereboam*, who made *Israel* to sin. In like manner God favoured *Edom*, and *Mobab*, and *Ammon*, and would not let *Israel*, take their Land, &c. when yet he did not consider them as his Church. And his Providence has been in some peculiar Manner exercised over, and toward the *Jews*, these Seventeen hundred Years past, tho' they are not his Church, but broken off from the good Olive. With Respect to those Expressions, which signify near and dear Relation, we ought to consider, that very remarkable Passage, in *Jer. iii.* relating to the ten Tribes. They had been Idolaters Two hundred Years in *Canaan*, from the Time of *Jereboam*, not attended one Passover, or any Ordinance at *Jerusalem*, as God directed, and had been overwhelmed with all Sorts of Vice, as well as Idolatry; and God had now expelled them out of their own Land, for near the Space of an hundred Years, and had as the Scripture says, *2 Kings xvii.* rejected the Seed of *Jacob*, and cast them out of his Sight. Yet says he, to *Jeremiah*, Go and proclaim these Words toward the North (where *Israel* was in Captivity) and say, return thou backsliding *Israel*, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you, &c. Turn, O backsliding Children,

dren, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you, &c. A Variety of such Expressions, do not prove that they were his Church, much less that he approved of their coming to Ordinances, as they did, in their corrupt State.

But the Objectors say, *If it was a Sin to come to Sacraments with carnal unregenerate Hearts, or without saving Grace, why did not God reprove them for it, especially since there were Prophets among them, and God was continually sending his Messages to them? Surely God would have faulted them!* Here I might bid them answer themselves, and shew why God did not reprove them for coming to Sacraments, while they were such scandalous Sinners. Let them answer this, and it will put an Answer into my Mouth. But since these Objectors always shun an Answer to this Difficulty, and since some that are more consistent than they, may desire to see some Solution of it: I observe, that those who say, God did not find Fault with the *Jews*, for coming as they did, are under a Mistake. Ezek. xxii. 26. *Her Priests have violated my Law, and have profaned mine holy Things; they have put no Difference between the Holy and Profane, neither have they shewed Difference between the Unclean and the Clean.* Whenever God speaks against Hypocrisy, and coming to him without the Heart, he reproveth them for coming to Sacraments without the Heart, for those Sacraments were Means or Ways in which they drew near to him. Whenever he speaks against Hypocrites covenanting, 'tis the same as to speak against coming to Sacraments in Hypocrisy, for their covenanting led the Way to

the Sacraments. As People covenanted, so they might use the Sacraments. If their covenanting was Right, so would be the Use of the Sacraments; and if that was wrong, this would be wrong. Against covenanting in Hypocrisy, he speaks in *Psalm* l. 5, 16. *Gather my Saints that have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice.—But unto the Wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant into thy Mouth.*

In the Days of *Josiah*, there was an apparent great Reformation; he brought *Judah* to renew Covenant, as is expressly said, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 31, 32. And they kept the Passover with apparent Solemnity; and yet God reproves and condemns them by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that in this turning to him, they had not done it with the Heart, and shews that he abhors them, yea, represents them as being worse than idolatrous *Israel*. *Jer.* iii. 6,—
11. *The Lord said unto me, in the Days of Josiah the King: Hast thou seen what backsliding Israel hath done, &c. And I put her away, and gave her a Bill of Divorce, &c. And her treacherous Sister Judah saw it, &c. And yet for all this her treacherous Sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole Heart, but feignedly saith the Lord.—The backsliding Israel, hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.*

How fully does God declare, in *Isaiab* i. That he abhors their Sacrifices and Offerings, and calls them vain Oblations, abhors their treading his Courts, spreading out their Hands, &c. Further let it be considered, how abundantly he reproves them for that which was the Evidence of their being

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ing unfit for Sacraments, I mean their Immoralities. We can scarce read a Chapter in the Prophets, without seeing this. God dealt with them according to their external Appearance, as has been observed. And he reproveth and condemns them for those Vices that was an Evidence, that they were not his covenant People. Being thus reprov'd, they were without Excuse, condemned in their own Consciences, before the Prophet that reprov'd them, and before the World: And could find no Room to say, the Ways of the Lord are not equal. The whole Bible makes Practice or Fruit, the Rule to judge by. Yet notwithstanding, God abundantly shews, that he requires the Heart, and true Grace in Duty, and condemns for the Want of it.

To conclude, 'tis proper to observe, that while God had the immediate daily directing, and ordering, all their Affairs in the Wilderness, in *Moses's* Time, he would not permit the Unbelievers, while apparently such, to use and enjoy the Sacraments. While he thus immediately and visibly (as I may say) governed them, he kept up the Discipline which he had appointed, and regulated all Things according to his own Institutions. But as this Sort of divine Government or immediate Interposition began to cease, they neglected his Discipline, and ran fast into Degeneracy, and abuse of Ordinances.



C H A P. X.

Of the Gentiles being grafted into the same Church State, from which the Jews were broken off.

AN Argument for the Admission of graceless Persons, has been formed from the Metaphor the Apostle uses, in *Rom. 11*. Comparing the Church to a good Olive Tree, from which the *Jews* were broken, and into which the *Gentiles* were engrafted. 'Tis said the *Jews* were broken off, not as Persons who exhibited Evidence of true Grace, but far otherways; and that the *Gentiles* were taken into their Room and Place, to be God's Church, as the *Jews* before were: Therefore as the *Jews* were broken off, not as appearing gracious, so the *Gentiles* are taken, not as gracious, but otherways.

If such surprising Kind of Reasoning, could deserve a serious Answer, those that use it might be desired to consider, what it was the *Jews* were broken off for, and what the State was that they were in immediately before they were broken off; and then say, if the *Gentiles* were grafted in, to stand or be considered, as being what the *Jews* were before they were broken off: If they say they were, I leave the Apostle *Paul* to contend with them.

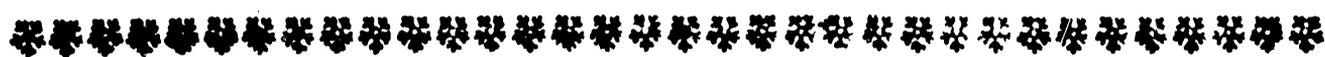
He let's us know, that before the *Jews* were broken off, they were in a State of Infidelity, Disobedience, and Obstinacy. *For unbelief they were broken off.* *Rom. xi. 20.* The *Gentiles* were taken, not as being of such a Character, but a very different,

ferent, *viz.* Believers. *Thou standest by Faith.* If on the other Side, it should be said, that the *Gentiles* were not grafted in, to be in the same Circumstances and Condition, that the *Jews* were in immediately before they were broken off, but that they were grafted into the same visible Church, so as to be the visible Church of Christ. I grant this is true, but then what is it to their Purpose. If the *Gentiles* were not taken with the same Qualifications, that the *Jews* had when they were broken of, but with other very different Qualifications, this is against, rather than for my Opposers. The *Jews* were broken off, for not being, or appearing to be true Believers, and the *Gentiles* were taken as appearing to be what God required them to be, *viz.* true Believers. *For unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith.*

The true Olive, the Root, and Stock that the *Gentiles* were grafted into, had Fatness, Sap, and Nourishment in it ; but then this was the Church, according to God's Appointment and Institution at first, as in *Abraham* and *Moses's* Time. *That noble Vine which he planted wholly a right Seed.* The Church as God instituted it, was a Stock or Root, that truly had Fatness, Virtue and Excellency, as the Apostle speaks. The *Jews* were broken off, because they had become dry and withered Branches, and did not partake of the Fatness of the Olive Tree : The *Gentiles* were grafted in, not as dry Branches like the *Jews*, but as living Branches into a living Stock, thus to partake of the Fatness of the true Olive. Surely there is difference between dry withered Branches, and living ones.

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The Argument (of those that are admitting graceless Persons) from this Passage of Scripture, is as good, as if they should say, when a Man discards a Servant, for being deceitful, idle and fraudulent, and hires another of a good Character; because he takes the Second, in the Room of the First, to do the Business that the First ought to have done, therefore he takes him as being qualified like the first, no better, but as bad, an idle deceitful Wretch as he which he had discarded. Admirable Reasoning!



C H A P. XI.

On making the Institution and Practice of the Jewish Church, a Rule for the Christian Church.

WE are not to expect the clearest Light from the Old Testament, and the Institution and Practice of the *Jewish* Church. That Dispensation was dark, compared with that of the Gospel. The Apostle says, it had no Glory compared with that which came after.

The ceremonial and judicial or civil Laws, were mingled with those that were purely Ecclesiastical or Evangelical: And 'tis not very easy in all Respects to distinguish them. This renders it something difficult to build upon their Institutions. 'Tis granted by all, that the Ceremonial Law is done away: 'Tis not very clear how much of their judicial or civil Law we now are bound by. As to the *Abramic* Covenant, tho' the Substance of it remains, as is evident, from *Gal. iii.* and other Passages

sages of Scripture, yet there are circumstantial Alterations in that. And 'tis evident to all that will observe, that there is much said, even in the Old Testament, to shew, that under the Gospel Dispensation, there should be much greater Light and Purity, and that peculiarly with Respect to the Church: These Things are observed (and much more might be) to shew, that we are not to look there for the fullest and clearest Directions, concerning the Gospel Church: The Pattern and Model of it, is properly learned or taken from the New Testament. The Apostle observes, *Heb. iii.* that Christ was counted worthy of more Glory than *Moses*.— And has been faithful in and over all his House.

As to Qualifications, I do not suppose there is more in *Kind*, required under the Gospel Dispensation, than was under the Law, as I have shewn. God hath, and must, require the same essentially, under every Dispensation. But these Things are more clearly and fully expressed in the New Testament. There was of old, in some Sense, a Vail over many important Gospel Truths.

Further, as to their Practice, 'tis to be observed, that, in that State of Darkness and Ignorance, God might wink at more Irregularities in their ecclesiastical Affairs, than he does, or will, where there is so much more Light as the Gospel affords. *The Time of Ignorance God winked at.* We are not now to encourage ourselves in those Failings, and Deficiencies, that God might then in his Long Suffering and Patience bear with: Some Saints in that dark Dispensation lived in Polygamy. Those among us now, who are continually going back

to the *Jewish* Dispensation to determine, and regulate their Church Affairs, ought to attend to the Apostle *Paul*, who says so much against going back to the Law, and the *Jewish* Dispensation in order to form and model the Church.

On the whole, 'tis evident, that though the Old Testament affords much Light, yet 'tis from the Gospel, we are chiefly to take Rules and Directions for the Constitution and Management of Christ's Church. The Qualifications for Church-Membership, which I have insisted on, are most abundantly evident, and confirmed in the New Testament. But 'tis not my Design to consider that, or vindicate my Principles from the Gospel, or the whole Word of God taken together. That has been fully, and I think, unanswerably done by Mr. *Edwards*. 'Tis therefore needless for me fully to canvass the Subject; nor was it the Design of this Treatise. My Design was to consider the Constitution and Discipline of the *Jewish* Church †, in order to see what Grounds, those (that are for admitting graceless Persons) have to build so much as they do, upon the State of that Church: For the State and Practice of the *Jewish* Church, seems to be their principal Refuge. How I have succeeded in my Attempt, must be left to the Judgment of the candid Reader of the foregoing Chapters.

† This I had not seen handled so fully by any Writer.



The A P P E N D I X.

In Two P A R T S.

Part First.

What are the Principles or Tenets held forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms and Directory, concerning the Qualifications for Sacraments or Church-Membership?

IT may well be inquired, whether a *Presbyterian* Minister, who has adopted and adheres to the *Westminster* Confession of Faith, Catechisms and Directory, can consistently admit Persons to either Sacrament, unless they exhibit credible Evidence of Grace?

The Nature of the Christian Church, the Christian Sacraments, and what Persons were proper to enjoy Sacraments, were some of the most important Points that lay before the Assembly. And I think they have expressed themselves very intelligibly upon these Heads. And the following Things are observable,

1. *They clearly and repeatedly shew, that Persons must be in Covenant, even IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE, in order to enjoy either of the Sacraments.* In larger Catechism, Question and Answer 162. *A Sacrament is an holy Ordinance—to signify, and seal, and exhibit, unto those that are within the Covenant of Grace, the Benefits of his*

Mediation, &c. They expressly limit them to those *within the Covenant of Grace.* Accordingly they speak of the Sacraments as Seals of the Covenant, and of its sealing this Covenant to persons. Chap. xxvii. in the Confession of Faith. *Sacraments are holy Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace.* And again, Chap. xxviii. *Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn Admission of the Party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him, a Sign and Seal of the Covenant of Grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of Regeneration, of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in Newness of Life, &c.* In Larger Catechism, Q. 165. *Baptism is a Sacrament, whereby the Parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, and enter into an open and professed Engagement, to be wholly and only the Lords. This Engagement most fully and properly expresses Covenanting; nor can any do what they say here is done, unless they are in the Covenant of Grace. Thus they shew, that Persons must be in the Covenant of Grace, not only to come to the Lord's Supper, but even to come to the first Sacrament, viz. Baptism. And therefore they say, that when Persons come to the other Sacrament, they renew Covenant. See Large Cat. Q. 174. Which I need not repeat.*

2. *They shew that Persons being in this Covenant of Grace, implies their having true saving Grace, or that true saving Grace is necessary, in order to be thus in the Covenant. Confession Chap. vii. The Lord was pleased to make a Second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace, wherein he freely offereth unto*

unto Sinners, *Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them Faith in him, that they may be saved.* Here are briefly but clearly expressed, the Terms of the Covenant on God's Part, and on the Creatures. God on his Part, offers *Life and Salvation.* On the Creatures Part is required, *Faith unto Salvation.* And that Man on his Part, does thus believe and submit to God, in order thus to come into Covenant, they most fully shew, *Quest. 165.* where speaking of this, they say, *they enter into an open and professed Engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.* This cannot in any Sense, with Truth be said of any unregenerate Person. Again, this Profession or entering into Covenant, they express, by Persons professing their *Faith in Christ and Obedience to him.* *Short Cat. Q. 95.* And if we allow them to give their own Meaning of Faith, they will not represent it as a doctrinal Faith, which unregenerate Men may have, but that 'tis a *saving Grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ, alone for Salvation.* And by Obedience, they mean *new Obedience.* This new Obedience is what cannot be in any unregenerate. For speaking of the Fall of Man, or Original Sin, they say, *Confession Chap. 6. Hereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all Good, and wholly inclined to all Evil, &c.* These therefore, are not the Persons who can in Truth profess Obedience to Christ. And in *Chap. 16. Of Good Works,* they shew largely, that this Obedience is peculiar to God's Children, and that all which unregenerate Men do, is *sinful, and cannot please God.* But this Point will

will receive further Confirmation in the following Particulars. Therefore,

3. *They shew and prove that the Sacraments exhibit, and are designed to seal spiritual saving Blessings to the Souls of those that use and enjoy them. This they cannot do to any remaining unregenerate. Confession, Chap. 27. Sacraments are instituted by God to represent Christ and his Benefits, and to confirm our Interest in him. Again, Chap. 28. Baptism is a Sign and Seal of engrafting into Christ, of Regeneration, &c. And, Chap. 29. The Lord's Supper is instituted for—the Sealing all Benefits thereof, (viz. Christ's Death) unto true Believers, their spiritual Nourishment and Growth in him.— And to be a Bond and Pledge of their Communion with him. More fully expressed in Large Cat. Q. 162. A Sacrament is an holy Ordinance instituted by Christ in his Church, to signify, seal and exhibit, unto those that are within the Covenant of Grace, the Benefits of his Mediation, to strengthen and increase their Faith, and all other Graces. And, Q. 167. How is Baptism to be improved. Ans.—By serious and thankful Consideration of the Nature of it, the Privileges and Benefits conferred and sealed thereby, &c. Q. 168. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, and they that worthily communicate, feed upon his Body and Blood, to their spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace, &c. None partake worthily according to them but such. And they who do no partake worthily, eat and drink Judgment to themselves. Therefore none but gracious Persons (according to them) can partake worthily, without*

without eating and drinking Judgment to themselves.

4. *They shew that both the Sacraments are of the same general Nature, and that a Person cannot come even to Baptism, without exhibiting such Evidences of Grace.* This is evident from what has already been produced. (1) In that Baptism is a Seal of the Covenant of Grace. The Lord's Supper is no more, as it is a Seal. 2. In that they must profess Obedience, new Obedience in order to come to baptism, say they, *Baptism is not to be administred to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their Faith in Christ and Obedience to him.* 3. Because therein, Persons enter into a solemn Engagement, to be *wholly and only* the Lord's. No more can be required in order to come to the Lord's Supper. 4. In that it is a Sign and Seal of engrafting into Christ, of Remission of Sins, by his Blood, of Regeneration by his Spirit, of Adoption, &c. Q. 165. As 'tis evident in the Nature of Things, so according to them, both Sacraments represent the same spiritual Blessings, Christ and his Benefits. Speaking of both the Sacraments, they say, *Christ and his Benefits are represented, sealed and applied to Believers.* Now if nothing less than has been mentioned, is requisite in order to Baptism in adult Age; those who are for admitting only gracious Persons, require no more in order to come to the Lord's Supper.

5. *They shew as fully as can well be expressed with Words, that true Grace is so necessary in order to use and enjoy the Sacraments, that without it Persons would be unworthy Communicants, greatly*
sinning

finning and endangering their Souls. Short Cat. Q. 97. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their Knowledge, to discern the Lord's Body, of their Faith (not speculative, but) to feed upon him, of their Repentance (which they tell us elsewhere is a saving Grace) Love (which none pretend unregenerate ones can have) and new Obedience, lest coming unworthily they eat and drink Judgment to themselves. If they have not these Graces they come unworthily, and eat and drink judgment to themselves. Again, Large Cat. Q. 168. They that worthily communicate, feed upon his Body and Blood to their spiritual Nourishment, &c. Q. 170. They that worthily communicate, do feed upon the Body and Blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal Manner, but in a spiritual Manner, yet truly and really, while by Faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the Benefits of his Death. So in Confes. Chap. 29. Although ignorant and wicked Men, receive the outward Elements in this Sacrament, yet they receive not the Thing signified thereby, but by their unworthy coming thereto, are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.— Therefore all ignorant and ungodly Persons as they are unfit to enjoy Communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot without great Sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy Mysteries, or be admitted there unto. What they thus say of the Lord's Supper, is equally true of Baptism in adult Age, because both Sacraments exhibit and represent the same great and important Blessings and Benefits of Christ's Death.

And

And lest after all that they had said, there should be some doubt, what Sort of Persons have a Right to come, they propose a Case of Conscience, and answer it. Large Cat. Q. 172. *May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due Preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?* Answered, That he may. Why? Because some serious unregenerate Men may come? No: But *because he may have true Interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof, say they.* ONE who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due Preparation for the Lord's Supper, may have true Interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's Account hath it, if he be duly affected with the Apprehension of the Want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from Iniquity; in which Case (because Promises are made, and this Sacrament is appointed for the Relief, even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his Unbelief, labour to have his Doubts resolved; and so doing he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may (what, be converted? No: But) be further strengthened. Here they have brought the Case as low as possibly they can. And will it take in an unregenerate Person who is morally sincere? By no Means. The Person of the lowest and least Qualifications they dare propose, is one, that may have true Interest in Christ: That in God's Account hath it: That unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ. Which no unregenerate Person does. That has Promises belonging to him: That is a weak, tho' doubting Christian: That has spiritual Strength, but needs further strengthening.

Thus appear the publick Standards of *our* Faith. These Sentiments are by the Assembly abundantly repeated, and the Scriptures they quote are full to the Purpose, and clearly prove those Sentiments to be true. Indeed the contrary Opinion is *Arminian*; Yea, 'tis built upon a very dangerous Part of *Arminianism*. It goes upon the Supposition, that unregenerate Men have something in them friendly to God, and Christ, and true Holiness: That their Hearts are not wholly at Enmity with God, but that he looks upon them with some Approbation, so as to enter into Covenant with them, set his Seal of Baptism upon them, except their Children and Seal them; and in this Way makes and seals Promises to them, because being in Covenant, implies Promises, and sealing the Covenant, seals the Promises to them: That they as unregenerate, may thus come according to God's Direction. Now, nothing like this tends to ease their Consciences, and make them think they are in a good fair Way; that God is not so very angry with them; that they shall by Degrees work themselves wholly into his Favour. Sinners, who have some Thought about Religion, are exceedingly inclined to Self-righteousness, and these Principles tend to build them up in it.

Surely Ministers who lead graceless Persons, as such, to come into Covenant, and to either of the Sacraments, cannot be said to hold to, or believe the publick Standards of our Faith. I may defy the World to shew, such Principles and Practice consistent with the Assembly of Divines. If Ministers of such Principles are honest, they must not say they assent to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

chifins. Serious People in our Churches, may well be alarmed to think what a Departure there is from the System of Christian Faith and Practice.



P A R T Second.

Answers to sundry Questions respecting Church-Membership, Sacraments, &c.

I. Quest. **A**RE there any scriptural Marks, Signs or Evidences, whereby we may judge or conclude Persons to be gracious?

Ans. 1. There are no Signs or Evidences, whereby we can be infallably certain a Person is gracious. We are liable to be imposed upon. We cannot know the Hearts of others.

2. Yet we can, and ought in many Cases to come to a Judgment, or Conclusion, that Persons are gracious, and that upon Evidence.

3. We cannot look upon all the World alike. Some are very bad, and others are eminently good.

4. There are various Degrees of Evidence, from the fullest Satisfaction, to a Case so doubtful, that the Mind must remain in Suspense.

5. The Evidence that we are to judge by, is something more than Negative, *i. e.* not knowing but a Person may have Grace, there must be something Positive.

6. The Signs or Evidences by which we judge must be scriptural ones.

7. Not an account of inward Experiences. Such

an Account is never in Scripture laid down as a Rule of publick Judgment, by which any are to be by others concluded good or gracious.

8. Profession of Religion, and Practice or Behaviour agreeable, is the Rule to judge by.

9. Agreeable Practice and Behaviour, implies the Exhibition of a Taste and Relish for Divine Things; the Ways of God, and godly People.

10. That there are Evidences or Grounds to conclude some Persons gracious, or that they belong to Christ, and bear his Image, appears from Scripture. We are commanded to love the Brethren; to do good to all, *especially to the Household of Faith*. There is that by which *all Men may know them to be Christ's Disciples*. By the Fruits we are to know, &c. &c.



II. Quest. *What is it brings Persons into, or constitutes them regular Members of the visible Church? Is it a publick Profession, or Baptism, or being Children of Church Members?*

Ans. 1. **A**S to those who have not been baptised in Infancy, two Things bring them in. *viz.* (1) A Profession, supported with Practice agreeable. (2) Baptism. Neither of them alone, each does its Part.

2. As to Children of Believers, three Things bring them into the visible Church compleat. (1) Being Children of visible Believers. (2) Baptism. (3) Profession, when come to Years of understanding, with a Life agreeable.

3. Ther

3. There is a proper Difference between being Members in full or compleat Standing, and being Members in some Sort. A civil Officer may be considered as such, in a Sort when he has his Commission, but not fully till he has taken his qualifying Oath.

4. Persons may have a particular Character or Denomination, and yet it consist in various Degrees or Stages. Thus Saints. (1) As soon as they are regenerated. (2) After they have lived many Years and made great Progress in Religion. (3) When they are admitted into Heaven and perfectly Holy. God admits none to Heaven but Saints compleat, and 'tis in vain to argue, that they may go there with some Degree of Sin which they have in this World, because while they are here, they are called Saints, are compleatly justified, and entitled to Heaven. 'Tis so as to Church Members. They may belong to the Church in a Sort, and yet something more be absolutely necessary to admit them to full standing, and without which they cannot be received.

5. 'Tis therefore easy to conceive, that Children from Infancy till they are Adult, may in a Sort belong to the visible Church, when yet they do not fully.

6. 'Tis therefore without Foundation, that the *Anabaptists* say, that Infants cannot be in Covenant or in the visible Church, because they are not capable of being fully so. And 'tis without Foundation that some *Presbyterians* urge, that Children baptised and grown up in the Church, have a Right to Sacraments or compleat standing, without Profession

feſſion, and exhibiting credible Evidence of Grace :
 Becauſe 'tis evident that being in the Church, in a
 Sort, doth not make them Members compleat.

III. *Queſt. In what Senſe are Children taken into
 Covenant and into the Church, together with
 their Parents ?*

I. **N**O Persons in adult Age, or Parents of
 Children are properly taken into Covenant,
 but as appearing gracious ; at leaſt their Covenant-
 ing implies ſincere hearty Subjection to God. But,
 2. The Words or Phraſes *being in Covenant, or
 eſta bli ſhing a Covenant with,* are uſed with ſome
 Latitude. Persons may be ſaid to be in Covenant in
 ſome Senſe, or ſome Degree, when they are not
 in the full eſt proper eſt Senſe.

3. Children are taken and laid under the Oblig-
 ation Bonds of the Covenant. God's ſpecial pecu-
 liar Command lies upon them, that when come to
 Years of Underſtanding, under the greateſt Penal-
 ty, they are obliged to be ſincerely and truly for
 God, and comply with his Inſtitutions.

4. 'Tis evident that ſometimes when God ſays,
 he makes Covenant, it implies no more than that
 he lays them under the peculiar Obligation Bonds of
 the Covenant, in a ſpecial diſtinguishing Manner,
 enjoining them to be wholly or heartily for him,
 under ſome *peculiar* Penalty, if they do not. Thus
Deut. xxix. God ſays, he makes Covenant not only
 with them that were there preſent, but with them
 alſo that were not there ; whether this means Per-
 ſons

sons not then in hearing, or Generations to come; it must chiefly mean, that they were laid under the same peculiar Obligation, to be wholly and heartily for God.

5. When God takes a Believer, as such, into Covenant, and tells him, that he also takes his Children into Covenant, we cannot think that the Parent and Children are both taken precisely in the same Sense into Covenant. Parents are taken as Members compleat, to all Ordinances; Children are not capable of this. God lets Believers know the Terms of the Covenant, and they having the Exercise of Reason, actually comply, and perform practical Duties of the Covenant, but Infants cannot.

6. God's Covenant with *Abraham* of Old, and with Believers now, as to their Seed, I suppose is, That he takes a peculiar Notice and Care of them, commits them to their Parents and the Church, for teaching, restraining, governing, and the like; solemnly charging and obliging them [the Children] (under Penalty of being cut off) when they come to Years of Understanding, to love, and serve him in Sincerity; and in Token of his Care of them, and their Obligations to him, he orders his Mark, Sign, or Seal, to be put upon them.

7. God's gracious Condescension in Covenanting, and the Regard he has shewn to the Children of Believers, gives such Parents Reason to hope, that their Children dying in Infancy, are saved.

In this Manner, I think, we may consider this Covenant Relation of Children, and be consistent, even if we should not suppose the Seed of Believers

are taken, as being truly gracious, or upon the Supposition of our having Reason to hope they are sanctified.

8. Doctor *Watts*, expresses himself thus. *In my Opinion, so far as Infants are any way Members of the visible Christian Church, it is upon Supposition of their being (with their Parents) Members of the invisible Church of God. Of this Opinion are many Divines, and doubtless it may be defended.*



IV. *Quest. Since God requires all Men to act as they think in their Consciences they ought to, and some unregenerate Persons conscientiously think they ought to come into the Church, and to Sacraments, is it not therefore their Duty, and does not God require such unregenerate Persons, to come into the Church, and to Sacraments ?*

Ans. 1. **T**O propose this as a Case of Conscience, is one Thing, and as an Argument, is another Thing. As an Argument to prove graceless Men may be admitted into the Church, 'tis but a Quibble.

2. Granting Persons are to act according to an erroneous Conscience, it will not prove that 'tis right, and that 'tis the Will of God, that such graceless Persons should come into the Church, any more than it proves it to be right, and that 'tis the Will of God, Persecutors should kill poor harmless Christians; it may be their own Parents, because some Persecutors have thought in their Consciences they ought so to do. *I verily thought with myself, says Paul, I ought to do many Things contrary*

contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet this was a wicked Thing, and he condemned himself for it, as long as he lived.

3. An erroneous Conscience ought to be enlightened : 'Tis Ministers Duty to do it. These mistaken Persons should know, what is implied in a Profession of Religion, and what 'tis to covenant with God, and they would not then think it their Duty, to profess what implies true Love to God, while they thought they had none. People would not continue in this Mistake if they were not encouraged in it.



V. *Quest. Suppose a Person admitted into the Church, as exhibiting Evidence of Grace; can the Church afterward have Evidence that that Person is graceless, and unfit for Sacraments, any other Way than by scandalous Sin, of Omission, or Commission, persisted in?*

Ans. **N**O.



VI. *Quest. What could a Jew have done, who knew himself to be a carnal unregenerate Sinner, and as such, not fit to come to Sacraments, yet obliged to circumcise his Children, and keep the Passover, under Penalty of being cut off?*

Ans. 1. **T**HE cutting off might probably not mean Death.

2. Any sort of cutting off, would be preferable to Perjury, or known Falshood in covenanting.

2. If they promise Obedience and Subjection, they must come to the Lord's Table, for this is an expressly commanded Duty. All the professed Disciples of Christ, are commanded and obliged to come.

3. A Minister cannot admit them to Baptism, without their coming into full Communion, by considering them as gracious Persons, of a tender Conscience, (who dare not come to the Lord's Table, lest they should not be fit) *because* a private Judgment cannot be the Rule of admitting them; even to Baptism, it must be a publick Judgment, which cannot be found without their promising Obedience to Christ, in all Gospel Ordinances. They cannot give the Church publick Evidence, without professing Religion, which implies, Subjection to Christ in all revealed Duties.

4. The People in our Churches who apply for Baptism, and neglect the Lord's Supper, are not in general, Persons of a very tender Conscience. Having covenanted and obtained Baptism, they afterward shew no great Regard to Religion.

5. Ministers by complying with their Requests, and tolerating them in thus dividing, or making such a Difference in the Sacraments, confirm them in their Mistake: People have wrong Notions as to the Nature of Covenanting and Baptism, and Ministers ought to enlighten them, and not uphold them in their Errors and Ignorance.

6. If Ministers, to make their Conduct and Principles consistent, should lead these People to profess Religion properly, and promise Obedience to Christ in all Gospel Ordinances, or to use any

Expressions that imply a Determination to observe all Gospel Ordinances, when yet the People do not design any such Thing ; this, instead of making the Matter better, makes it worse. To lead People to vow or promise, what they do not expect or propose to perform, is a great and dangerous Evil*.

7. Ministers ought not to prostitute the Sacrament of Baptism, to comply with Peoples Humours, but consider what a solemn Thing it is to administer a Sacrament, that represents Seals, and applies the Benefits purchased by the Blood of Christ. To profane or misuse a sacred Ordinance, is a Breach of the Second Commandment, where God says, he is a jealous God.

* I cannot help expressing my Fears, that Ministers may permit People, to covenant or profess Religion, without leading them into the Knowledge, and inculcating upon them, the Nature of Covenanting, and a Profession of Religion, and thus by Degrees admit almost any Sort of Persons, who may inconsiderately offer themselves.

I know much depends upon the Faithfulness, and Care of Ministers. It has been seen in all Ages, that when they are negligent, the Church becomes corrupt and degenerate, and Ordinances profaned : And no Wonder, since they are the Door-keepers of the Church, and the Dispencers of Ordinances. But the Danger of profaning Ordinances when Ministers are unfaithful, is no Argument against the Principles I maintain ; nor is the Danger of receiving some graceless Persons, an Argument that we should set the Doors of the Church open to them. This would be strange Policy.





VIII. *Quest. Where People come to Sacraments, at least to Baptism, without pretending to have Grace, or to exhibit the Evidence of it, can a Minister with a good Conscience continue to administer Sacraments, from Time to Time, without determining in his own Mind, which Side of this Controversy is right, or what are the Qualifications, on which People may be admitted to Sacraments?*

Ans. 1. **W**HATSOEVER is not of Faith, is Sin: He that doubteth is condemned, if he acts. This is not a Matter of Indifference, that may be managed either Way, as in many common Affairs of Life.

2. If a Man was undetermined in his Mind, whether the Baptism of Infants was right, *i. e.* agreeable to the Word of God, or not, I think he could not in that Case lawfully baptise them. So here,

3. Where the Mind is in an Equilibrium or Suspence, especially in important Matters, the Evidence on both Sides appearing equal, 'tis sinful to act, but not to forbear acting, because in Matters of Doubt or Uncertainty, 'tis Duty to suspend Action till we get Light.

4. A Man ought to be determined in this Matter, before he enters into the Ministry, and takes the Ordination Vows. But too many young Men of a truly religious Character, enter (not to say rash) into the Ministry, without sufficiently considering, what Actions and Duties, will be consequent upon their Ordination; especially respecting the Discipline of the Church.

IX. *Quest.*

IX. Quest. *May God be said to enter into Covenant with unregenerate Men CONDITIONALLY, and make Promises to them Conditionally?*

1. **S**OME, that are for admitting graceless Persons, build much upon the Affirmative of this Question.

2. I answer in the Negative, by observing, that there is a great Difference between a *Proposal* and a *Covenant*, and between an *Offer* and a *Promise*. God proposes the Covenant of Grace, and makes offers to all under the Light of the Gospel; but it cannot therefore be said, that he enters into Covenant, and makes Promises to them. ONE Man's making Proposals and Offers to another upon *certain Conditions*, is not an Agreement, Compact, or Covenant, without something further: The Man to whom the Offer is made, must do, or say, something that is a complying with the Terms, or a ratifying and confirming the Bargain, and then 'tis properly a Covenant.

3. God's telling the Gospel World, that if they will repent, believe, &c. they shall be saved, is not entering into Covenant with them in any Sense, or making Promises to them, in any proper Sense of a Promise. If any of them repent, believe, &c. they then enter into his Covenant, and then there are Promises that are actually theirs.

4. I think there is as much Reason in saying, that God justifies, adopts, entitles to Heaven, yea, sanctifies the Unregenerate *conditionally*, as that he enters into Covenant and makes Promises to them *conditionally*.

Reason to think it would do much more good, than to indulge Persons with the Thought, that they may consider themselves, and that the Church considers them, as Church-Members ; when yet they are not so, in any proper Sense, according to God's Appointment.

3. When a Church is far gone in a wrong Way, and has been long accustomed to Methods and Practices, that are not according to Christ's Institutions, 'tis very difficult to reduce it to Order. It cannot be done all at once, nor would it be prudent to attempt it. Christ led his Disciples and the Primitive Church out of Errors, and *Jewish* Rites, and Practices, gradually, as they were able to bear. And yet so, it caused great Commotions. *Acts* xiv. and xv. &c.

4. Prudence and Resolution ought happily to be joined in bringing People from Wrong to Right. But how gradually soever we proceed in Practice, I think we ought to acknowledge what is Right, what ought to be practised if we could but come at it. Truth ought to be held up and maintained ; nor should we be too dilatory in proceeding, especially as we have now the clearest Light of the Gospel, and are not to expect any Thing further as to Revelation concerning the Nature of Christ's Church, which was not the Case in the first Part of the Apostolic Age.

5. Thus far, I think, I have proceeded with Safety. But what would be prudent and proper Measures, in the present Situation of our Churches, may be difficult to determine : Different Churches, may require different Measures. However, I will
give

give my Opinion, what would be proper as a general Rule. General Rules have some Exceptions.

6. 'Tis granted by all, that baptised Children and Youth, ought to be under the Watch and Discipline of the Church; to be called to an Account and censured for Misconduct. This is now practised in some Churches. This being granted, I suppose it might be proper for the Church to call upon the baptised Youth, after they come to a proper Age; suppose 14, 16, 18 Years, and enquire of them, what their Views were of their Obligations to be for God, to enter into his Covenant explicitly, and unfeignedly devote themselves to him. And let them know, that God required all that were baptised in Infancy, when come to Years of Understanding, to serve him in Love, sincerely to take the Covenant upon themselves, and in Faith come to the Sacraments, or else in proper Time to be cut off, and not be considered as Members of the Church. If they express their Fear of being unfit to covenant in Truth, and yet say, they will seriously consider these Things, they ought to be waited upon, at least, till they are of Age, but not without being called upon by the Church, once in a Year or less, to see if they were considering these Things. If after they come to full Age, they appear to love and serve the Creature more than the Creator, to be against Christ, by not being for him, it might be proper for the Church to drop them out of their Number, and let them know that they cannot any longer consider them as in the Church, but as belonging to this World, and the God of this World. As to the particular Manner,

or Form, in which the Church shall drop them, or cut them off, I know not that Scripture or Reason determines it, only that it be done in a Manner that will be most likely to do them, and others Good. If any of those Young ones, on whom the Church calls, are Ignorant, the Church ought to take Care that they be properly instructed: But if they appear to have tolerable Knowledge, and yet are vain and careless, the Church ought solemnly to warn them, from Time to Time. If any of those on whom the Church is waiting, should be guilty of contemning Church Government, or guilty of Scandal, they ought to be cut off, after the first and second Admonition. If the Church should wait upon those that are civilised, and considerate, something longer than till they are of Age, I know not that it would be a Fault, if proper Discipline was exercised in all other Respects; because these Persons do in Effect cut themselves off, and such are not in general by the World considered as Church Members, and their Misconduct does not occasion Reproach, like that, of those, who come to Sacraments.

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XI. *Quest.* Do the Sentiments in this Publication favour the Anabaptists?

Ans. I. **A**FTER I published my Sermon upon Christian Baptism, it was by some thought, to be favourable to the *Anabaptists*, on account of the same Sentiments which I have here maintained, or because I held, the Faith of Parents gave

gave right to Baptism for themselves, or Children. But so far from being for, I think the Principles I maintain, do most effectually guard against *Anabaptism*.

2. Lax Principles respecting Sacraments, and lax Discipline, have done more than any Thing to open the Door, for the Increase of *Anabaptists*. To cut off their Objections, and some of their most popular Arguments, and establish Persons who are wavering with Respect to their Sentiments, has been one considerable End of my writing the foregoing Inquiry into the State of the *Jewish Church*.

3. 'Tis obvious to all, and the common People easily see, that the New Testament requires Repentance and Faith, in order to Baptism. They cannot help observing also, that many *Presbyterian* Ministers, open the Doors of the Church to unbelievers, and baptise where there is no Pretence to true Faith, or Gospel Repentance: The People are sure, according to Scripture, this cannot be right: They are thence ready to conclude, there is no Medium between these Errors, and the Tenets of the *Anabaptists*, who insist on actual personal Faith in order to Baptism. Hence they are easily led, to fall in with that Sect in renouncing Infant Baptism. Whereas if Ministers would keep to the Rules of the Scripture, and require Faith in Order to Baptism, and would discipline baptised Children, there would be but little Danger of the *Anabaptists* gaining Ground among our People.

4. We derive some of our principal Arguments for Infant Baptism, from God's Covenant with *Abraham*, and the *Gentiles* being grafted, or

brought into a Church State, essentially the same that the *Jewish* Church was; as God instituted it. Now if we hold (as many do), that God approved of the *Jews* coming to the Sacraments, as they were in their corrupt degenerate State, and that we *Gentiles*, may now come as they did, this is so very contrary, to what is every where said in the New Testament, concerning coming to Sacraments, that 'tis no Wonder the *Anabaptists* say, that our Argument from the *Jewish* Church, cannot be good, because say they, the Gospel which is so plain and easy, certainly contradicts it, as it certainly requires true Repentance and Faith, in order for Baptism. They in this Case, having some Truth on their Side, reject our Argument in the whole. Whereas, would we consider the *Abrahamic* Covenant and *Jewish* Church, according to God's Institution, and maintain that true Faith, or saving Grace was always necessary to a proper worthy Approach to the *Jewish* Sacraments, we obviate their most popular Objection or Argument, *viz.* That believing is required in order to Baptism. For allowing this (which is the Truth according to Scripture) and practising accordingly, there would not be so much Difficulty to reconcile them to the Baptism of the Seed of Believers.

F I N I S.